

# Playing The Saxophone

by **Bob Mintzer**

## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	ii
Chapter 1 • Sound Production .....	1
Chapter 2 • Intonation .....	8
Chapter 3 • Articulation .....	9
Chapter 4 • Vibrato .....	14
Chapter 5 • Glissing Up To And Down From Notes .....	16
Chapter 6 • Growling .....	18
Chapter 7 • Scales & Patterns .....	18
Chapter 8 • Playing Fast! .....	52
Chapter 9 • Playing With Dynamics .....	54
Chapter 10 • Some Trouble Spots On The Horn .....	57
Chapter 11 • How & What To Practice .....	59
Chapter 12 • Who To Listen To & What To Listen For .....	60
Chapter 13 • Developing A Sound & Style Of Your Own .....	62
Chapter 14 • Six Etudes .....	63
Chapter 15 • What They Didn't Tell Me In Music School .....	73
Closing .....	78
About The Author .....	78

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# Introduction

This book is a compilation of ideas acquired through playing, teaching and composing music via the saxophone. It encompasses techniques which deal with general musicianship, and then goes on to deal with different styles of saxophone playing (jazz, classical, funk, etc.). The intention here is to provide saxophonists with a solid foundation in playing their instrument, as well as to suggest things to do to get their playing to a place where it will be possible to work in today's music scene.

Some of the topics covered are what and how to practice, listening to music and what to listen for, what makes an original sound and style, how to play with dynamics, shape and style, how to practice scales and what to do with them to form melodic ideas, and what is expected of you on the bandstand. At the end of the book are six etudes which incorporate the various techniques explored in the text. They are composed in a variety of styles ranging from bebop to orchestral.

Everything in this book is information that has been passed on to me from all the great musicians with whom I have had the good fortune to come in contact. To pass this material on to you is both a great honor and the logical thing to do for the purpose of keeping quality music alive. I hope you can incorporate some of the things here into your routine, and in turn, come up with your own interpretation of playing the saxophone.

# CHAPTER 1

## Sound Production

The saxophonist's sound or tone is the main ingredient of his/her essence as a player. Listen to one bar of Coltrane, Stan Getz, Sonny Rollins, Marcel Mule or Dave Sanborn, and you should be able to identify them. What sets them apart is the different way each player connects notes together, articulates, uses dynamics, and various other effects (bending notes, growling, etc.). The common thread between all of the great saxophonists is that they all play with a full, vibrant tone from top to bottom of the horn. This is achieved, in great part, due to the way they move air through their horn at a quick enough velocity to make the reed, mouthpiece, and horn vibrate with intensity.

While experimenting with air velocity I discovered that moving the air quickly through the horn made for a vibrant and projecting sound, while not moving air quickly enough resulted in an anemic, less-projecting sound. It soon became apparent that to move the air at the velocity required to produce a tone pleasing to my ear would require a substantial amount of breath support.

### Breathing

I use a form of breathing borrowed from yoga breathing techniques. It enables me to take in the maximum amount of air without straining or tensing up. It works as follows:

1. Comfortably exhale air from your lungs and diaphragm area. Relax.
2. With an open and relaxed throat, begin to take in air to the stomach or diaphragm area first. Try to expand your stomach (push it out) while filling up with air.
3. Next begin to fill up your lungs comfortably (without straining) with air. Again, try not to strain, and keep your throat open and relaxed.
4. Put the mouthpiece in your mouth with your embouchure set and the tip of the tongue on the reed. Release the tongue and simultaneously start the air flow.
5. Flex the diaphragm to create pressure, which will move air through your chest, throat, and into the mouthpiece. Keep your throat relaxed and open (almost as if you were yawning -- *aw*). The diaphragm should be the only thing to tighten. You should think of sticking it out rather than pulling it in, although it will ultimately go in as you run out of air.





handmade mouthpiece which, like my horn, provides the proper amount of brightness, darkness and fullness. I generally have to tailor a reed for my setup. This involves either clipping a Rico 3.5 slightly or shaving down an RKM medium-hard reed a bit (RKM is a new reed on the market which I like very much). In either case, I try to create the right amount of resistance for me, which facilitates playing full with a wide variety of dynamics; specifically, really loud and really soft, really bright and really dark or covered. The amount of resistance should also allow me to blow hard into the horn without the reed closing up, while at the same time enabling me to play both low and high on the horn at all dynamic levels. If you can't play the low notes softly, your reed may be too hard.

### Long Tones With Dynamic & Timbral Changes

This exercise deals with exploring the various dynamic and tone or timbral capabilities of your saxophone. Play each note for sixteen counts ( $\text{♩} = 80$ ). Start the note as softly as you possibly can, and in eight counts crescendo to the loudest volume you are able to. For the remaining eight counts, decrescendo back to the softest volume again. As you crescendo, think of adding brightness to the sound; the loudest volume should be the brightest or "edgiest" tone. As you decrescendo, go for a darker or softer tone. And remember to use the breathing techniques from the previous section.

1.  $\text{♩} = 80$

ppp  $\xrightarrow{8 \text{ counts}}$  fff  $\xleftarrow{8 \text{ counts}}$  ppp

descend chromatically to

ppp  $\xrightarrow{8 \text{ counts}}$  fff  $\xleftarrow{8 \text{ counts}}$  ppp

then

ppp  $\xrightarrow{8 \text{ counts}}$  fff  $\xleftarrow{8 \text{ counts}}$  ppp

ascend chromatically to

ppp  $\xrightarrow{8 \text{ counts}}$  fff  $\xleftarrow{8 \text{ counts}}$  ppp

Playing with dynamics and shape are an important part of being an expressive player. We will discuss the use of these various dynamic and timbral techniques later.

Some notes on your saxophone may be stuffy or more resistant than others. Middle D is a problem note; I like to add the D side key to brighten it up.



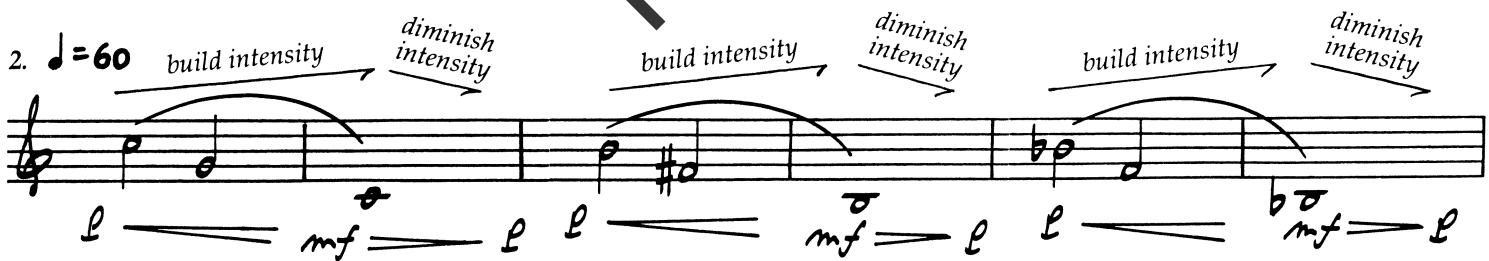
Also A is sometimes stuffy. By moving the air a little faster you can make the stuffy note be more in character with its surrounding notes.



Be sure to keep your throat open when playing the high notes (  $\underline{\underline{D}}$  to  $\underline{\underline{G}}$  ). Think of what it feels like to yawn and you will prevent those high notes from sounding pinched.

### Putting The Notes Together

The following exercises should be played slowly (  $\text{♩} = 60$  ) and smoothly. Try to really connect the notes so that there is little or no break between them. Take in your air, put your tongue on the reed and release it to start the air. Crescendo from *p* to *mf* and back to *p*. Along with this, try to build in intensity as you crescendo. This will make the connection between notes smoother and will add a sense of forward motion to the line. Think of "leaning into" the next note as you crescendo.



then return to the initial C-G-C pattern and ascend chromatically to



3.

descend chromatically to

and ascend chromatically to

In order to play legato and smoothly, it is essential that your fingers move accurately and in sync with one another. One of the harder interval jumps is from middle C to the E above. Your thumb must hit the octave key at the exact same moment as your other fingers hit their keys (2 and 4 in the left hand and 2, 3 and 4 in the right), or a glitch or gap will occur between the notes.

Do not slam your fingers down on the keys. This will also impede legato playing and add an accent to a note. Try to move your fingers gently and precisely.

Try to let the air move the phrase. Let the air propel you from note to note, with the fingers light and precise.

4. *build intensity* *diminish intensity*

5.

6.

On the next series of exercises try to keep your tone fat and even from bottom to top of your horn. Keep your throat open for the high notes.

7.

8.

Go higher if you care to!

Playing slowly and connected is the foundation of good saxophone playing. It is essential for executing a melody in any style of music. One must be able to play slowly in a correct fashion before he/she can play fast; if the notes don't connect at a slow tempo, you will have difficulty playing smoothly and evenly at fast tempos. The way you put notes together and move from one to another will reveal a lot about you as a player. In the following exercise, connect the notes -- play pretty and smooth!

"Body & Soul" - tenor sax

keep the intensity up & moving

Phrase 1

move the line - build intensity

Phrase 2

3

3

3

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## CHAPTER 2

# Intonation

At this point it is worth bringing up the issue of playing in tune. Playing with good intonation is crucial, particularly when it comes to playing in ensembles. It is most crucial when you find yourself having to play in unison with a keyboard that has a stationary pitch. Two wind players can adjust their pitch to one another. However, I have been in recording situations where I had to play unison with a synthesizer and it was quite demanding.

It is strongly recommended that you get a tuner (the small digital tuners are reasonable and very good). Use the tuner frequently during practice sessions to check the various notes on your horn.

The sound production exercises (putting the notes together) are good for working on intonation because they are simple major triads which are easily heard for the sake of tuning.

Saxophones vary greatly in terms of intonation. Some of the newer horns play more in tune, based on improvements in the design of those instruments. However, some older horns have a richness of tone that the new ones don't have, along with some intonation problems. Have a teacher or professional help you pick an instrument with a good scale and sound.

No horn is perfectly in tune. You will have to compensate slightly with your jaw or air column to get certain notes where they should be. A tuner can help you see what needs to be done (even possibly get another instrument).

Certain mouthpieces make it more difficult to play in tune as well. Trying a different mouthpiece on a horn with intonation problems is a good first step. It may just be a case of finding the appropriate mouthpiece for your horn.

## CHAPTER 3

# Articulation

Articulation, or the way you stop and start notes with the tongue and air column, varies greatly from situation to situation. It is something which demands attention in order to play articulately and clearly. It is also something which, when used effectively, will create contrast and color in your playing.

### Starting A Note

The typical way to start a note on the saxophone involves first taking in your air, getting the embouchure set, placing the correct part of your tongue (one-quarter to one-half inch from the tip) on the reed, then releasing your tongue and simultaneously starting the air flow. This will produce a *ta* sound and is a good way to start a note with a clean, precise attack. The tongue should be placed gently on the reed and removed in a fairly gentle way as well. Play the following exercise:



Descend chromatically to low Bb, then go from middle C up to high F.

### Legato Tonguing

Legato tonguing is a type of articulation used to join notes smoothly together. Think of the sound *da* (softer than *ta* in the previous section). Legato tonguing might look like this:



As you can see, the note never completely stops. Instead you make “indentations” or soft attacks at a given tempo, which works well for smooth, connected playing. Try the first exercise in this chapter using legato tonguing.





3. ♩ = 100 (increase as is comfortable)

The musical score consists of six staves of music in 9/8 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 9/8 time signature. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 100, with the instruction '(increase as is comfortable)'. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are several accidentals, including sharps and flats. A 'sim.' marking is present above the third staff. A large diagonal watermark reading 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the center of the page.

Be sure that there is ample air support when tonguing. Tonguing too hard with not enough air pressure will make your tonguing cumbersome and could prevent you from playing fast passages.



Here are some other tonguing exercises you should practice:

6.



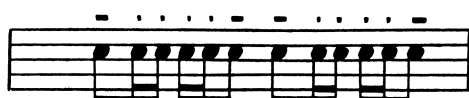
Descend chromatically to



then ascend chromatically to



7.



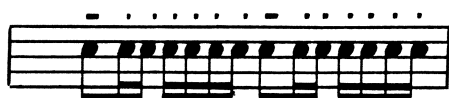
Descend chromatically to



then ascend chromatically to



8.



Descend chromatically to



then ascend chromatically to



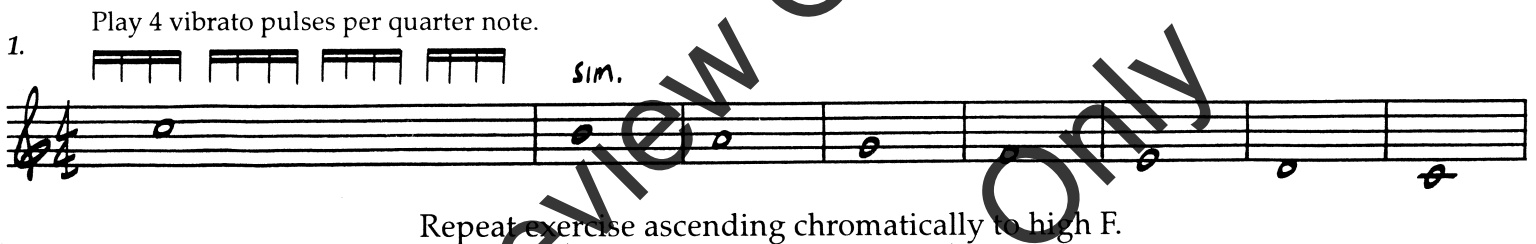
## CHAPTER 4

# Vibrato

Modern saxophone vibrato uses the movement of the lower jaw to create a fluctuation of pitch at a given tempo. I like to think of *ow-ow-ow*. Vibrato can be practiced with a metronome. The idea is to be able to use vibrato at a variety of tempos (slow pulse to fast pulse) with evenness and consistency.

Start at a tempo which enables you to sustain the vibrato evenly and clearly (♩ = 60 for the following exercise). Then gradually increase your tempo, making sure your vibrato is steady before getting faster.

1. Play 4 vibrato pulses per quarter note. *sim.*



Repeat exercise ascending chromatically to high F.

Vibrato has different applications, depending on the style of playing with which you are dealing. For example, when playing a jazz ballad like *Body And Soul*, one might introduce vibrato in the middle of a long note towards the end of the first phrase.

2. ♩ = 72 Start vibrato on beat 3.



In R&B saxophone playing, vibrato is typically used throughout, and especially on long notes:

3. EVEN EIGHTH NOTE FEEL ♩ = 100





## CHAPTER 5

# Glissing Up To And Down From Notes

In the jazz and R&B style of saxophone playing it is common to *gliss* or slide up to and down from a note. This will add quite a bit of color and expression to your playing. The best way to check out how this is done is to listen specifically for it when listening to your favorite players, and then trying to emulate what you have heard. In the meantime, here are a few things I do.

### Scooping Up To A Note

Notated like this:



I generally finger the note a half-step below the note I am going for. Along with this I drop my jaw to start the note. As I tighten my jaw, I gently lift my finger and slide up to the note smoothly from a half-step below.

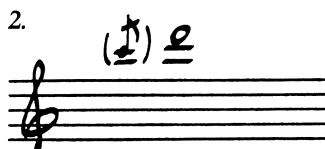
1.



Finger Bb and slowly remove the righthand index finger while tightening the dropped jaw.

This can also be done from a whole step below:

2.



Finger C; drop the jaw slightly and then gently slide from C to D while tightening the jaw.

### Scooping Down From A Note

There are a few ways to approach scooping down. The first way is to gliss or scoop down between notes in a phrase:

3. scoop down to G# or G-natural with the jaw

The musical notation for example 3 is on a single staff in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It shows a sequence of notes: a whole rest on beat 1, a quarter note G4 on beat 2, a quarter note A4 on beat 2.5, a quarter note B4 on beat 3, and a quarter note A4 on beat 3.5. A downward arrow points to the A4 note on beat 3.5, indicating a glissando down to G#4 or G4.

In this first example you don't move the fingers from the note A. Only the jaw drops, which lowers the pitch either a half step or whole step, or more if you can.

Another way to scoop down is to simply end a note with a downward gliss. This can be done with the jaw alone, the fingers alone, or both together.

4. drop jaw on beat 3 for a quick fall-off

The musical notation for example 4 is on a single staff in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It shows a sequence of notes: a quarter note G4 on beat 1, a quarter note A4 on beat 1.5, and a quarter note B4 on beat 2. A downward arrow points to the B4 note on beat 2, indicating a glissando down to A4 or G4.

5. just move the fingers quickly down in a chromatic or diatonic scale

The musical notation for example 5 is on a single staff in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It shows a sequence of notes: a quarter note G4 on beat 1, a quarter note A4 on beat 1.5, and a quarter note B4 on beat 2. A downward arrow points to the B4 note on beat 2, indicating a glissando down to A4 or G4.

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## CHAPTER 6

# Growling

Adding *growl* to your tone is a great way to add some color and intensity in spots. Rock and roll saxophone frequently calls for growl playing. Again, everyone does it a little differently with a different resulting sound. What I do is sing (or almost scream!) a note into my horn while playing a note. The pitch you choose to sing and the intensity at which the pitch is sung will determine the character of the growl tone.

You can get some really interesting effects by singing pitches a fixed interval from the note you play on the horn. Try to sing a third, fifth, sixth or octave away from the note you are playing. As your singing note changes, the overtone configuration of the growl tone will change.

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## CHAPTER 7

# Scales & Patterns

Scales are to music what verbs are to language. They play a crucial role in correct musicianship and should be dealt with aggressively at an early stage in one's training.

Scales should be played from top to bottom of the horn. Use a metronome for accuracy and consistency of timing. Start at whatever tempo enables you to play each scale accurately, and then gradually increase the tempo to as fast as you can get it! Your goal should be to play all the scales fast, smoothly and evenly, like a machine. Once this is achieved, you can forget the scales and move on to the finer points of music making.



### Major Scales

C

The C major scale is presented on a treble clef staff. The ascending line starts on middle C (C4) and moves up stepwise through D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, and B4 to C5. The descending line starts on C5 and moves down stepwise through B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, and D4 to C4. The scale is marked with a repeat sign at the beginning and ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final C4 note.

C#

The C# major scale is presented on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The ascending line starts on C#4 and moves up stepwise through D#4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, and B4 to C#5. The descending line starts on C#5 and moves down stepwise through B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, and D#4 to C#4. The scale is marked with a repeat sign at the beginning and ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final C#4 note.

D

The D major scale is presented on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The ascending line starts on D4 and moves up stepwise through E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, and C#5 to D5. The descending line starts on D5 and moves down stepwise through C#5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, and E4 to D4. The scale is marked with a repeat sign at the beginning and ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final D4 note.

E<sup>b</sup>

The E<sup>b</sup> major scale is presented on a treble clef staff with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, and Ab). The ascending line starts on E<sup>b</sup>4 and moves up stepwise through F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, and D5 to E<sup>b</sup>5. The descending line starts on E<sup>b</sup>5 and moves down stepwise through D5, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4, and F4 to E<sup>b</sup>4. The scale is marked with a repeat sign at the beginning and ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final E<sup>b</sup>4 note.

**more Major Scales**

**E**

Musical notation for the E major scale, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale, ending with a repeat sign and a final whole note E.

**F**

Musical notation for the F major scale, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale, ending with a repeat sign and a final whole note F.

**F#**

Musical notation for the F# major scale, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale, ending with a repeat sign and a final whole note F#.

**G**

Musical notation for the G major scale, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale, ending with a repeat sign and a final whole note G.

more Major Scales

A<sup>b</sup>

Musical notation for the A<sup>b</sup> major scale. The first staff shows the ascending line: A<sup>b</sup> (B<sup>b</sup>), B<sup>b</sup>, C, D, E, F, G, A<sup>b</sup>. The second staff shows the descending line: A<sup>b</sup>, G, F, E, D, C, B<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>. The key signature is two flats (B<sup>b</sup> and E<sup>b</sup>).

A

Musical notation for the A major scale. The first staff shows the ascending line: A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, A. The second staff shows the descending line: A, G, F, E, D, C, B, A. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

B<sup>b</sup>

Musical notation for the B<sup>b</sup> major scale. The first staff shows the ascending line: B<sup>b</sup>, C, D, E, F, G, A, B<sup>b</sup>. The second staff shows the descending line: B<sup>b</sup>, A, G, F, E, D, C, B<sup>b</sup>. The key signature is two flats (B<sup>b</sup> and E<sup>b</sup>).

B

Musical notation for the B major scale. The first staff shows the ascending line: B, C#, D, E, F#, G, A, B. The second staff shows the descending line: B, A, G, F#, E, D, C#, B. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#).

### Pure Minor Scales

C

The C minor scale is shown on two staves. The first staff contains the ascending scale: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5. The second staff contains the descending scale: C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb).

C#

The C# minor scale is shown on two staves. The first staff contains the ascending scale: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C#5. The second staff contains the descending scale: C#5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4, E4, D#4, C#4. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

D

The D minor scale is shown on two staves. The first staff contains the ascending scale: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5. The second staff contains the descending scale: C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

E<sup>b</sup>

The Eb minor scale is shown on two staves. The first staff contains the ascending scale: Eb4, F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5. The second staff contains the descending scale: C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4, F4, Eb4. The key signature has three flats (Bb, Eb, and Ab).

more Pure Minor Scales

E

Two staves of music for the E minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5. The second staff shows the descending scale: E5, D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4. Both staves include a repeat sign at the end.

F

Two staves of music for the F minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5. The second staff shows the descending scale: F5, Eb5, D5, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4. Both staves include a repeat sign at the end.

F#

Two staves of music for the F# minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C#5, D5, E5, F#5. The second staff shows the descending scale: F#5, E5, D5, C#5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4. Both staves include a repeat sign at the end.

G

Two staves of music for the G minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5, G5. The second staff shows the descending scale: G5, F5, Eb5, D5, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4. Both staves include a repeat sign at the end.

**more Pure Minor Scales**

G<sup>#</sup>



A



B<sup>b</sup>



B



**Harmonic Minor Scales**

C

The C harmonic minor scale is shown in two staves. The first staff contains the ascending scale: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5. The second staff contains the descending scale: C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb).

C#

The C# harmonic minor scale is shown in two staves. The first staff contains the ascending scale: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C#5. The second staff contains the descending scale: C#5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4, E4, D#4, C#4. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

D

The D harmonic minor scale is shown in two staves. The first staff contains the ascending scale: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#4, D5. The second staff contains the descending scale: D5, C#4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

E<sup>b</sup>

The Eb harmonic minor scale is shown in two staves. The first staff contains the ascending scale: Eb4, F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, C4, D4, Eb5. The second staff contains the descending scale: Eb5, D4, C4, Bb4, Ab4, G4, F4, Eb4. The key signature has three flats (Bb, Eb, and Ab).

**more Harmonic Minor Scales**

**E**

Musical notation for the E Harmonic Minor scale. The scale is written on a staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The ascending line starts on E4 and goes up to E5. The descending line starts on E5 and goes down to E4. The notes are E, F#, G, A, B, C, D, E.

**F**

Musical notation for the F Harmonic Minor scale. The scale is written on a staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The ascending line starts on F4 and goes up to F5. The descending line starts on F5 and goes down to F4. The notes are F, G, Ab, Bb, C, D, Eb, F.

**F#**

Musical notation for the F# Harmonic Minor scale. The scale is written on a staff with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The ascending line starts on F#4 and goes up to F#5. The descending line starts on F#5 and goes down to F#4. The notes are F#, G#, Ab, B, C#, D, E, F#.

**G**

Musical notation for the G Harmonic Minor scale. The scale is written on a staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F#, C#). The ascending line starts on G4 and goes up to G5. The descending line starts on G5 and goes down to G4. The notes are G, A, B, C, D, Eb, F, G.



more Harmonic Minor Scales

G<sup>#</sup>

A

B<sup>b</sup>

B

### Major Scales in 3rds

C

The first system of the C major scale in thirds consists of two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. It contains the first line of the scale, starting with a repeat sign and ending with a double bar line. The bottom staff continues the scale from the second line, also ending with a double bar line. The notes are: C4, E4, G4, Bb4, C5, E5, G5, Bb5, C6, E6, G6, Bb6, C7, E7, G7, Bb7, C8, E8, G8, Bb8, C9, E9, G9, Bb9, C10, E10, G10, Bb10, C11, E11, G11, Bb11, C12, E12, G12, Bb12, C13, E13, G13, Bb13, C14, E14, G14, Bb14, C15, E15, G15, Bb15, C16, E16, G16, Bb16, C17, E17, G17, Bb17, C18, E18, G18, Bb18, C19, E19, G19, Bb19, C20, E20, G20, Bb20, C21, E21, G21, Bb21, C22, E22, G22, Bb22, C23, E23, G23, Bb23, C24, E24, G24, Bb24, C25, E25, G25, Bb25, C26, E26, G26, Bb26, C27, E27, G27, Bb27, C28, E28, G28, Bb28, C29, E29, G29, Bb29, C30, E30, G30, Bb30, C31, E31, G31, Bb31, C32, E32, G32, Bb32, C33, E33, G33, Bb33, C34, E34, G34, Bb34, C35, E35, G35, Bb35, C36, E36, G36, Bb36, C37, E37, G37, Bb37, C38, E38, G38, Bb38, C39, E39, G39, Bb39, C40, E40, G40, Bb40, C41, E41, G41, Bb41, C42, E42, G42, Bb42, C43, E43, G43, Bb43, C44, E44, G44, Bb44, C45, E45, G45, Bb45, C46, E46, G46, Bb46, C47, E47, G47, Bb47, C48, E48, G48, Bb48, C49, E49, G49, Bb49, C50, E50, G50, Bb50, C51, E51, G51, Bb51, C52, E52, G52, Bb52, C53, E53, G53, Bb53, C54, E54, G54, Bb54, C55, E55, G55, Bb55, C56, E56, G56, Bb56, C57, E57, G57, Bb57, C58, E58, G58, Bb58, C59, E59, G59, Bb59, C60, E60, G60, Bb60, C61, E61, G61, Bb61, C62, E62, G62, Bb62, C63, E63, G63, Bb63, C64, E64, G64, Bb64, C65, E65, G65, Bb65, C66, E66, G66, Bb66, C67, E67, G67, Bb67, C68, E68, G68, Bb68, C69, E69, G69, Bb69, C70, E70, G70, Bb70, C71, E71, G71, Bb71, C72, E72, G72, Bb72, C73, E73, G73, Bb73, C74, E74, G74, Bb74, C75, E75, G75, Bb75, C76, E76, G76, Bb76, C77, E77, G77, Bb77, C78, E78, G78, Bb78, C79, E79, G79, Bb79, C80, E80, G80, Bb80, C81, E81, G81, Bb81, C82, E82, G82, Bb82, C83, E83, G83, Bb83, C84, E84, G84, Bb84, C85, E85, G85, Bb85, C86, E86, G86, Bb86, C87, E87, G87, Bb87, C88, E88, G88, Bb88, C89, E89, G89, Bb89, C90, E90, G90, Bb90, C91, E91, G91, Bb91, C92, E92, G92, Bb92, C93, E93, G93, Bb93, C94, E94, G94, Bb94, C95, E95, G95, Bb95, C96, E96, G96, Bb96, C97, E97, G97, Bb97, C98, E98, G98, Bb98, C99, E99, G99, Bb99, C100, E100, G100, Bb100, C101, E101, G101, Bb101, C102, E102, G102, Bb102, C103, E103, G103, Bb103, C104, E104, G104, Bb104, C105, E105, G105, Bb105, C106, E106, G106, Bb106, C107, E107, G107, Bb107, C108, E108, G108, Bb108, C109, E109, G109, Bb109, C110, E110, G110, Bb110, C111, E111, G111, Bb111, C112, E112, G112, Bb112, C113, E113, G113, Bb113, C114, E114, G114, Bb114, C115, E115, G115, Bb115, C116, E116, G116, Bb116, C117, E117, G117, Bb117, C118, E118, G118, Bb118, C119, E119, G119, Bb119, C120, E120, G120, Bb120, C121, E121, G121, Bb121, C122, E122, G122, Bb122, C123, E123, G123, Bb123, C124, E124, G124, Bb124, C125, E125, G125, Bb125, C126, E126, G126, Bb126, C127, E127, G127, Bb127, C128, E128, G128, Bb128, C129, E129, G129, Bb129, C130, E130, G130, Bb130, C131, E131, G131, Bb131, C132, E132, G132, Bb132, C133, E133, G133, Bb133, C134, E134, G134, Bb134, C135, E135, G135, Bb135, C136, E136, G136, Bb136, C137, E137, G137, Bb137, C138, E138, G138, Bb138, C139, E139, G139, Bb139, C140, E140, G140, Bb140, C141, E141, G141, Bb141, C142, E142, G142, Bb142, C143, E143, G143, Bb143, C144, E144, G144, Bb144, C145, E145, G145, Bb145, C146, E146, G146, Bb146, C147, E147, G147, Bb147, C148, E148, G148, Bb148, C149, E149, G149, Bb149, C150, E150, G150, Bb150, C151, E151, G151, Bb151, C152, E152, G152, Bb152, C153, E153, G153, Bb153, C154, E154, G154, Bb154, C155, E155, G155, Bb155, C156, E156, G156, Bb156, C157, E157, G157, Bb157, C158, E158, G158, Bb158, C159, E159, G159, Bb159, C160, E160, G160, Bb160, C161, E161, G161, Bb161, C162, E162, G162, Bb162, C163, E163, G163, Bb163, C164, E164, G164, Bb164, C165, E165, G165, Bb165, C166, E166, G166, Bb166, C167, E167, G167, Bb167, C168, E168, G168, Bb168, C169, E169, G169, Bb169, C170, E170, G170, Bb170, C171, E171, G171, Bb171, C172, E172, G172, Bb172, C173, E173, G173, Bb173, C174, E174, G174, Bb174, C175, E175, G175, Bb175, C176, E176, G176, Bb176, C177, E177, G177, Bb177, C178, E178, G178, Bb178, C179, E179, 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G219, Bb219, C220, E220, G220, Bb220, C221, E221, G221, Bb221, C222, E222, G222, Bb222, C223, E223, G223, Bb223, C224, E224, G224, Bb224, C225, E225, G225, Bb225, C226, E226, G226, Bb226, C227, E227, G227, Bb227, C228, E228, G228, Bb228, C229, E229, G229, Bb229, C230, E230, G230, Bb230, C231, E231, G231, Bb231, C232, E232, G232, Bb232, C233, E233, G233, Bb233, C234, E234, G234, Bb234, C235, E235, G235, Bb235, C236, E236, G236, Bb236, C237, E237, G237, Bb237, C238, E238, G238, Bb238, C239, E239, G239, Bb239, C240, E240, G240, Bb240, C241, E241, G241, Bb241, C242, E242, G242, Bb242, C243, E243, G243, Bb243, C244, E244, G244, Bb244, C245, E245, G245, Bb245, C246, E246, G246, Bb246, C247, E247, G247, Bb247, C248, E248, G248, Bb248, C249, E249, G249, Bb249, C250, E250, G250, Bb250, C251, E251, G251, Bb251, C252, E252, G252, Bb252, C253, E253, G253, Bb253, C254, E254, G254, Bb254, C255, E255, G255, Bb255, C256, E256, G256, Bb256, C257, E257, G257, Bb257, C258, E258, G258, Bb258, C259, E259, 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G459, Bb459, C460, E460, G460, Bb460, C461, E461, G461, Bb461, C462, E462, G462, Bb462, C463, E463, G463, Bb463, C464, E464, G464, Bb464, C465, E465, G465, Bb465, C466, E466, G466, Bb466, C467, E467, G467, Bb467, C468, E468, G468, Bb468, C469, E469, G469, Bb469, C470, E470, G470, Bb470, C471, E471, G471, Bb471, C472, E472, G472, Bb472, C473, E473, G473, Bb473, C474, E474, G474, Bb474, C475, E475, G475, Bb475, C476, E476, G476, Bb476, C477, E477, G477, Bb477, C478, E478, G478, Bb478, C479, E479, G479, Bb479, C480, E480, G480, Bb480, C481, E481, G481, Bb481, C482, E482, G482, Bb482, C483, E483, G483, Bb483, C484, E484, G484, Bb484, C485, E485, G485, Bb485, C486, E486, G486, Bb486, C487, E487, G487, Bb487, C488, E488, G488, Bb488, C489, E489, G489, Bb489, C490, E490, G490, Bb490, C491, E491, G491, Bb491, C492, E492, G492, Bb492, C493, E493, G493, Bb493, C494, E494, G494, Bb494, C495, E495, G495, Bb495, C496, E496, G496, Bb496, C497, E497, G497, Bb497, C498, E498, G498, Bb498, C499, E499, 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G579, Bb579, C580, E580, G580, Bb580, C581, E581, G581, Bb581, C582, E582, G582, Bb582, C583, E583, G583, Bb583, C584, E584, G584, Bb584, C585, E585, G585, Bb585, C586, E586, G586, Bb586, C587, E587, G587, Bb587, C588, E588, G588, Bb588, C589, E589, G589, Bb589, C590, E590, G590, Bb590, C591, E591, G591, Bb591, C592, E592, G592, Bb592, C593, E593, G593, Bb593, C594, E594, G594, Bb594, C595, E595, G595, Bb595, C596, E596, G596, Bb596, C597, E597, G597, Bb597, C598, E598, G598, Bb598, C599, E599, G599, Bb599, C600, E600, G600, Bb600, C601, E601, G601, Bb601, C602, E60

more Major Scales in 3rds

E

Musical notation for the E major scale in 3rds, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale, and the second staff shows the descending scale. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

F

Musical notation for the F major scale in 3rds, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale, and the second staff shows the descending scale. The key signature has one flat (Bb).

F#

Musical notation for the F# major scale in 3rds, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale, and the second staff shows the descending scale. The key signature has four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#).

G

Musical notation for the G major scale in 3rds, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending scale, and the second staff shows the descending scale. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

**more Major Scales in 3rds**

A<sup>b</sup>

Musical notation for the A<sup>b</sup> major scale in thirds, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending line and the second staff shows the descending line.

A

Musical notation for the A major scale in thirds, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending line and the second staff shows the descending line.

B<sup>b</sup>

Musical notation for the B<sup>b</sup> major scale in thirds, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending line and the second staff shows the descending line.

B

Musical notation for the B major scale in thirds, consisting of two staves. The first staff shows the ascending line and the second staff shows the descending line.

### Pure Minor Scales in 3rds

C

Two staves of musical notation for the C Pure Minor Scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting on C4, and the second staff shows the descending scale ending on C4. The scale consists of the notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B, A, G, F, E, D, C.

C#

Two staves of musical notation for the C# Pure Minor Scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting on C#4, and the second staff shows the descending scale ending on C#4. The scale consists of the notes C#, D#, E, F, G, A, B, A, G, F, E, D#, C#.

D

Two staves of musical notation for the D Pure Minor Scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting on D4, and the second staff shows the descending scale ending on D4. The scale consists of the notes D, E, F, G, A, B, C, B, A, G, F, E, D.

E<sup>b</sup>

Two staves of musical notation for the E<sup>b</sup> Pure Minor Scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting on E<sup>b</sup>4, and the second staff shows the descending scale ending on E<sup>b</sup>4. The scale consists of the notes E<sup>b</sup>, F, G, A, B, C, D, C, B, A, G, F, E<sup>b</sup>.

**more Pure Minor Scales in 3rds**

**E**

Two staves of music for the E minor scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting with a repeat sign. The second staff shows the descending scale ending with a repeat sign and a whole note E.

**F**

Two staves of music for the F minor scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting with a repeat sign. The second staff shows the descending scale ending with a repeat sign and a whole note F.

**F#**

Two staves of music for the F# minor scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting with a repeat sign. The second staff shows the descending scale ending with a repeat sign and a whole note F#.

**G**

Two staves of music for the G minor scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting with a repeat sign. The second staff shows the descending scale ending with a repeat sign and a whole note G.

Preview Only

more Pure Minor Scales in 3rds

A<sup>b</sup>

Musical notation for the A<sup>b</sup> minor scale in thirds. The first staff shows the ascending scale: A<sup>b</sup>2, B<sup>b</sup>3, C<sup>b</sup>4, D<sup>b</sup>5, E<sup>b</sup>6, F<sup>b</sup>7, G<sup>b</sup>8, A<sup>b</sup>9. The second staff shows the descending scale: A<sup>b</sup>9, G<sup>b</sup>8, F<sup>b</sup>7, E<sup>b</sup>6, D<sup>b</sup>5, C<sup>b</sup>4, B<sup>b</sup>3, A<sup>b</sup>2.

A

Musical notation for the A natural minor scale in thirds. The first staff shows the ascending scale: A2, B3, C4, D5, E6, F7, G8, A9. The second staff shows the descending scale: A9, G8, F7, E6, D5, C4, B3, A2.

B<sup>b</sup>

Musical notation for the B<sup>b</sup> minor scale in thirds. The first staff shows the ascending scale: B<sup>b</sup>2, C<sup>b</sup>3, D<sup>b</sup>4, E<sup>b</sup>5, F<sup>b</sup>6, G<sup>b</sup>7, A<sup>b</sup>8, B<sup>b</sup>9. The second staff shows the descending scale: B<sup>b</sup>9, A<sup>b</sup>8, G<sup>b</sup>7, F<sup>b</sup>6, E<sup>b</sup>5, D<sup>b</sup>4, C<sup>b</sup>3, B<sup>b</sup>2.

B

Musical notation for the B natural minor scale in thirds. The first staff shows the ascending scale: B2, C3, D4, E5, F7, G8, A9. The second staff shows the descending scale: B9, A9, G8, F7, E5, D4, C3, B2.





more Harmonic Minor Scales in 3rds

E

Musical notation for the E Harmonic Minor Scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting on E4, and the second staff shows the descending scale ending on E4. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

F

Musical notation for the F Harmonic Minor Scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting on F4, and the second staff shows the descending scale ending on F4. The key signature has two flats (Bb, Eb).

F#

Musical notation for the F# Harmonic Minor Scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting on F#4, and the second staff shows the descending scale ending on F#4. The key signature has two sharps (F#, C#).

G

Musical notation for the G Harmonic Minor Scale in 3rds. The first staff shows the ascending scale starting on G4, and the second staff shows the descending scale ending on G4. The key signature has two sharps (F#, C#).

**more Harmonic Minor Scales in 3rds**

G<sup>#</sup>

A

B<sup>b</sup>

B

**Major Scale Sequential Patterns**

C

The C major scale sequential patterns are shown on two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves begin with a repeat sign. The top staff contains the ascending scale: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The bottom staff contains the descending scale: C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The descending scale is written with beamed eighth notes and includes a fermata over the final C4 note.

C#

The C# major scale sequential patterns are shown on two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves begin with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a repeat sign. The top staff contains the ascending scale: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5. The bottom staff contains the descending scale: C#5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D#4, C#4. The descending scale is written with beamed eighth notes and includes a fermata over the final C#4 note.

D

The D major scale sequential patterns are shown on two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves begin with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a repeat sign. The top staff contains the ascending scale: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5, D5. The bottom staff contains the descending scale: D5, C#5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The descending scale is written with beamed eighth notes and includes a fermata over the final D4 note.

E<sup>b</sup>

The E-flat major scale sequential patterns are shown on two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves begin with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, and Ab) and a repeat sign. The top staff contains the ascending scale: E<sup>b</sup>4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E<sup>b</sup>5. The bottom staff contains the descending scale: E<sup>b</sup>5, D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E<sup>b</sup>4. The descending scale is written with beamed eighth notes and includes a fermata over the final E<sup>b</sup>4 note.

**more Major Scale Sequential Patterns**

**E**

Two staves of musical notation for the E major scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale with a repeat sign at the end. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#).

**F**

Two staves of musical notation for the F major scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale with a repeat sign at the end. The key signature has one sharp (C#).

**F#**

Two staves of musical notation for the F# major scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale with a repeat sign at the end. The key signature has four sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#).

**G**

Two staves of musical notation for the G major scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale with a repeat sign at the end. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

### more Major Scale Sequential Patterns

A<sup>b</sup>

Two staves of musical notation for the A<sup>b</sup> major scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale with a repeat sign at the end. The key signature has two flats (B<sup>b</sup> and E<sup>b</sup>).

A

Two staves of musical notation for the A major scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale with a repeat sign at the end. The key signature has three sharps (F<sup>#</sup>, C<sup>#</sup>, and G<sup>#</sup>).

B<sup>b</sup>

Two staves of musical notation for the B<sup>b</sup> major scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale with a repeat sign at the end. The key signature has two flats (F<sup>b</sup> and C<sup>b</sup>).

B

Two staves of musical notation for the B major scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale with a repeat sign at the beginning. The second staff shows the descending scale with a repeat sign at the end. The key signature has two sharps (F<sup>#</sup> and C<sup>#</sup>).

### Pure Minor Scale Sequential Patterns

C

Two staves of music for the C minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The second staff shows the descending scale: C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The pattern is repeated twice, with a repeat sign at the beginning and end of each line.

C#

Two staves of music for the C# minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C#5. The second staff shows the descending scale: C#5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4, E4, D#4, C#4. The pattern is repeated twice, with a repeat sign at the beginning and end of each line.

D

Two staves of music for the D minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. The second staff shows the descending scale: D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The pattern is repeated twice, with a repeat sign at the beginning and end of each line.

E<sup>b</sup>

Two staves of music for the E-flat minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: E<sup>b</sup>4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E<sup>b</sup>5. The second staff shows the descending scale: E<sup>b</sup>5, D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E<sup>b</sup>4. The pattern is repeated twice, with a repeat sign at the beginning and end of each line.

**more Pure Minor Scale Sequential Patterns**

E

Two staves of music for the E minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5. The second staff shows the descending scale: E5, D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4. The piece concludes with a whole note E4.

F

Two staves of music for the F minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5. The second staff shows the descending scale: F5, Eb5, D5, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4. The piece concludes with a whole note F4.

F#

Two staves of music for the F# minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C#5, D#5, E#5, F#5. The second staff shows the descending scale: F#5, E#5, D#5, C#5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4. The piece concludes with a whole note F#4.

G

Two staves of music for the G minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5, G5. The second staff shows the descending scale: G5, F5, Eb5, D5, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4. The piece concludes with a whole note G4.

**more Pure Minor Scale Sequential Patterns**

G#

Two staves of musical notation for the G# minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: G#4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G#5. The second staff shows the descending scale: G#5, F#5, E5, D5, C5, B4, A4, G#4. Both staves include repeat signs and a final whole note G#4.

A

Two staves of musical notation for the A minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5. The second staff shows the descending scale: A5, G5, F5, E5, D5, C5, B4, A4. Both staves include repeat signs and a final whole note A4.

B<sup>b</sup>

Two staves of musical notation for the Bb minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: Bb4, C5, D5, Eb5, F5, G5, Ab5, Bb5. The second staff shows the descending scale: Bb5, Ab5, G5, F5, Eb5, D5, C5, Bb4. Both staves include repeat signs and a final whole note Bb4.

B

Two staves of musical notation for the B minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5. The second staff shows the descending scale: B5, A5, G5, F5, E5, D5, C5, B4. Both staves include repeat signs and a final whole note B4.



**Harmonic Minor Scale Sequential Patterns**

C

Two staves of musical notation for the C harmonic minor scale. The top staff shows the ascending scale: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5. The bottom staff shows the descending scale: C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Both staves include repeat signs at the beginning and end.

C#

Two staves of musical notation for the C# harmonic minor scale. The top staff shows the ascending scale: C#4, D#4, E4, F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C#5. The bottom staff shows the descending scale: C#5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4, E4, D#4, C#4. Both staves include repeat signs at the beginning and end.

D

Two staves of musical notation for the D harmonic minor scale. The top staff shows the ascending scale: D4, E4, F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C#4, D5. The bottom staff shows the descending scale: D5, C#4, B4, A4, G#4, F#4, E4, D4. Both staves include repeat signs at the beginning and end.

E<sup>b</sup>

Two staves of musical notation for the Eb harmonic minor scale. The top staff shows the ascending scale: Eb4, F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, C4, D4, Eb5. The bottom staff shows the descending scale: Eb5, C4, Bb4, Ab4, G4, F4, Eb4, Eb4. Both staves include repeat signs at the beginning and end.

### more Harmonic Minor Scale Sequential Patterns

E

Two staves of musical notation for the E Harmonic Minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C#5, D5. The second staff shows the descending scale: D5, C#5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4. The piece concludes with a whole note E4.

F

Two staves of musical notation for the F Harmonic Minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5. The second staff shows the descending scale: D5, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4. The piece concludes with a whole note F4.

F#

Two staves of musical notation for the F# Harmonic Minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: F#4, G#4, A4, B4, C#5, D5. The second staff shows the descending scale: D5, C#5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4. The piece concludes with a whole note F#4.

G

Two staves of musical notation for the G Harmonic Minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, D5. The second staff shows the descending scale: D5, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4. The piece concludes with a whole note G4.

## more Harmonic Minor Scale Sequential Patterns

G<sup>#</sup>

Two staves of musical notation for the G<sup>#</sup> harmonic minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: G<sup>#</sup>4, A4, B4, C<sup>#</sup>5, D5, E5, F<sup>#</sup>5, G<sup>#</sup>5. The second staff shows the descending scale: G<sup>#</sup>5, F<sup>#</sup>5, E5, D5, C<sup>#</sup>5, B4, A4, G<sup>#</sup>4. The key signature has three sharps (F<sup>#</sup>, C<sup>#</sup>, G<sup>#</sup>).

A

Two staves of musical notation for the A harmonic minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F<sup>#</sup>5, G<sup>#</sup>5. The second staff shows the descending scale: A4, G<sup>#</sup>4, F<sup>#</sup>4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3. The key signature has two sharps (F<sup>#</sup>, C<sup>#</sup>).

B<sup>b</sup>

Two staves of musical notation for the B<sup>b</sup> harmonic minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: B<sup>b</sup>3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A<sup>b</sup>4, B<sup>b</sup>4. The second staff shows the descending scale: B<sup>b</sup>4, A<sup>b</sup>4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B<sup>b</sup>3. The key signature has two flats (B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b</sup>).

B

Two staves of musical notation for the B harmonic minor scale. The first staff shows the ascending scale: B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A<sup>#</sup>4, B4. The second staff shows the descending scale: B4, A<sup>#</sup>4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3. The key signature has one sharp (F<sup>#</sup>).

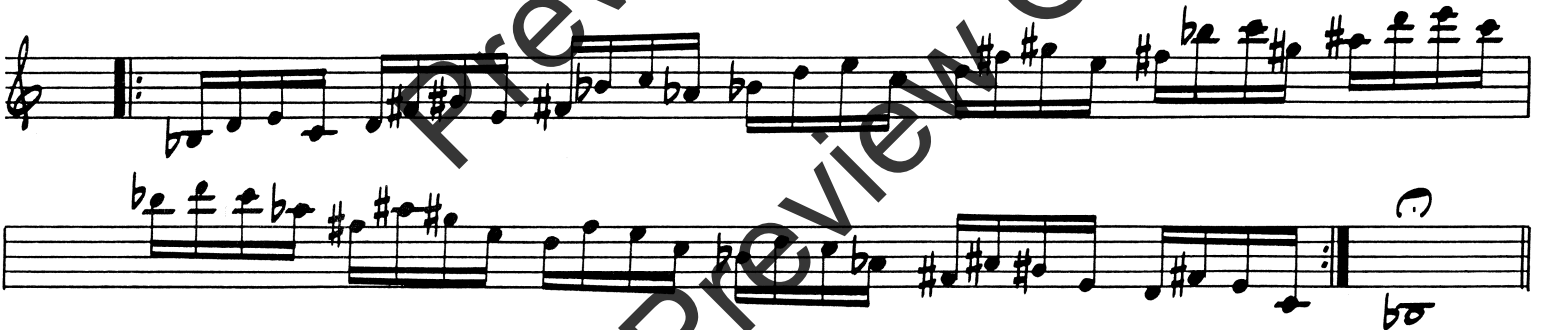
**Whole-Tone Scale**



**Whole-Tone Scale in 3rds**



**Whole-Tone Scale Sequential Pattern**



**Whole-Tone Scale, Half Step Higher**



**Whole-Tone Scale in 3rds**

Musical notation for the Whole-Tone Scale in 3rds. The scale is presented in two staves, starting on C4 and ending on C5. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, with each note played in a triad (e.g., C-E-G, D-F-A, E-G-B, F-A-C, G-B-D, A-C-E, B-D-F, C-E-G). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final C note on the bass staff.

**Whole-Tone Scale Sequential Pattern**

Musical notation for the Whole-Tone Scale Sequential Pattern. The scale is presented in two staves, starting on C4 and ending on C5. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, with each note played in a triad (e.g., C-E-G, D-F-A, E-G-B, F-A-C, G-B-D, A-C-E, B-D-F, C-E-G). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final C note on the bass staff.

**Chromatic Scale**

Musical notation for the Chromatic Scale. The scale is presented in two staves, starting on C4 and ending on C5. The notes are C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final C note on the bass staff.

### Chromatic Scale in 3rds

Musical notation for the Chromatic Scale in 3rds. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff is in treble clef, the second in bass clef, and the third in bass clef. The scale is written in a chromatic fashion, moving through all 12 chromatic intervals in thirds. The notes are: C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C. The scale is written in a chromatic fashion, moving through all 12 chromatic intervals in thirds. The notes are: C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C.

### Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale

Musical notation for the Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff is in treble clef, the second in bass clef. The scale is written in a chromatic fashion, moving through all 12 chromatic intervals in half and whole steps. The notes are: C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C. The scale is written in a chromatic fashion, moving through all 12 chromatic intervals in half and whole steps. The notes are: C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C.

### Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale in 3rds

Musical notation for the Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale in 3rds. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff is in treble clef, the second in bass clef, and the third in bass clef. The scale is written in a chromatic fashion, moving through all 12 chromatic intervals in half and whole steps in thirds. The notes are: C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C. The scale is written in a chromatic fashion, moving through all 12 chromatic intervals in half and whole steps in thirds. The notes are: C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F, F#, G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C.

**Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale  
Sequential Pattern**

**Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale, Half Step Higher**

**Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale in 3rds**

### Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale Sequential Pattern

Musical notation for the Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale Sequential Pattern. The first system shows the scale in treble clef, starting on G4. The second system shows the scale in bass clef, starting on G3. The third system shows the scale in treble clef, starting on G4, with a final measure containing a whole note G5 and a sharp sign below the staff.

### Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale, Whole Step Higher

Musical notation for the Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale, Whole Step Higher. The first system shows the scale in treble clef, starting on A4. The second system shows the scale in bass clef, starting on A3. The third system shows the scale in treble clef, starting on A4, with a final measure containing a whole note A5 and a sharp sign below the staff.

### Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale in 3rds

Musical notation for the Half Step-Whole Step Diminished Scale in 3rds. The first system shows the scale in treble clef, starting on G4. The second system shows the scale in bass clef, starting on G3. The third system shows the scale in treble clef, starting on G4, with a final measure containing a whole note G5 and a sharp sign below the staff.





## CHAPTER 8

# Playing Fast!

A good place to start working on a fast and smooth technique is with something relatively diatonic and simple. The reason for this is that it is easier to hear and execute simple melodies at a fast tempo. The idea is to get comfortable with the fingers and the brain moving at a quick pace on simple melodies, and then move on to playing more complex passages at a fast clip.

Set metronome at ♩ = 60 and gradually increase the tempo.

1. **CLICKS:** 

and ascend  
chromatically to



2. 

and ascend chromatically

3. 

and ascend chromatically

4. 

and ascend chromatically

5. 

and ascend chromatically

6.



and ascend chromatically

7.



and ascend chromatically

Preview Only  
Preview Only

## CHAPTER 9

# Playing With Dynamics

Playing with dynamic contrast is integral to playing the saxophone with style and flair. Dynamics are to the saxophonist what paints of different colors are to the artist. You will ultimately find yourself in a playing situation where extreme dynamic changes are indicated on a written part, or where dynamic change is called for based on the style of music. It is, therefore, necessary to know the extreme dynamic ranges of your instrument and be able to initiate dynamic change while playing.

Regardless of the particular style you are dealing with, a varied dynamic landscape is essential to an interesting presentation. It is all too easy to fall into a narrow volume area (usually *mf*) and get stuck there.

Listen to people talk. Certain words are louder or emphasized. Other words are softer and “farther back.” It is this way of speaking or playing that makes for a shapely and colorful delivery. As an exercise, play the following passages with as *much* contrast between loud and soft as you can manage.

1. ♩ = 140



2. ♩ = 140



3. ♩ = 100



4. "FUNKY"  $\text{♩} = 130$

Musical notation for "FUNKY" in 4/4 time, tempo  $\text{♩} = 130$ . The melody is written on a single staff. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics are indicated by *ff* (fortissimo) and *pp* (pianissimo) markings, with slanted lines showing crescendos and decrescendos. The piece starts with *ff*, moves to *pp*, then back to *ff*, and ends with *pp*.

A good general rule for playing with dynamics is to crescendo when a melodic line ascends and decrescendo when the line descends.

5.  $\text{♩} = 120$  "LEGATO"

Musical notation for "LEGATO" in 4/4 time, tempo  $\text{♩} = 120$ . The melody is written on a single staff. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics are indicated by *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *f* (forte) markings, with slanted lines showing crescendos and decrescendos. The piece starts with *mp*, moves to *f*, and ends with *mp*.

6. "SWINGIN'"  $\text{♩} = 144$

Musical notation for "SWINGIN'" in 4/4 time, tempo  $\text{♩} = 144$ . The melody is written on a single staff. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics are indicated by *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *f* (forte) markings, with slanted lines showing crescendos and decrescendos. The piece starts with *mp*, moves to *f*, and ends with *mp*.

In jazz and rock saxophone playing, a wide variety of dynamics are often used. Certain notes are loud and accented for rhythmical emphasis and groove, while other notes are softer and implied. In the following examples showing musical "terrain", all accented notes are loud and all others soft.

7. Jazz example

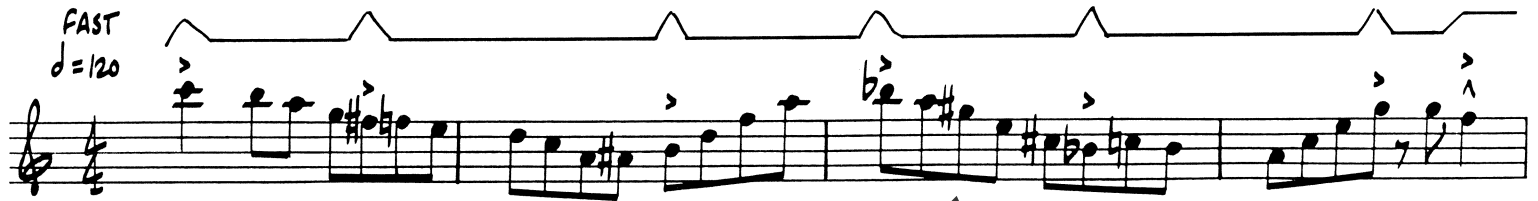
Musical notation for the Jazz example in 4/4 time, tempo  $\text{♩} = 150$ . The melody is written on a single staff. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics are indicated by *f* (forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano) markings, with slanted lines showing crescendos and decrescendos. The piece starts with *f*, moves to *mp*, and ends with *f*.

8. Rock example

Musical notation for the Rock example in 4/4 time, tempo  $\text{♩} = 110$ . The melody is written on a single staff. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. Dynamics are indicated by *f* (forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano) markings, with slanted lines showing crescendos and decrescendos. The piece starts with *f*, moves to *mp*, and ends with *f*.

When playing fast bebop lines, it is crucial that you accent certain select notes and play all others lightly for speed and ease of execution.

9.  
Bebop example



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## CHAPTER 10

# Some Trouble Spots On The Horn

Certain intervals on the saxophone cause problems due to awkward fingering patterns. If not executed smoothly, a glitch or extra note may sound. Here are a few short exercises to smooth out some of those difficult fingering situations; these are particularly difficult if your horn is leaking even the slightest bit.

1. 8 TIMES



8 TIMES



2. 8 TIMES



7.

8 TIMES



3. 8 TIMES



8 TIMES



4. 8 TIMES



9.

8 TIMES



5. 8 TIMES



10.

8 TIMES



Practicing these finger-busters is about as much fun as having a toothache. But your chops and facility will feel quite a bit more comfortable if you spend a little time on them. Here are a few more:

11. 8 TIMES



12. 8 TIMES



13. 8 TIMES



14. 8 TIMES



You can also make up your own exercises based on any specific problems you might be having.

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## CHAPTER 11

# How & What To Practice

Practicing seems to be a dilemma for some people. How to most efficiently use your time is the topic I wish to address here.

When I was younger and had more time to practice, I constantly looked for a way to practice which would cover all the areas of music with which I was trying to deal. Being a clarinet major in college (having to practice orchestral and chamber music repertoire, as well as lesson material), I was also working on saxophone, flute, piano, composing, improvising, and playing jazz, rock and latin music -- it was crucial that I allot my practice time carefully.

The aspiring saxophonist should try to establish a practice routine geared to his or her particular direction, and then try to do it daily for a prolonged period of time. The most progress is usually made when practicing occurs on a daily basis. The length of time is not as important as the consistency factor.

Here is a model practice session that would occupy one hour.

1. 10 minutes on scales and scale configurations (such as thirds, fourths, patterns) and "trouble" spots.
2. 5 minutes on long tones and dynamic exercises.
3. 15 minutes working on an etude, transcription, or written piece of music. The best way to improve your reading skills is to *read, read, read!* The Bach cello suites work well on saxophone and are fun to play.
4. 10 minutes learning a new tune -- a jazz, standard or pop tune. Play the song on piano as well. Then practice playing the melody a few times in tempo and go on to improvising on the harmonic structure of the tune. Learn a tune a day!
5. 10 minutes playing on blues, rhythm changes, II-V-I progressions, one-chord vamps, substitute changes, etc. This could include patterns, riffs and melodies. An original tune could very well develop out of this activity.
6. 5-10 minutes freely improvising. Play anything that comes to mind. Try to improvise a song, or play and expand upon a rhythmic or melodic motif. Have some fun! By ending my practice session with this activity, I am able to stay focused on why I chose to play music in the first place.

## CHAPTER 12

# Who To Listen To & What To Listen For

To get a well-balanced overview of playing the saxophone, it is advisable to look at a variety of players spanning the full history of the instrument. A medical student deals with general medicine before choosing a specialty. The modern saxophonist can benefit from this approach -- listening to fifteen of the more important jazz saxophonists from 1945-1985 would yield better results than focusing too heavily on one or two of the contemporary players prominent on the scene today.

### Who To Listen To

<i>Alto Sax - Jazz</i>	Charlie Parker Jackie McLean Sonny Stitt	Johnny Hodges Phil Woods Paul Desmond	Cannonball Adderly Lee Konitz Ornette Coleman
<i>Alto Sax - R&amp;B</i>	Hank Crawford Dave Sanborn	Maceo Parker	Grover Washington
<i>Tenor Sax - Jazz</i>	Coleman Hawkins Lester Young Ben Webster Gene Ammons Sonny Stitt Joe Henderson Michael Brecker	Hank Mobley Dexter Gordon Stan Getz Sonny Rollins John Coltrane Zoot Sims	George Coleman Wayne Shorter Lucky Thompson Johnny Griffin Al Cohn Eddie Harris
<i>Tenor Sax - R&amp;B</i>	Junior Walker Eddie Harris Michael Brecker	King Curtis Louis Jordan Maceo Parker	David Newman Grover Washington

This is by no means a complete list. However, if you were to listen carefully to one or two recordings from each player on the list, you would get a good look at the history of saxophone playing in the jazz and R&B idioms.

You may notice that many of the current players are missing from the listening list. I listen to the younger players to keep abreast of what is going on, yet for some reason I keep going back to my Coltrane, Rollins, "Prez" and "Bean" recordings for inspiration.

In a way, it is like going to the source. My motto has always been “listen to the players who the contemporary players listen to. Eliminate the middle man.”

## What To Listen For

I find myself listening to music in different ways at different times. Most of the time I listen for the *essence* of a piece of music to see what the player's and composer's intention is. I listen for the emotional content, the energy level, momentum, and the overall “vibe.” Other times I will listen for melodic content, harmonic structure, form and phrasing interpretation. After repeated listenings of my favorite jazz recordings, I find that I can sing along with the solos. For some of the more dissonant parts of those solos, it is helpful to write the passage down and then play it on my saxophone.

On other occasions I find myself focusing on a saxophonist's sound exclusively. I listen for timbre (bright versus dark), articulation (starting and ending notes), pitch, and stuff related to sound effects (overblown notes, false fingerings, harmonics, dynamics, etc.).

During my early days of practicing and listening I would occasionally try to mimic the various qualities mentioned above of my favorite saxophonists. The things I mimicked would generally lead me towards playing other kinds of things which obscured the original music I was emulating. This process help me develop a foundation in jazz and R&B saxophone playing, as well as giving me an idea about how I wanted to play and sound.

The real progress came when I began playing with bands on a regular basis. Practicing puts ideas in your vocabulary, but the act of playing in live situations enables you to put your ideas together in your own unique way. Listening to what the other players are playing and responding to that in the moment on the bandstand is how I have developed most of what I do today.

## CHAPTER 13

# Developing A Sound & Style Of Your Own

Developing your own sound and style is a long, involved quest which will take some intense initiative on your part. Initially you will want to absorb as much music from as wide a musical history period in your area of interest as is possible. Then you must be extremely proficient in the technical areas of playing your instrument, general musicianship, and playing in an ensemble. Then you will have to seek playing and performance situations with a vengeance -- you want to play as much as possible! A few ways of instigating playing situations are:

1. Write or arrange some music and put together an ensemble to play the music in concert, in a club, or to make a demo recording.
2. Approach a restaurant, small theatre, art gallery or arts council, and propose your idea of presenting your music with your ensemble.
3. Try to sit in with bands with members you know. Bring them some original music which includes you as a player.
4. Instigate jam sessions or reading sessions at your house, or somewhere you can play.

Through these "live" playing situations you will find yourself coming up with things to play in your own unique way. When you are playing in a situation, you more or less have to come up with the "goods." Assuming all the other ingredients are right, you will come up with musical ideas that you can call your own.

Responding to other musicians in "live" playing situations in the moment is very much like having a conversation with a group of friends. It is different every time and you never know what will be said and how you will respond. Playing "live" will let your personality emerge. I beg of you to pursue this with all your heart and soul.

When playing in a setting that involves improvisation or soloistic playing, try to reach beyond what or how you might normally play. Try for something really far-out or adventurous. Go beyond the things you have worked out and practiced. Don't be afraid to try something out and fall down. It is here that you will find things to play that are unique.

The most compelling argument for seeking out many "live" playing situations is that this type of exposure increases the likelihood that you will be heard by someone

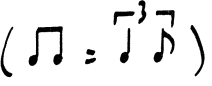
who can give you the opportunity to play with a name band or other working groups. Getting work in music is pretty much a word-of-mouth situation. Therefore, you must get out and play!

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## **CHAPTER 14** **Six Etudes**

On the following pages you'll find six original etudes written in a variety of styles which incorporate most all of the playing techniques discussed in this book. Mastering the expressive and technical challenges they present will undoubtedly build your confidence and proficiency as a performer.

# ETUDE 1 BLUESIED

SWING JAZZ FEEL (♩ = 100) (  )



The musical score for 'Etude 1: Bluesied' is written in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. It begins with a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and an accent (^) over the first note. The tempo is indicated as 'SWING JAZZ FEEL' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. A musical notation example shows a quarter note followed by eighth notes with a triplet bracket. The score consists of seven staves of music, featuring a variety of rhythmic patterns and accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) characteristic of a blues-influenced jazz style. A large diagonal watermark reading 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the center of the page.

The image displays a page of musical notation for 'Six Etudes', page 65. The score is presented in a single system with nine staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and accidentals. A large, diagonal watermark reading 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the center of the page.

# ETUDE 2 BALLAD

SLOWLY (♩ = 66)

The musical score consists of ten staves of music in treble clef, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked 'SLOWLY (♩ = 66)'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Performance instructions include 'A TEMPO' and 'RIT.' (ritardando). A large diagonal watermark 'Preview Only' is overlaid across the center of the page. The final staff ends with a double bar line and the word 'Call' written vertically.



# ETUDE 3 BROKEN CHORDS

SLOWLY AND LEGATO (♩ = 100)

The musical score for Etude 3, 'Broken Chords', is written for a single melodic line in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'SLOWLY AND LEGATO' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The piece begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The first six staves feature a series of broken chords, with dynamics ranging from mezzo-forte to mezzo-piano (*mp*). A large, diagonal watermark reading 'PREVIEW ONLY' is overlaid across the middle of the score. The seventh staff includes the instruction 'RIT.' (ritardando) and 'A TEMPO' (return to tempo). The eighth staff returns to mezzo-forte, followed by a crescendo (*CRES.*) leading to a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic in the ninth staff. The piece concludes with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic on the final staff.

# ETUDE 4 DISPLACED RHYTHMS

LEGATO TONGUED (♩ = 84)

*mf*

*Sim.*

*mp*

*Cresc.*

*mf*

*f*

*p*

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, key signature of one flat. Dynamics: *f*, *p*, *ff*. Includes a fermata over the final measure.

Musical staff 2: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. Dynamics: *mf*, *mf*. Includes a fermata over the final measure.

Musical staff 3: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. Dynamics: *mf*, *CRES.*. Includes a fermata over the final measure.

Musical staff 4: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. Dynamics: *mf*. Includes a fermata over the final measure.

Musical staff 5: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. Dynamics: *mf*, *CRES.*. Includes a fermata over the final measure.

Musical staff 6: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. Dynamics: *f*. Includes a fermata over the final measure.

Musical staff 7: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. Dynamics: *mf*, *mf*. Includes a fermata over the final measure.

Musical staff 8: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. Dynamics: *CRES.*, *f*. Includes a fermata over the final measure.

Musical staff 9: Bass clef, key signature of one flat. Dynamics: *mf*, *CRES.*, *f*. Includes a fermata over the final measure.

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# ETUDE 5 MOVING ALONG

♩ = 152

*mp*

*mp*

*f*

*mp*

\* B.B.

*mp*

\*B.B. = BIG BREATH

The image displays a musical score for six etudes, arranged in eight staves. The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff begins with the instruction "b.b." and a dynamic marking of *f*. The second staff is marked *mf*. The third staff ends with *mf*. The fourth staff is marked *mp*. The fifth staff is marked *mf*. The sixth staff is marked *mf*. The seventh staff is marked *mf*. The eighth staff begins with *mp*, includes a *CRESC.* marking, and ends with *f*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. A large, diagonal watermark reading "Preview Only" is overlaid across the center of the page.

# ETUDE 6 FUNKY

FUNK (♩ = 72)

LEGATO TONGUE UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

The musical score consists of ten staves of music in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 72 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various dynamics such as *f*, *mf*, *mp*, and *ff*, along with articulations like accents (^), slurs, and a 'sub. p' marking. A large 'Preview Only' watermark is overlaid diagonally across the center of the page.

## CHAPTER 15

# What They Didn't Tell Me In Music School

### Some Anecdotes

One of my first gigs was playing with Eumir Deodato, who in 1974 had somewhat of a hit record with a disco version of Strauss' *Zarathustra*. The reason I got the call was because one of my classmates had recommended me after he turned the job down. As was the case with most of the playing situations that came my way, this was the first tried-and-proven example of getting work through word-of-mouth and being in a music scene with a large volume of activity (New York).

I learned a few important lessons on this job. Firstly, it became apparent that I would not benefit from playing a louder setup (more open mouthpiece, harder reed), even though the music was loud. I decided to go for a setup which afforded me the flexibility to execute the ideas in my head and which produced the sound I was hearing. Once you find this situation, try not to be thrown by a loud-playing band or a playing scenario in which you don't hear yourself comfortably. This could be caused by a lousy monitor or P.A. system, an inferior microphone, or less-than-ideal acoustics. Sometimes the playing environment makes you sound terrible, regardless of what equipment you use on your saxophone.

Secondly, I found out that, as a doubler, it is essential to take some flute and clarinet lessons, and put in some time before attempting to play on a recording. I had to play flute on one of Deodato's records, and my intonation was pretty horrible due to my lack of experience. Embarrassment and humiliation are very good motivators, however, and I quickly set out to correct the problem. It can be avoided, though, by preparing properly beforehand.

One of the most eye-opening experiences of my early musical career was playing with Buddy Rich. I worked with Buddy on and off for two years (1975-1977). In hindsight, I now realize that to be able to play and compose for a band of that calibre on a nightly basis was the best training I ever could have hoped for. As a player, I got to practice and compare notes with other fine players, and then get out on the bandstand and try stuff out. Also while on the road a bunch of the guys from the band would go to the local jazz joint and sit in or have a jam session.

As a composer and arranger, the Buddy Rich band afforded me the opportunity to write, play, and record my songs on a regular basis. This helped to build “chops” in writing and arranging, and ultimately helped my playing as well; as an improvising saxophonist, I try to carry over compositional skills to my solo playing.

Here are some of my more memorable moments with Buddy:

1. At the first band rehearsal, Buddy karate-chopped a big piece of wood for all to see, and then we played all the most difficult charts he had as fast as they could be played.

2. Before the first concert we played, I went up to Buddy and said, “Buddy, my name is Bob Mintzer and I’m playing tenor sax.” Buddy responded with, “So what!” It was as if he didn’t want to know who I was until I had proven myself on the bandstand. After the first couple of gigs, we became friends.

3. I had written a shuffle tune for the band, and at the rehearsal I played the first solo. After the second chorus, I started to solo on another chorus and Buddy stopped playing. I asked what was wrong, and Buddy said that the solo should end after two choruses. Rather than give the bandleader what he wanted, I questioned his decision and asked why the solo couldn’t be longer. He said, “Because you aren’t playing anything.” Ask a stupid question, you get a stupid answer! Also, give the bandleader what he wants -- it’s easier that way.

4. Buddy was notorious for yelling at the band and, in my perception, from night to night it was Buddy who changed rather than the performance of the band. Nevertheless, I learned the importance of self worth and being confident that you are doing a job to the best of your ability, regardless of what anybody says. Buddy was being Buddy. And I had put in the time on the music and my instrument and was supposed to be there. Once that was clear in my head, everything was fine.

5. Although things got pretty wacky at times in Buddy’s band, I came to realize the importance of positive thinking and being clear on your motives. To this day, I appreciate the experience with Buddy as one in which I had the chance to play and write and learn. The only way to get better as a player is to play a lot.

Here are some of the things I was told by record company A&R men after they listened to my demo tape:

1. “Why don’t you do something more like the Stray Cats?” (Say what?!)
2. “We already got a band that plays music like that.”
3. “What am I gonna do with this? I can’t sell this!”



The first two years of playing demo tapes for record companies resulted in nothing but a bruised ego and a feeling of discouragement. So at that point I went back to the drawing board and worked harder at learning about *all* music while continuing to try and realize the music I heard in my head through composing and playing.

Here are some memorable things that listeners said to me after hearing me play:

1. "You sound just like Coltrane."
2. "I was listening to you play and you just never got me off." (Why is he telling me this?)
3. "You sound just like Mike Brecker and Wayne Shorter combined." -- a magazine writer in Japan.
4. "Can't you play more like Al Klink?" (from the Glenn Miller Band)

I should mention here that many people come up and say positive things about my playing as well. I bring up these less-than-glowing comments to illustrate the fact that not everyone will like what you do or understand what it is you are trying to do. Thus, it is crucial that you believe in yourself and trust what you hear in your head. Also, people like to associate your playing with someone else's playing they know and like as a way of being involved with your music. Many people who say these things are not equipped to hear the differences between you and to whom they are comparing you.

Here is a story which illustrates that a little bit of brashness in the music scene can go a long way, if executed tastefully. I went down to the Village Vanguard in 1977 to sit in with Art Blakey. It was a Sunday night, and players were occasionally allowed to sit in with the bands on the last set. I went up to Art, and with the greatest confidence I could muster, asked to sit in. He said yes, and I played a few tunes with the band.

After the set, Art told me he liked my playing and asked if I had any tunes for an up-and-coming recording his band was going to do. I said yes without thinking much about it. Art said to bring the tunes to his rehearsal the next day. That night I went home and wrote a few tunes in the style of the Art Blakey records I had been listening to for years. I took them to the rehearsal the next day and Art seemed to like them. He asked if I would like to play with the band. I said I couldn't come right away because of my commitment with Buddy Rich; he didn't wait and hired someone else. Art did record my tunes on an album called *Gypsy Folk Tales*.

It was an honor and an education to have had this brief encounter with Art Blakey. It came about as a result of taking a chance and asking to sit in.

On the topic of how to get a record deal . . . it still is not always apparent to me why certain people get recorded and others do not. The record business is a very trend-oriented situation, and your age, look, and attitude play as big a role as does your music.

I first worked on my music (and still do). I did this through practice, study, listening, searching, writing lines and songs, getting people together to play and demo the music, pursuing live playing situations, and jamming. Later I thought about how I would like to connect musically (and otherwise) with my audience. I thought about how the musician and non-musician listener might respond to various musical ideas. I also gave some thought to how I should look, act, and generally relate to the audience.

My recording situations have come about as the result of working very hard on my writing and playing and doing something that a record company was coincidentally interested in. I didn't plan it that way, but that is the way it happened. After years of rejection, a few different companies came along and expressed interest in what I was doing . . . first with a big band, and later as a solo saxophonist (here is a great example of how writing and arranging can add another dimension to your playing).

Even after doing 12 recordings as a solo artist, it is not always smooth sailing. While receiving praise from some on these projects, there have been others who were less-than-thrilled with what I was doing. Here are some choice comments from some of my record reviews:

1. *Down Beat*: "Bob Mintzer has a band of studio furniture." (Mike and Randy Brecker, Dave Sanborn, Peter Erskine, Don Grolnick???)

2. *Digital Audio*: "His writing is uninspired and lacking in personality."

3. *Down Beat*: "The first all-Jewish sax section"

4. *Down Beat*: "You've heard it all before."

At the same time I was seeing reviews about the same music which were quite positive. Some of the things said were:

1. *Digital Audio*: "The best big band ever."

2. *Jazziz*: "Fresh, innovative writing."

3. *Jazz Times*: "Inspired playing."

What's a player to do? Trust your instincts, believe in yourself, put your helmet on, and move forward!

### **Some Do's and Don'ts**

#### DON'T:

1. Don't show your dissatisfaction with your playing to your listeners. It will effect their enjoyment of your playing.
2. Don't bad-mouth or complain about a musical situation in public.
3. Don't play late Coltrane licks on a wedding gig.
4. Don't beat yourself up for what you think was a poor performance. Leave it at being a reflection of that moment and try for a better one next time.
5. Don't wait for the phone to ring. Be an instigator! Set up jam sessions, write tunes, make tapes, find new places for gigs (restaurants, art galleries, street fairs), start a band (or many different bands).

#### DO:

1. Act positive, and be friendly and helpful on gigs, even if you are not fond of the music or the players. Offer compliments and support when it is due. Music is hard and we need each other's encouragement.
2. When someone tells you that they enjoyed your performance, say "thank you" even if you were dissatisfied.
3. Try to play appropriately for the kind of music you are dealing with. If it is a style with which you are unfamiliar, go and listen to a few recordings of that particular style.
4. Practice your scales, chords, lines and chord changes at home with great vigor so that, when you go to play with people, you are not thinking so much about technical matters and can focus on playing and interacting with the other musicians.
5. Arrange playing situations. Try out a new song with some friends. Start a band. Look for an off-night in your local bar or restaurant. Go get it! It will not always come to you.

# Closing

The quest to be an accomplished musician never ends. Please continue to look in all directions for information and inspiration with an open mind. What I've written here is a very small piece of the art of saxophone playing. I hope it encourages you to look further and develop your own practice habits, melodic ideas, and musical taste.

Special thanks to Don Sinta, Al Regni, Mike Brecker, Jack Kripl, Marvin Stamm, Jackie McLean, John Dearth, Alec McCullough, and Stanley Hammer, my teachers. Thanks also to Jeff Jarvis and everyone at Kendor Music.

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## About The Author

Born January 27, 1953 in New Rochelle, New York, Bob Mintzer attended the Interlochen Arts Academy, the Hart School of Music, and the Manhattan School of Music. His formal education was followed by numerous playing, writing and recording experiences with Deodato, Buddy Rich, Thad Jones and Mel Lewis, Joe Chambers, Al Foster, Hubert Laws, Art Blakey, Tito Puente, and many others. In the 1980's Bob formed his own big band and began recording a series of critically-acclaimed albums for the prestigious DMP label -- "Incredible Journey", "Camouflage", "Spectrum", "Urban Contours", "Art Of The Big Band" and "Departure". Most recently, he became the newest member of The Yellowjackets and now pours most of his creative energies into their writing, touring and recording projects.