Selected Works to Demonstrate the Expanded Range and Technical Demand of the Saxophone

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SELECTED WORKS TO DEMONSTRATE THE EXPANDED RANGE AND TECHNICAL DEMAND OF THE SAXOPHONE

by

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TITLE: SELECTED WORKS TO DEMONSTRATE THE EXPANDED RANGE AND TECHNICAL DEMAND OF THE SAXOPHONE

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Richard Kelley

The purpose of this research paper is to present a selection of different compositions for the saxophone by a group of composers from different countries, musical backgrounds, and compositional styles. In addition, the author chose different compositions that reflect a timeline that begins with the early style compositions for the saxophone and progresses to more modern. These five works were performed on a graduate recital on February 26, 2022. This document contains biographical, historical, analytic information, and performance considerations to influence a better performance of any of these five pieces. The compositions discussed in this document are: *Sonatine pour Saxophone Alto en Mib et Piano* by Claude Pascal, *Mirage* by Dorothy Chang, Muczynski’s *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano*, Heitor Villa-Lobos’s *Fantasia*, and *Hot-Sonate* by Erwin Schulhoff.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to acknowledge the musicians who gave me the tools and have made a difference in my musical development. These are Dr. Ernesto Alonso, who is my dad and professor since the beginning of this musical journey, Norberto “Tiko” Ortiz, Harry Rosario, Carlos Torres, Samuel “Sammy” Morales, Dr. David Rivera, Nelson Corchado, Dr. Ping Hui-Li, Dr. Nora Ponte, Dr. Nestor Hernandez, Dr. Carlos Cabrer, Dr. Richard Kelley, Dr. Christopher Morehouse, Dr. David Dillard, Dr. Isaac Lausell, and Dr. Cody Brookshire. Theses instructors love for music made me appreciate more the music in every aspect. I would like to thank them for supporting me and adding that portion of each knowledge so I could be a better musician and human being.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my parents, especially my dad, who applied the first steps of music in my life, to my first saxophone professor, Tiko, to Ruben who received me as a friend and gave a warm welcome when I arrived to SIUC giving me a tour of the area, and to my girlfriend Hilary who is my inspiration to follow my dreams so we can have a better future together.
The chosen music and repertoire discussed in this paper demonstrate the technical and range abilities of the saxophone and different compositional styles from early to late 20th century music. The saxophone has advantages in volume and expressiveness because of its construction. Also, it is closer to the human voice than other instruments making it easier to mimic.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The pieces that will be discussed throughout this paper were chosen to showcase a variety of compositional styles that highlight the saxophone’s flexibility in the classical and jazz idioms. Most of these compositions are from a similar timeline, but the styles are the ones that show the difference of how a saxophone sounds and performs. This repertoire is outside the classical standard repertoire that is played on concerts, and these compositions are less known and performed.

The first one is Sonatine pour Saxophone Alto en Mib et Piano by French composer, Claude Pascal. This piece sounds French in style with the lightness of the passages and articulations that fits into a French character. Next, is the American by Dorothy Chang’s Mirage. This is the most modern composition on the recital program. The saxophone shows the whole register and above in a five-minute piece, and the performer shows the versatility of playing, especially in the high altissimo notes. The American composer Robert Muczynski’s Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano comes back to a more classical saxophone sound and starts to use the altissimo register as part of the melody and not just an arrival note. Furthermore, the Heitor Villa-Lobos’s Fantasia has a playful and virtuosic approach testing the performers technical command of the saxophone. Last, but not least, is the Hot-Sonate by Erwin Schulhoff, a German composer. This composition is considered one of the few crossover sonatas written throughout history. The style is German jazz language, meaning that it will sound different than the American jazz style.
CHAPTER 2

SONATINE POUR ALTO SAXOPHONE EN MIB ET PIANO BY CLAUDE PASCAL

Claude Pascal was born in Paris on February 19, 1921. Since the age of five he began studying music with the piano and music theory. He was accepted into the music theory class of the National Conservatory of Music in Paris, at the age of 10. Next year, he won the first medal. As a singer, the director of the conservatory recommended him to the conductor, Walter Straram. Cast him in the boy-soprano role of Yniold of Pelléas et Mélisande by Debussy, performing it at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris in 1933. He sang in many more operas while he was a young boy.\(^1\) Also he impressed Georges Truc, the head of the Columbia record label, who made recordings with famous composers such as Debussy, Grovlez and De Fragny. Later, Pascal continued his music studies at the Paris Conservatory. His teachers were: Jean Gallon for harmony, Noel Gallon for counterpoint, Henri Busser for composition, Louis Laloy in music history, and Charles Münch for conducting. He took piano lessons with Yves Nat and conducting with Roger Desormiere and Louis Fourestier. Pascal received numerous awards for his studies but his innovation as a composer came in 1943-45 receiving the Premier Grand Prix de Rome for his cantata La Farce du Contrebandier.\(^2\) When he returned to Paris, he was first chorus master at the Opera-Comique, and in 1952 became professor of sightreading at the conservatory. He held these positions until retiring in 1987. He died on February 28, 2017.\(^3\)

The word Sonatine is French from Sonatina meaning miniature sonata. Its structure is small with a few technical demands on the performer. Usually, the word sonata caries some implications like several movements, but sonatina denotes a single movement divided in

\(^3\)Tobias Broeker, https://www.tobias-broeker.de/rare-manuscripts/m-r/pascal-claude/.
sections. It is possible that the first movement or section of the sonatina is in Sonata form. In a sonatina there is an exposition and a recapitulation but no central development section making it the distinction from the sonata form.4

The Sonatine for Alto Saxophone and Piano is a one movement piece divided in three sections of fast-slow-fast. The sonatina was composed in 3/4 meter as the main meter almost throughout the whole piece, but it changes to 2/4 meter at the last section of the piece. There are some transitional meter changes on rehearsal number eleven that go to 5/8 and 3/8 to accelerate the tempo to the third and last section of this sonatina. It was written in D major concert pitch, meaning the saxophone will be in B major but it eventually changes to G-sharp minor. In addition, sometimes it gives the feeling of playing in B mixolydian by cancelling the A-sharp of the original key signature. We can see that on rehearsal number two where the A-sharp, G-sharp, and D-sharp are changed to naturals working as a passage of a secondary dominant of Dorian (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Secondary Dominant section5

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4 Ellis B. Kohs, Musical Form, 291.
The saxophone and piano share melodic material, usually playing it together or by the piano playing a recapitulation of what was stated before by the saxophone. The first time we can see the piano playing the melody with the saxophone is on measure five. The right hand follows the same structure of the saxophone for two measures. Also, following the same line, the piano plays two times in different measures and the melodic material played by the saxophone four measures earlier. These can be seen in four measures before rehearsal number four and four measures before rehearsal number five. In addition, it is interesting how Pascal repeated the same structure for these kinds of devices which can be seen also as a large structure sequence (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Piano’s same melody and recapitulation mm. 5-6, mm. 61-64

The saxophone gets a cadence with the common rhythm stated since the beginning of the sonatina, which is dotted eight-note and sixteenth note, playing different ascending arpeggiated phrases in different keys. The clearest ones seen in the beginning are G major seventh with the ninth, B-flat minor seven with the flat eleven, and D major seventh with the eleventh (Figure 2.3).

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6Pascal, Sonatine, I and 4.
After the cadence, there is a recapitulation of the first theme shown at the beginning but leads to the relative minor of the existing key, B minor concert pitch. Later, there is a transitional measure that starts at rehearsal number eleven changing the time signature to 5/8 and 3/8 and tempo to \textit{Animé} working as a transitional accelerando section to change to the last section which goes to F major concert pitch, D major for saxophone (Figure 2.4).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{transitional_section}
\caption{Transitional section to the last section\textsuperscript{8}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{7}Pascal, \textit{Sonatine}, 6.
\textsuperscript{8}Pascal, \textit{Sonatine}, 8-9.
The last section seems similar to sonata form because of one thing specifically between rehearsal numbers twelve and eighteen. One of the common phrases is that the saxophone goes through different arpeggiation of chords throughout the whole section outlining them and showing the technical demand that this sonatina asks from the performer. This happens in different measures such as the first four measures of rehearsal number twelve and then at the twelfth bar of rehearsal number sixteen (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Outlining Chords

Furthermore, the composer, in rehearsal number fourteen, gives the saxophone a technical break and adds a melancholy melody and offers the saxophonist an opportunity to display his lyricism. Meanwhile, the pianist plays chords in the left hands and sixteenth note scales in the right hand. This looks very similar to a written solo in jazz, when the pianist riffs in the right hand and harmonizes in the left. Meaning, usually when the piano performer is improvising, he or she plays part of the chords on the left hand.

Figure 2.6: Piano technical section

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Pascal repeats similar material in the beginning of this section in rehearsal number eighteen, but at the end of the phrase the saxophone gets a two-measure rest to prepare the performer to finish the section. The phrase is constructed on half-step motion building from a *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*. At the *fortissimo* the saxophone and piano are in unison. The saxophone has two measures of an arpeggiated E-flat minor beginning with the B-flat and finishing the composition abruptly an interval leap of an 18th from E to D (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: Half-Step Motion/Abrupt Ending with 18th Interval Leap\(^\text{11}\)

One important performance consideration that will help the performers play this composition is to not follow the tempo markings exactly. The tempo is an estimate that the composer thinks can be a good tempo to perform it, but if the performers feel that needs to decrease or increase the tempo because is not working or does not feel right by all means can be change. Also, the notes that are not marked as articulated in any way should be articulated or re-articulated. Breathing marks are important and it is better if both performer marks those breath after a tie and not in the middle of it.

\(^{11}\text{Pascal, Sonatine, 16.}\)
CHAPTER 3

MIRAGE BY DOROTHY CHANG

Dorothy Chang was born in Winfield, Illinois in 1970. She started her music studies on piano when she was six years old and began composing at the age of fourteen. Chang received her bachelor and master’s degree from the University of Michigan, and her doctoral degree was from Indiana University School of Music. She worked on the music faculty at Indiana State University and since 2003 has been a music professor at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Dorothy’s compositions have been featured in concerts and festivals across North America and overseas, with performances of prominent or well-known ensembles and orchestras such as: Albany Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago Civic Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Queens Symphony Orchestra, Seattle and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. Also, the Nu:BC Collective, the Smith Quartet, Soundstreams, the Chicago Saxophone Quartet, Collage New Music, and Music from China, and so on and so forth.12

Chang is described as “evocative and kaleidoscopic” which means that often the music reflects an eclectic mix of musical influences from her youth, ranging from popular and folk music to elements of traditional Chinese music. Several of her compositions are inspired by place, time, memory, and personal histories.13 The piece is dedicated to her husband Paolo Bortolussi, who is a flutist.14 He has premiered most of her works since they know each other.15

Furthermore, it is important to mention that Chang is a meaningful contributor to modern

saxophone repertoire. She has published seven saxophone works. The first one was composed in 1993, *Two Preludes* for alto saxophone and piano, written thinking of the saxophonist Christopher Creviston and pianist Hannah (Gruber) Creviston. The second was *Mirage* in 2000 originally for flute, but later was adapted to saxophone. *Obsess*, the third one, composed 2003 for saxophone quartet. Long says it is out of circulation because Chang is planning to rewrite it. This composition was commissioned by the Chicago Saxophone Quartet. The next work was *Walk on Water* composed in 2004 written as a single-movement duo of alto saxophone and cello. The fifth composition was *In Quiet Light* for alto saxophone and electric guitar in 2009. Then, she wrote *New Stories* in 2013 for alto saxophone and piano commissioned by Joseph Lulloff. Finally, the latest one was *Afterlight* in 2018 for soprano saxophone and piano. Chang likes to explore the possibilities of versatility and color the saxophone offers; its various tonal possibilities influenced her way of writing for this instrument. She said that she is often inspired by it, and it sounds like an “expressive singing human voice, yet also its ability to be very percussive and industrial sounding. When she composes for the saxophone, the material is usually from specific timbre ideas. One can certainly identify through her music how she fully utilized and understands the sound capabilities of the saxophone, and at times pushing established limitations to make inimitable and beautiful works of art.”

A mirage, as the British encyclopedia defines it, is an optical illusion. Deceptive appearances of a distant object or objects caused by refraction in layers of air of varying density. This happens under certain conditions, like stretch of pavement or desert air heated by intense sunshine, in which the air rapidly cools with elevation and therefore increases in density and

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refractive power.\textsuperscript{18} The cause of a mirage as an extreme situation is when you are stranded in the desert and almost on the verge of dying. Chang manages to compose to a very precise character in the piece, \textit{Mirage}, regarding how a person goes from walking without any hopes of finding water or food to seeing a mirage and letting it consume you almost to the border of insanity.

Below, in an analysis, the author will show certain examples on the piece to prove the plot of the mirage feeling through its climax and conclusion.

The primary motive of this composition is the ‘sighing’ motive when there is an ascending half-step interval, and it is represented by bending the first note down and back up as you arrive to the next note. This motive starts at the very beginning of the piece, and it happens in many measures thought the piece, but changes notes or dynamics. The composition starts as a resemblance of a lone wanderer staggering through a dry, severe desert. This first sigh motive should be quiet and more like a pianissimo as mentioned in the marking at the beginning of the work (figure 1).\textsuperscript{19}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{Figure31.png}
\caption{Sighing Motive (half-step interval)}
\end{figure}

The half-steps, which are minor second intervals, are the most important characteristic throughout the whole piece. The measures of this interval are seen at the beginning, and later on measures 3, 7-8, 15-17, 28-29, 31-33, 35, 38-40, 42, 44-47, 49-50, 56-59, 61-63, 66-67, 72 and

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Ad} Adcock, “Scholarly Program Notes,” 14.
\bibitem{Chang} Dorothy Chang, Mirage. (Kylix Music, 2000), 1.
\end{thebibliography}
finally on measure 74. This pattern has rhythm combinations with 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes, starting at the beginning, then on measures 3, 7-8, 15-17, 28-29, 31-33, 35, 38-40, 42, 44-47, 49-50, 56-59, 61-63, 66-67, 72, and 74 (figure 3.2).\textsuperscript{21}

Figure 3.2: Combination of 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes with the minor second interval\textsuperscript{22}

In addition to the bending technique, another one is the flutter. It appears shortly and only two times in the whole piece. Moreover, this happens when the piece is almost ending on mm. 61-62. The feeling of what this two-measure motive gives is the climax going down the hill to a conclusion. It ends after an altissimo passage of climactic sensation with a resemblance of desperation. The character is still agitated coming from an intense altissimo rage of half and whole notes. The flutter may vary between performers and how they “roll their R’s” or if they cannot roll them there is also growling from the throat. Although it is not recommended, growling to make flutter, in this case, can be acceptable because is only two measures of flutter (figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: Flutter Extended Technique\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21}Adcock, Scholarly Program Notes, 14-15.
\textsuperscript{22}Chang, Mirage, 2.
\textsuperscript{23}Chang, Mirage, 3.
Finally, the composer uses an extended technique for the saxophone called altissimo. The authors say is an extended technique for saxophone because the saxophone’s normal written range only extends to F-sharp 6. Above the F-sharp, everything else is an altissimo because it is not part of the normal register. The work was written originally for flute and its normal register goes to that high C, but for the saxophone it is already an extended register pitch turned to an altissimo. This section of altissimo starts on measure 51 until measure 61. These notes are written G, G#(Ab), A, A#, B and C. This fragment consists of building momentum to a climax by showing how desperate the wanderer is because they saw a mirage on the distance. Also, the leaps between octaves that are happening since the beginning of m. 51 can resemble the wanderer stumbling trying to reach the mirage they just saw (figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Altissimo Register mm. 51-61

Some considerations for a better performance that future performers should consider are diaphragmatic attacks for the beginning of half-step motives. Because this is a sighing effect, the performer needs to keep the tongue out of the equation for these piano entrances on the first page. As mentioned before, the flutter extended technique is more comfortable to “roll the R”

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24 Chang, Mirage, 2-3.
instead of using the throat. The altissimo register is different for everyone. There are different fingerings, and it depends on the saxophone the performer owns. For this, he or she must explore every possibility to place the altissimo notes and find better movement between them. For example, in mm. 52-53 it is better to use front high E when combining it with high G (figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Altissimo Fingering between front E and G

Also, for a better connection with the audience the performer needs to show the emotions of sighing, desperation and giving up throughout the instrument, so the title of the composition thus not be in vain.

_____________________

Sent through the email by Dr. Richard Kelley.
CHAPTER 4

FANTASIA BY HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS

Heitor Villa-Lobos was born in Rio de Janeiro on March 5, 1887 and died there on November 17, 1959. Villa-Lobos was a Brazilian composer who is considered the single most significant creative figure in 20th century Brazilian art music. Villa-Lobos also created unique compositional styles in which contemporary European techniques and reinterpreted elements of national music are combined. He was successful in his career and was a model for later generations of Brazilian composers.26

He was a strongly nationalist composer, though over six decades of prolific work his nationalism took many faces. The folk and popular music was very significant to him and Béhage says that: “it would be simplistic to classify his works merely in terms of its presence or absence; or indeed to try to view such references as separate from his numerous and varied experiments in style and language, even within a single work.” He wrote approximately 206 compositions in which they were for different kinds of ensembles or combinations of instruments. For example, he wrote for piano, solo vocal, gui, two instruments, three or more instruments, string quartet, orchestral with soloist, educational books, choral, vocal-orchestral, and dramatic.27

A fantasia is a term implemented in the Renaissance for an instrumental composition whose form and invention spring solely from the fantasy and skill of the author who created it. It has kept this subjective license from the 16th to 19th centuries and its formal and stylistic characteristics may consequently vary widely from free improvisation types to contrapuntal, and

standard sectional form. This term was used in German keyboard manuscripts before 1520, and in printed tablatures originating as far apart as Valencia, Milan, Nuremberg, and Lyons by 1536.  

Villa-Lobos’s Fantasia, for soprano or tenor saxophone and chamber orchestra, was finished in 1948. Also, it was dedicated to one of the first concert saxophone players, Marcel Mule. The premiere took place in Rio de Janeiro at the Auditorio do Ministerio da Educacao e Cultura, with a chamber orchestra conducted by Villa-Lobos and Waldemar Szilman as the saxophone soloist, on November 17, 1951. Even though Villa-Lobos has composed numerous works this is the only known saxophone composition in which the saxophone is the principal instrument. The Fantasia, is divided into three movements marked as Animé, Lent, and Tres animé, and is characteristic for complex rhythmic constructions. Most of the piece requires much technical skill for the saxophonist with virtuoso passages in the saxophone part. The music examples provided will be from the piano reduction version with the saxophone in their transposed key.

The first movement is very distinctive because of its use of polydivisions of the 3/2 meter, and only happens at the first part of this movement. This is created by the concurrent use of simple meter and compound meters of 3/2 with 12/8, resulting in a rhythmic contrast of strong beats happening at the same time between both meters. Also, implied polymeter results from the simultaneous use of simple triple and simple duple meters of 2/2 and 3/2 among the instruments. The movement opens in E-flat Major with a five-bar orchestral introduction in 3/2 containing

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29James D. Butler, “Heitor Villa-Lobos: The Compositional Use Of The Saxophone In Orchestral, Chamber, And Solo Repertoire,” (DMA diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 1995), 228.
descending eighth note patterns in the strings. The saxophone will play this motive as soon they start playing. This conflict results in polydivisions because while the saxophone is playing in 3/2 consistently the accompaniment is 3/2 as well, but the rhythm is written in 12/8. In addition, the fourth measure of rehearsal 2 shows the difficulty of playing these polydivisions because while the accompaniment is playing in 12/8 the saxophone is playing on a solid 3/2 meter (Figure 4.1).\textsuperscript{30} This section does not last long, serving as a good introduction to the fantasia.

Figure 4.1: The polydivisions between the saxophone and accompaniment m. 17\textsuperscript{31}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure4_1}
\end{figure}

The meter changes to 2/2 at the \textit{Moins}, meaning less or in this case slower tempo. Even though the time signature changes to 2/2, the polymeter is a result of simple duple and triple meters. The accompaniment is moving in 2/2 and the saxophone melody has a feeling of 3/2. The cause of this strong 3/2 feeling in the saxophone at the \textit{Moins} is because of the rhythmic figure (\begin{music}
\note{D} \ exile \note{C}
\end{music}) that is frequently joined on a subsequent beat with a similar figure, and on a third beat by a third repetition or variant of the rhythmic figure or long note (Figure 4.2).\textsuperscript{32} This continues to happen between the two groups and sometimes the saxophone will be in 3/2 feeling and

sometimes the accompaniment will be in 3/2 feeling meanwhile the other one is playing in 2/2 meter.

Figure 4.2: Saxophone playing in 3/2 meanwhile the accompaniment is in 2/2

In this section of the first movement the saxophone part shows the virtuosic passage of sixths that will appear approximately seven times throughout the movement. It is composed of descending and ascending arpeggios going through modes: G$^7$, Fmaj$^7$, Em$^7$, and Dm$^7$. Also, the orchestra now takes the role of the 3/2 feeling meanwhile the saxophone is playing in 2/2 (Figure 4.3). In addition to rehearsal number 6, this approach of implied meter that Villa-Lobos is applying to this movement will continue to appear in different rehearsal numbers, for example in rehearsal 9, 10, and 13.\(^\text{34}\)

Figure 4.3: Rehearsal number 6 the orchestra playing 3/2 with the saxophone on 2/2

\(^{33}\text{Villa-Lobos, Fantasia, 6.}\)
\(^{34}\text{Butler, “Heitor Villa-Lobos,” 242-248.}\)
\(^{35}\text{Villa-Lobos, Fantasia, 7.}\)
The second movement is the slow section with a long legato melody that will continue with a homogenous motion and repetitions of the same melody. The accompaniment gives an introduction of the movement and is basically the first eight bars of the saxophone melody. The saxophone ends the movement with a chromatic motion in the last five measures functioning as a codetta, but the last measure has a pick-up to the third movement consisting of the first three notes played by the saxophone at the beginning of the fantasia (Figure 4.4).36

Figure 4.4: Last Two Bars of the Chromatic Motion mm. 26-2737

According to Butler, harmonically speaking, the collection of notes provides on this movement outlining a seven-note scale that, if they are ordered in some way, form a Lydian-Mixolydian flat 6 scale (Eb–F–G–A–Bb–Cb–Db). This is applied in different variations throughout the whole second movement, for example as a descending-ascending scale, that goes in a descrescendo patterns, and other modes in the same type of scale but starting on A-flat. This happens at rehearsal number two when the altered E-flat Lydian-Mixolydian suddenly modulates to the A-flat scale mentioned before. The saxophone part has some notes of this scale for three measures (Figure 4.5).

37Villa-Lobos, Fantasia, 16.
Furthermore, the use of a modified Lydian-Mixolydian scale is used in numerous measures, such as the first three measures of the movement, in the saxophone solo part at rehearsal number three, and the recapitulation of the main them in rehearsal number eight.39

The third movement was composed in the asymmetrical time signature 7/4 (3/4 + 4/4). It can be challenging to players that are not used to this kind of meter. There is a complicated use of irregular groupings of beats in the saxophone line. Although the quarter-note remains constant, the grouping varies. Generally, it is grouped in 3+4 or 4+3. The accompaniment opens the movement dividing the groups of notes in 3+4. Then on the fourth measure of rehearsal number one, the saxophone repeats the melody given to the accompaniment dividing the measures in 3+4 quarter-note beats. The first group of the bar is in three and later the second part of the group goes to the grouping of four happening in those first three measure of the saxophone solo part (figure 4.6).40

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38Villa-Lobos, Fantasia, 13.
Another shifting of 3+4 and 4+3 happens on the third measure of rehearsal number two when the saxophone changes the character to legato playing in groups of 3+4 and then 4+3 and vice versa. In the fourth measure the grouping of quarter-notes changes to 4+3 synchronizing with the accompaniment that is on 4+3 as well. Also, we can see this grouping in the next measures of rehearsal number two. This movement contains abundant sections of virtuosic phrases and lines for the saxophone part giving this movement a character of triumphant ending. Starting at the beginning of the movement, the soprano saxophone has a long phrase of sixteen-notes playing different patterns of scale from the fourth measure of rehearsal number one to measure two of rehearsal number two. Then on rehearsal numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6 the soloist will continue to demonstrate the virtuosic phrases. In the middle of this 7/4 movement the composer changes to 4/4 for a new section, using the last four beats of the original melody, serving as a reminiscent motive developing it through rehearsal numbers 7 to 9.42

Once again, the movement goes back to the shifting groups of 7/4 (3+4 and 4+3). The saxophone is the one carrying the shifting groups meanwhile the accompaniment is playing a passive rhythm of half and quarter notes, serving as a support of the saxophone part, which is at the highest level of difficulty. The technical challenge of the saxophone solo part begins in the

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second measure of rehearsal number ten. Even though there are a large number of notes in the accompaniment, these notes are shifting with the saxophone part dividing the first three bars in groups of 3+4 and changing on the fourth measure. Here the saxophone does an ascending passage which is headed to the turning point (Figure 4.7). To identify these kinds of groupings the easiest way to notice them is to analyze the accompaniment.43

![Figure 4.7: Shifting groupings](image)

Finally, at the end of the movement, the tempo changes to Presto and once again the composer used the group shifting, but in this case, it is against each other. The saxophone part is on group of 4+3, meanwhile the accompaniment is in groups of 3+4 ending on a dominant B-flat with a sharp ninth and eleventh chord (Bb7(#9, #11)) (Figure 4.8).45

![Figure 4.8: Presto with the 4+3 against 3+4 grouping](image)

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44Villa-Lobos, Fantasia, 22.
46Villa-Lobos, Fantasia, 23.
A performance consideration for rehearsal and performance is to be flexible with the tempo markings. If it is too fast, it will not sound clear and too slow it will be boring. The *moins* needs to be played binary because if the performers get to rehearsal number six and is too slow it would not feel as written. Also, sextuplets are to be played on time as they are not ad libitum like the sixteenths on rehearsal number six. It should be performed differently giving the primary importance to the high F, E, and C of the phrase. In addition, because the second movement does not change meter, there is one section that has an *accelerando* to a *ritardando* on measures 6-8 of rehearsal number two. Also, this can be done on rehearsal number five as well. For the third movement, the tempo works better between 132-142, because at 152 is too fast to play with an expressive character. The first sixteenths going to rehearsal number two needs to be in two slurs and two staccato grouping. Also, do not cut the length of the half notes or tied half notes. Because it is a fast tempo sometimes, one can get too excited and want to go forward. The other part that needs the most attention are the sixteenths on two before rehearsal number eleven. The sixteenths that do not have any articulation should be two slurs and two staccatos. Finally, the grace notes on the third movement must be played clearly because the effect that they create is very important for the character of the movement.
CHAPTER 5

SONATA FOR ALTO SAXOPHONE AND PIANO BY ROBERT MUCZYNSKI

Robert Muczynski was born in Chicago, IL on March 19, 1929 and died on May 25, 2010. He was an American composer, pianist, and teacher. He studied piano with Walter Knupfer and with Alexander Tcherepnin he studied composition at DePaul University, where he obtained his bachelor’s degree and master’s degree. His debut was in New York by playing his own works in a recital. Muczynski concentrated his compositions on chamber music and piano. His music shows superb craftsmanship and expressive beliefs, unaffected by changing compositions trends and fashion. Although he demonstrates that he has influences from Béla Bartók, Barber, and Bernstein, he can be classified as a neo-classical composer, but with neo-romantic elements. Muczynski’s compositions are abstract and concise following the traditional techniques, and at the same time evading grandiosity. Also, his music reveals a concern with mood and emotion, with dark but gently restrained lyricism, and in fast movements he uses strongly accented, irregular meters. This creates an energetic rhythmic drive.

His compositions for flute and saxophone have entered the active repertoires of each instrument. In addition, his solo works for piano and his chamber music for winds, are often chosen as competition pieces, and are played throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia. In addition, to his composing and performing, Robert Muczynski oversaw the piano department at Loras College in Iowa from 1956 to 1959. Also, he was composer-in-residence at the University of Arizona until his retirement in 1988. Most of his music was recorded, including himself playing his solo piano music for Laurel Records. For the saxophone he composed a
Saxophone Concerto with band, op. 41, and a Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, op. 29.⁴⁷

The Sonata Op. 29 for Alto Saxophone and Piano was commissioned by saxophonist Trent Kynaston, written in 1970, and published by G. Schirmer. Due to some altissimo phrases, these two movements have been catalogued as a level of grade six. Kynaston was interviewed for the *Saxophone Journal*, and he clarified information regarding the title of the sonata explaining that Muczynski considered giving it the title of *Desert Sketches* or *Desert Serenade*. Kynaston said:

“I suggested that the mind-set of the classical saxophonist at that time was such that, if he used one of those titles, many players might not consider it a “serious” piece and overlook it. I suggested he call it Sonata, even though it had only two movements. After it had been out for several years, he said he was glad we made that decision, but now when I play it, I have these visions of that desert scene and I wish we had followed his original thought.”

Muczynski and Kynaston performed the premiere of the two-movement sonata in December 1970 in Crowder Hall at the University of Arizona.⁴⁸

The Sonata’s first movement is marked as *Andante maestoso* and the tempo is slow, quarter-note equal 52. The saxophone and piano have long legato phrases. Much of the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic material for the composition is based in the opening motive. Also, the structure of the movement has a variational treatment of this motive.⁴⁹ Next, the author found on his research a harmonic and form map for the first movement (Figure 5.1).

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⁴⁹Thurmond, “Selected Woodwind Compositions by Robert Muczunski,” 47.
The first motive is played by the saxophone. The intervallic leaps and dotted rhythms are important throughout the whole movement. This motive happens on the first five bars of the sonata (Figure 5.2). The melodic figures that will be used in this chapter are going to be the notes that are written for the saxophone.\textsuperscript{51}

![Figure 5.2: First motive mm. 1-5.\textsuperscript{52}](image)

Basically, this first section starting on measure 1 to 12 show the material for the whole first movement. The saxophone develops the opening theme moving on a major 2\textsuperscript{nd}. Usually, the piano imitates what the saxophone did before. On bar 12 the cadence is incomplete with a diminuendo to pianissimo for the saxophone to get out of the way so the piano can start doing the mystery accompaniment that has on measure 13. The piano becomes the main melody from mm. 14-20 playing an ostinato. This ostinato sounds mysterious and scary, and here can be seen the signature of Muczynski dark harmony and phrases. On the other hand, the saxophone is playing a lighter countermelody until pick-up to measure 19 that goes to a more triumphant or conclusive passage with a decrescendo to piano on measure 21. Also, in the pick-up to measure 20, the alto saxophone and piano have the same rhythm to start this next section of give-and-take. The piano

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Andante Maestoso} & \textbf{A} & \textbf{B} & \textbf{A'} \\
\hline
Measures & 1 & 13 & 21 & 30 & 40 & 52 \\
\hline
Tonal Center & Ab-D-Gb & Eb-7/Em7 polychord & A-G & C#-E & B-F# & Bb-Eb \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Form and harmonic map.\textsuperscript{50}}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{50}Thurmond, “Selected Woodwind Compositions by Robert Muczunski,” 47.

\textsuperscript{51}Thurmond, “Selected Woodwind Compositions by Robert Muczunski,” 47.

plays the melody now, and the saxophone answers or repeats the same rhythm a beat later. This goes on until measure 24 (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3: measure 13-21

After these last sections, we arrive at the climax of this movement, which does not last very long, but at the same time is very intense. The saxophone gets a moment of playing a virtuosic passage including altissimo notes in which the opening melodic motive is just an octave higher. This climax ends in measure 28 which ascends to the highest note of the first movement. Later, measure 29 ends in an incomplete cadence leading to a calmer and more mysterious atmosphere until measure 40 when the saxophone again arrives to an altissimo passage following

Muczynski, Sonata, 2.
by an agitated character (figure 5.4). The movement concludes the same as it began with the same motive and harmonic material.\(^{54}\)

Figure 5.4 – Climax with Altissimo and Incomplete Cadence mm. 25-29.\(^{55}\)

The second movement shows energetic tempo, and accented syncopated themes. It is an altered sonata-rondo form with the B theme returning before the A theme following the development section. Here is a diagram of this movement (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Map Form of the second movement.\(^{56}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Tonal Center</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Tonal Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F-Eb</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>F-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>A’</td>
<td>F–G</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Db</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>B’</td>
<td>F–F-D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>A”</td>
<td>D–F–G–C</td>
<td>155</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both instruments, saxophone and piano, introduce the first theme that is letter A. There is an alternation between time signatures of 2/4 and 3/4, resulting in a syncopated irregular melody. The piano plays the theme in parallel minor sixths and meanwhile the saxophone plays a minor third above the piano. Also, in the piano’s left hand there is an accompaniment of parallel major sevenths, giving a harmonic dissonant sonority throughout the beginning of theme A. Later in

\(^{54}\)Thurmond, “Selected Woodwind Compositions by Robert Muczunski,” 51.

\(^{55}\)Muczynski, Sonata, 2-3.

\(^{56}\)Thurmond, “Selected Woodwind Compositions by Robert Muczunski,” 54.
measure 18, the saxophone plays the melody an octave higher but the piano does not state the
tHEME with the saxophone like it did on the beginning of the movement (Figure 5.6).\textsuperscript{57}

Figure 5.6: Melody with piano, and Melody an octave with the 7ths on piano mm. 1-2; 18-19\textsuperscript{58}

After the saxophone and piano established the theme of the second movement, a
transitional section in measure 26 goes directly to the second theme of the movement that is
more legato and gives the sonata a sense of rest or an intermission to the listener and player after
a very energetic beginning. The second theme begins in pick-up to measure 32 with the melody
being calmer and the accompaniment smoother and calmer than the beginning. The saxophone

\textsuperscript{57}Thurmond, “Selected Woodwind Compositions by Robert Muczunski,” 54-55.
\textsuperscript{58}Muczynski, Sonata, 7.
goes on developing this new theme until measure 52 when the piano cites the first theme, and the saxophone plays the second theme contrapuntally with the piano on measure 54 (Figure 5.7).\textsuperscript{59}

Figure 5.7: Counterpoint with the two themes mm. 53-56\textsuperscript{60}

Next, this theme is fragmented from measures 62 to 66 to create a build up to a cadence on G-flat in measure 67 leading to the restatement of the first theme. Continuing to measure 68, the first theme is played again. The piano plays the original three voices meanwhile the saxophone plays a fourth melody a third above the piano’s right hand (Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8: Saxophone plays a fourth melody mm. 68-71\textsuperscript{61}

Moving forward from measures 103-113, there is a transition to a third development of the sonata. The section starts in forte and has a major build up until measure 113 that has a decrescendo to measure 114. Here the movement goes from a marcato and energetic character to

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\textsuperscript{59}Thurmond, “Selected Woodwind Compositions by Robert Muczunski,” 56.
\textsuperscript{60}Muczynski, Sonata, 9.
\textsuperscript{61}Muczynski, Sonata, 10.
legato. The section seems more expressive and relaxed and helps transition back to the second theme of the movement until the last section of the second movement. After 154 measures of this movement, Muczynski changes the time signature to 6/8 and alternating with 9/8. This section leads to a coda giving a close to the sonata with a mighty ending. After the saxophone and piano elaborates this new section, the saxophone goes back to the first theme of the movement in measure 176 but the meter is now in 9/8 giving it a different accent pattern than the first one stated at the beginning of the movement. Meanwhile the piano is playing straight eighth notes like the saxophone in measure 155 (Figure 5.9). Finally, the movement is concluded with a loud accented character label as *strepitoso* meaning noisy or boisterous.62

Figure 5.9: First theme reinstated in 9/8 mm. 178-18063

Here are some performance considerations that are relevant to performing this sonata. Although, every performer is different in how they interpret the markings, it is suggested the markings by Muczynski should be followed. The composer already did more than half of the job for the performer so he or she would not struggle with what approach to take with those markings. The character for the different sections is not always clear but combined with the harmony it can be easy to discover which approach you want to show the audience. As said in the beginning, Muczynski always used obscure and mysterious harmony, and a very good

63Muczynski, Sonata, 15.
example is the very beginning of the sonata. The introduction is dark and mysterious, and the proper approach is to use a clear vibrato showing fear or nervousness. Then the second theme played is more legato, lighter vibrato can be used to convey a triumphant feeling, conquering the movement. Overall, if you can follow the articulations, tempo markings, dynamics, and other instructions the composer has written for you, the performance will be more than satisfactory.
CHAPTER 6
HOT-SONATE BY ERWIN SCHULHOFF

Erwin Schulhoff was born in Prague on June 8, 1894 and died in Wülzburg on August 18, 1942. He was a Czech composer and pianist of German descent. He showed interest in music since he was young. He started learning piano and soon emerged as a child prodigy, and because of Dvorák’s recommendation his music career was decided for him. He took private lessons and then entered to the Prague Conservatory in the piano class of Jindrich z Albestu. Kàan. Also, he began to compose at an early age. He modeled himself after Schumann, Brahms, Dvorak, Grieg and Strauss, whose Salome left a strong impression upon him in 1906. During the 1930s Schulhoff’s income was deteriorating, and he only could earn from radio appearances, although in 1933-5 he made extra money as a jazz pianist in the jazz orchestra of Jaroslav Ježek in the avant-garde Free Theatre. Erwin Schulhoff was one of the first generation of composers in the classical world to be inspired by jazz rhythms. After World War I, he embraced the avant-garde influences of Dadaism. This was an informal international movement in Europe and North America formed as a dispute to the outbreak of said war.

Hot-Sonate for Alto Saxophone and Piano was premiered in 1930. Schulhoff played the piano, and the saxophone part was played by Billy Barton an American saxophonist. It was composed as a commission from Berlin Radio. The piece represents the turbulent times Schulhoff encountered in life and shaped by his terrible experience in the Austrian army during World War I. The effect of this experience drove him to write this piece to more radical music from mainstream styles. He experimented with atonal expressionism and jazz-tinged surrealism.

favored in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. His exploration of jazz made him an expert in jazz piano
and composition, actively blending popular and classical styles. Making a huge success with
jazz-crossover compositions.65

The *Hot-Sonate* is divided into four movements. Most of the jazz language is contained
in the harmony. The harmony has characteristics from the French impressionism, but more in the
venue of Satie than Debussy. It does not have any further information of how to perform it. In
addition, it demands much technical virtuosity from the saxophone part because of its rhythmic
variety. Even though the piece is called *Hot-Sonate*, it does not have sonata form until the fourth
movement that follows a resemblance to said form. Also, the piece has jazz language, but the
composer did not explore the possibility of having one or many open sections to improvise on,
and only containing a written part of what Schulhoff thought was jazz rhythm.66 It can be said
that this composition seems like a transcription of a solo from a recording. All of the following
figures will contain the saxophone part transposed for the instrument and the piano.

The first movement is in tempo moderato but sassy and freewheeling in spirit.67 The main
rhythm used in this movement is the sixteen triplets with emphasis on beats one and three. The
piano plays one measure as an introduction emphasizing the first beat of each group of sixteens.
The saxophone plays on the second bar with a very free melody giving the character of the
movement as a procession of a French king entering the room. This is repeated two times while
the piano continues with the same accompaniment it used since the first measure. The piano has
a colorful harmony with a B-flat major with the eleventh and F-minor with the flat ninth

functioning as I–V chord progression (Figure 6.1). This section functions as an A section.

Figure 6.1: Introduction mm. 1-2 with the I–V progression

The tempo will continue for eighteen measures until the nineteenth when the tempo changes to poco animato. The harmonic movement is chromatically giving this new section more colors serving as a B section (Figure 6.2). Although the tempo changed the melody continues to maintain the triplet throughout the whole movement. Also, the end of the movement recapitulates the first, but as an A’ giving this movement somewhat an A–B–A’ form.

Figure 6.2: Chromatically movement changing the character

It is interesting that the ending functions as a little cadenza giving the saxophone the spotlight with an unaccompanied two measures, but even more interesting is that movements one to three end in the same way giving the saxophone a somewhat cadenza.

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The second movement is a livelier tune that gives the feeling of the dance floors in the nightclubs in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{70} Now the rhythm feel is on the upbeats giving this movement to the eighth note with more swing instead of straight eights. The composer intentionally writes a long marcato figure to the upbeats. Is interesting that when the saxophone is playing the piano functions as accompaniment but when the saxophones has long notes the piano plays more as a soloist or transitional rhythms. You can see this in many measures. For example, measures 41 to 56 the saxophone and piano have a section of responding to each other of two bars each. This form feels like a jazz improvisation when two performers trade solos, playing two measures of improvisation for each instrument (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3: Trading between the saxophone and piano\textsuperscript{71}

As the first movement, this movement maintains the same structure and tempo which

\textsuperscript{70}Maruri, "An Honors Recital," 5.
\textsuperscript{71}Schulhoff, \textit{Hot-Sonate}, 10-11.
does not change much. Also, there is resemblance to the first movement because it ends very much like the first one. The saxophone plays a non-accompaniment line serving as a cadenza, and meanwhile the piano waits to end the movement abruptly. We can see in the piano part that has a marking of *secco*, meaning that the note must be as short as possible. Also, this is one of the main rhythms used throughout the whole movement. Using this as an end can be a summary or reminder to the listener that this was the central motivic line and using it to its advantage because there are many critics or musicians that always say that the audience only remembers the beginning and the end of the piece (Figure 6.4).

*Figure 6.4: Same ending as the first movement*\(^{72}\)

The third movement is a slow and expressive blues that defines his life during the 1920’s. This is known from one of his letters sent to Alban Berg and stated: “I am boundlessly fond of nightclub dancing, so much so that I have periods during which I spend whole nights dancing with one hostess or another...out of pure enjoyment of the rhythm and with my subconscious filled with sensual delight.... There by I acquire phenomenal inspiration for my work, as my conscious mind is incredibly earthly, even animal as it were.” The movement is marked as *lamentoso ma molto grottesco* (lament but very grotesque) giving the character of the various nightclubs he would frequent.\(^{73}\) The piano gives the tempo in the first measure and the

\(^{72}\)Schulhoff, *Hot-Sonate*, 12.

\(^{73}\)Maruri, “An Honors Recital,” 5.
saxophone enters with a glissando quarter-note triplet, giving a character to the audience that is sensual or provocative. This can reflect that from time-to-time, Schulhoff was in gentleman nightclubs or simply jazz clubs. Almost throughout the whole movement the piano has constant eighth-notes rhythms, and this is comparable to the drummer’s ride cymbal in which he keeps the tempo. Also, the piano is playing the rhythm as a harmonic progression playing the chord tones of I–I–IV–I–I–IV–IV–I–I–I–IV–IV–IV–II–I–IV–IV– etc. Judging for this progression Schulhoff was mimicking the Blues form, but he stayed in the tonic and subdominant. It gives the piece a dark character and has that kind of uncertain harmonic movement. We can see the saxophone for the first time in this sonata using an extended technique of glissando adding more flexibility to bend notes to change the character of the performance (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5: Change of character to a more grotesque

This third movement serves as a change of atmosphere to show another kind of place that Schulhoff used to go in the evenings, in this case a gentleman’s club. Furthermore, as the previous movements, the third movement also leaves the saxophone alone to play a line alone maintaining the same approach, which has been used since the beginning of the sonata (Figure 6.6).

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The fourth movement is a finale that recapitulates themes from previous movements such as the first movement sixteen triplets and the triplets from the beginning of the third movement. The end of the movement is abrupt and leaves the ending up in the air without any resolution. It can be said that this ending can represent his untimely death at forty-eight years old in the Nazi concentration camp. The fourth movement is written in cut time or binary like the second movement going back to the two and four feel but keeping straight eights. Technically it is not challenging, but there are few measures that need more practice than other. For example, measures like 13-16 that will be repeated on measures 29-32 and 94-97 has eighth-notes triplets used as a descending sequence. The eighth-note triple is one of the main jazz language rhythms meaning that we can see another characteristic of why this sonata is categorized as crossover music (Figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7: Usage of Eight-note triples

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75Schulhoff, *Hot-Sonate*, 16.
Later, is the first recapitulation of movement one when the piano has a nine-measure solo transition calming the atmosphere of the energetic beginning and enters on the new tempo giving the saxophone the character of the next sections that is a reminiscent of the first movement using the sixteenth-triplet figure (Figure 6.8). This section ends how it started with the piano taking the spotlight to go back to the tempo primo with the quantity of ten-measures.

Figure 6.8: Recapitulation of first movement

After three movements, Schulhoff decided to use foreshadowing as a compositional device to remind the listener the movement is coming to an end. After going back to the tempo primo at the very end, the movement returns to the recapitulation of the first movement making you think that there is still material to continue playing, but in this case this section functions as a cadenza, allowing the saxophone to show its technique one more time before ending the fourth movement. The ending brings back the eighth triplet used at the beginning adding speed to the finale with an abrupt ending on a C major seventh chord with no resolution to a F major chord.

Here are some performance considerations to play better in the style. This is one of few jazz-crossover compositions that exists. That being said, bending long notes is encouraged. For example, the first movement theme can be play with some bending the second time it comes again on measure eleven. After applying bending in the first movement, you will need to do it in each following movement. This is different between performers, but to do so he or she should have played jazz or have some knowledge of jazz to ensure it sounds as a jazz-crossover composition and not just another concert work. The third movement first glissando notes must be as grotesque as possible with the largest bends the performer can do without breaking the sound. Finally, in the last movement he or she needs to follow the articulations because it gives the exact approach the phrase needs. At the end, on the last 2/4 meter, before going to the last eight bars, the performer with the piano can extended and not play it in time to give a climax and enlarge the ending. Also, this gives the saxophone more time to play the sixteenths more expressive.


APPENDIX

RECITAL PROGRAM NOTES

Southern Illinois University Carbondale
School of Music
presents

Graduate Recital

David Alonso-Otero, saxophone

with

Dr. Barbara Noyes, piano

SIU
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale

Series 2021-2022. No. 31
Saturday, February 26, 2022, 1:00 p.m.
Old Baptist Foundation Recital Hall
PROGRAM

Sonatine pour Saxophone en Mib et Piano (1948)
Claude Pascal
(1921-2017)
David Alonso-Otero, alto saxophone
Dr. Barbara Noyes, piano

Mirage (2000)
Dorothy Chang
(b. 1970)
David Alonso-Otero, alto saxophone

Fantasia for Bb and Chamber Orchestra arr. Piano (1948)
Heitor Villa-Lobos
(1887-1959)
David Alonso-Otero, soprano saxophone
Dr. Barbara Noyes, piano

Intermission

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1930)
Robert Muczynski
(1929-2010)
David Alonso-Otero, alto saxophone
Dr. Barbara Noyes, piano

Hot-Sonate (1930)
Erwin Schulhoff
(1894-1942)
David Alonso-Otero, alto saxophone
Dr. Barbara Noyes, piano

1. J = 66
II. J = 112
III. J = 80 - Lamentooso ma molto grottesco
IV. J = 132
Program Notes

By David Alonso-Otero

Sonatine pour Saxophone en Mib et Piano
Claude Pascal

Claude Pascal was born in Paris on February 19, 1921. Since the age of five he began studying piano and music theory. He was accepted into the music theory class of the National Conservatory of Music in Paris at the age of 10. Next year, he won the first medal. After hearing him sing, the director of the conservatory recommended him to the conductor Walter Straram. Pascal was given the role of Yniold of Pelléas et Mélisande by Debussy and performed it at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris in 1933. He sang in many more operas while he was a young boy. When he came back to Paris, he was first chorus master at the Opera-Comique, but in 1952 became professor of sightreading at the conservatory. He held these positions until retiring in 1987. He died on February 28, 2017.

The Sonatine for Alto Saxophone and Piano is a one movement piece divided into three sections of fast-slow-fast. The sonatina was composed in 3/4 meter as the main meter almost throughout the whole piece, but it changes to 2/4 meter at the last section of the sonatina. There are some transitional meter changes at rehearsal number 11 that goes to 5/8 and 3/8 to accelerate the tempo to the third and last section of this sonatina. It was written in D major concert pitch, meaning the saxophone will be in B major but it changes to G-sharp minor. In addition, sometimes gives the feeling of playing a B mixolydian mode cancelling the A-sharp of the original key signature.

Mirage

Dorothy Chang

Dorothy Chang was born in Winfield, Illinois in 1970. She started her music studies on piano when she was six years old and began composing at the age of fourteen. Chang received her bachelor and master’s degree from the University of Michigan, and her doctoral degree was from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. She worked on the music faculty at Indiana State University and since 2003 has been a music professor at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Dorothy’s compositions have been featured in concerts and festivals across North America and overseas, with performances of prominent or well-known ensembles and orchestras such as: Albany Symphony Orchestra, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago Civic Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra,
Queens Symphony Orchestra, Seattle, and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. Also, the Nu:BC Collective, the Smith Quartet, Soundstreams, the Chicago Saxophone Quartet, Collage New Music, and Music from China, and so on and so forth.

The primary motive of this composition is the ‘sighing’ motive when there is an ascending half-step interval. This motive starts at the very beginning of the piece, and it happens in many measures thought the piece, but not in the same rhythms or pitches as played in the beginning. The composition starts with resemblance of a lone wanderer staggering through a dry, severe desert. The composer uses various extended techniques to activate these feelings. She uses bending the pitch for a tired person without hope, flutter tonguing for showing the anger of realizing it was a mirage, and altissimo for the climax of the piece resembling despair and joy of seeing the mirage thinking he/she found water or an oasis.

Fantasia for Bb and Chamber Orchestra arr. Piano
Heitor Villa-Lobos

Heitor Villa-Lobos was born in Rio de Janeiro on March 5, 1887, and died there on November 17, 1959. Villa-Lobos was a Brazilian composer who is recognized as the single most significant creative figure in 20th century Brazilian art music. Villa-Lobos also created unique compositional styles in which contemporary European techniques and reinterpreted elements of national music are combined. He was successful in his career and was a model for later generations of Brazilian composers.

The Fantasia, is divided in three movements marked as Animé, Lent, and Tres animé, and features complex rhythmic constructions. Most of the piece requires heightened technical skill for the saxophonist with several virtuoso passages in the saxophone part. The first movement is very distinctive because of its use of polydivisions of the 3/2 meter, and only happens at the first part of this movement. This manifests by the concurrent use of simple meter and compound meters of 3/2 with 12/8, resulting in a rhythmic contrast of strong beats happening at the same time between both meters. Also, implied polymeter results from the simultaneous use of simple triple and simple duple meters of 2/2 and 3/2 among the instruments. The meter changes to 2/2 at the Moinhos, meaning less or in this case slower tempo. Even though the time signature changes to 2/2, polymeter is perceived from the simple duple and triple meters. The second movement is a slow movement with a long legato melody that will continue with homogenous motion and repetitions of the same melody. The third movement was composed in the asymmetrical time signature 7/4 (3/4 + 4/4). It can be challenging to players that are not used to this kind of meter. There is a complicated use of irregular groupings of beats in the saxophone line. Although the quartet-note remains constantly, the grouping varies.
Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano
Robert Muczynski

Robert Muczynski was born in Chicago, IL on March 19, 1929 and died on May 25, 2010. He was an American composer, pianist, and teacher. He studied piano with Walter Knupfer and with Alexander Tcherepnin he studied composition at DePaul University, where he obtained his bachelor’s degree and master’s degree. Muczynski made his debut in New York by playing his own works in a recital. He concentrated his compositions on chamber music and piano, and showed superb craftsmanship and expressive beliefs, unaffected by changing compositions trends and fashion. Although he demonstrates that has influences from Béla Bartók, Barber, and Bernstein, he can be classified has a neo-classical composer, but with neo-romantic elements. Muczynski’s compositions are abstract and concise following traditional techniques, and at the same time evading grandiosity. Also, his music reveals a concern with mood and emotion, with dark but gently restrained lyricism, and in fast movements he uses strongly accented, irregular meters. This creates an energetic rhythmic drive.

The Sonata Op. 29 for Alto Saxophone and Piano was commissioned by the saxophonist Trent Kynaston, written in 1970, and published by G. Schirmer. Due to some altissimo phrases, these two movements have been catalogued as a level of grade six. The Sonata’s first movement is marked as Andante maestoso and the tempo is slow, with quartet-note = 52. The saxophone and piano have long legato phrases. Much of the melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic material for the composition is based in the opening motive. The second movement shows energetic tempo, and accented syncopated themes. It is an altered sonata-rondo form with the B theme returning before the A theme following the development section.
Hot-Sonate
Erwin Schulhoff

Erwin Schulhoff was born in Prague on June 8 in 1894 and died in Wülzburg on August 18, 1942. He was a Czech composer and pianist of German descent. He showed interest in music from a young age. He started learning piano and soon emerged as a child prodigy, and because of Dvorák’s recommendation, his music career was decided for him. He took private lessons and then entered the Prague Conservatory in the piano class of Jindrich z Albestu Kánn. Also, he began to compose at an early age. He modeled after Schumann, Brahms, Dvorak, Grieg and Strauss, whose Salome created a strong impression upon him in 1906. During the 1930s Schulhoff’s income was deteriorating, and he only could earn from radio appearances. Although in 1933-5 he made extra money as a jazz pianist in the jazz orchestra of Jaroslav Ježek in the avant-garde Free Theatre. Erwin Schulhoff was one of the first generations composers of the classical world to be inspired by jazz rhythms.

Hot-Sonate for Alto Saxophone and Piano was premiered in 1930. Schulhoff played the piano, and the saxophone part was played by Billy Barton, an American saxophonist. It was composed as a commission from Berlin Radio. The piece represents the turbulent times Schulhoff encountered in life and shaped by his terrible experience in the Austrian army during World War I. The Hot-Sonate is divided in four movements. Most of the jazz language used is in the harmony, with characteristics from French impressionism, but more in the venue of Satie than Debussy. In addition, the writing demands much technical virtuosity from the saxophone performer because of its rhythmic variety. The first movement is in tempo moderato but sassy and freewheeling in spirit. The second movement is a livelier tune that gives the feeling of the dance floors in the nightclubs in the 1930s. The third movement is a slow and expressive blues that defines his life during the 1920s. This is known from one of his letters sent to Alban Berg and stated: “I am boundlessly fond of nightclub dancing, so much so that I have periods during which I spend whole nights dancing with one hostess or another...out of pure enjoyment of the rhythm and with my subconscious filled with sensual delight.... There by I acquire phenomenal inspiration for my work, as my conscious mind is incredibly earthly, even animal as it were.” The movement is marked as lamentoso ma molto grottesco (lament but very grotesque) giving the character of the nightclubs. The fourth movement is a finale that recapitulates themes from previous movements such as the first movement sixteen triplets and the triplets from the beginning of the third movement. The end of the movement is abrupt and leaves the ending in the air without any resolution. It can be said that this ending can represent his untimely death at forty-eight years old in the Nazi concentration camp.
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