

# WIND PLAYER

Vol. 8, No. 2 For Woodwinds

## MASTERCLASS

### EXPANDING YOUR VOCABULARY



IVO PERELMAN—SAXOPHONE

I grew tired of the music literature available for the saxophone. I found that it was all written the same way, covering the same ground. So, I did some research, spending a lot of time in music stores looking for something new.

I discovered that by studying the music written for other instruments, I could expand my improvisational vocabulary. I now regularly study violin, flute, oboe and percussion literature.

One piece I use is the Paganini Capricen Opus 1 for violin. There are easier pieces, like the Bach Partitas, that restrain themselves to a narrower range, but the student should explore the literature that fits his aptitude.

It is commonplace in the Copren for the violin to play a range wider than the low B flat to high F# on the saxophone within the space of a measure. One measure will start at low G (below middle C) and go up to fourth C (above middle C).

I transpose any notes written outside the bottom end of the sax up an octave. This exposes

me to intervals of sixths and sevenths. Music written in the low register, while rich and expressive on the violin, can be awkward and harsh sounding on the sax. The music forces me to play in this register with flexibility and smoothness. This particular piece pushes past the high F# on the horn so often that it challenges you to explore the altissimo register, a part of the horn often not rigorously covered in the classical sax music.

You also get to hear different intervallic relationships like arpeggios with open fifths, fourths and octaves. The point is to play music that challenges the extremes of the horn and exposes you to sounds and textures not customary in sax music.

Another book I use frequently is *Forty-eight Studies of Virtuosity Based on Chopin* by Marcel Moyse. Again, there is lots of work in the altissimo register. Music for flute contains interval leaps so wide that they elicit a new level of technical control. For example, there might be an A five ledger lines above the staff that comes down two octaves and up again several times within the same bar.

I find a second Moyse book, *On Sonority: Art and Technique*, one of the most definitive books for developing a woodwind sound. I use the flute warm up exercise in this book just as it is written, but I extend it to B and Bb.

Thirdly, *Studies and Technical*

*Exercises for Flute* by Moyse. Exercise 13: This includes every interval up to the double octave. I find this to be an excellent warm up, very comprehensive.

Another great warm up is in *24 Virtuosity Studies for Flute, Opus 60* by Joachim Anderson. Don't forget to practice the front f key and also the f palm key, focus on treating them both equally and work on not thinking of them as alternative.

On the flute these leaps can sound smooth because all it requires is a slight embouchure change. So, you have to imagine the sound of the flute and try to exploit that on the sax.

I also use percussion literature to improve my vocabulary in the realm of rhythm. I will invent a riff and apply it directly to the rhythmic values notated in the book. I take the same riff and transpose it to many different rhythms. That way I've experimented using the same notes in varying rhythmic configurations.

I take a book like Joseph Sellner's *Method for Oboe and Saxophone* that is written to stay within the natural range of the horn, and transpose the material up and down. This way I've run through that material in all registers on the horn. Wherever the notes reach outside the range of my sax and my playing ability, I transpose up one or two octaves or go down from C# to Bb. The mental work involved in doing

this keeps me alert while I'm reading. The student can use this method to expand the range of the sax music he may already have.

I use this literature as part of my study because I have found that, by exploring the way other instruments "speak," I can enrich the language of improvisation on my instrument.

But there is one saxophone book that I can recommend, *28 Etudes pour Saxophone* by Guy Lacour. Transpose each and every etude to the remaining 11 keys, that means 28 etudes multiplied by 12 which makes this a lifetime practice book. I use this saxophone book because it is based on the transposing modes of Olivier Messiaen, it's more a conceptual book, not linguistically specific for saxophone.

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Brazilian born Ivo Perelman plays tenor saxophone on his latest album Ivo on K2B2 Records. VAI Video has just released a music performance entitled Ivo Live In New York with Flora Purim and Geri Allen.

He uses a Selmer Mark VI with a metal Otto Link No. 4 mouthpiece. On that mouthpiece he uses hard LaVoz reeds with a Winslow ligature. He prefers a Neotech sax strap.