

Although there is a substantial amount of material available for brass warmups, ranging from lip slurs to pedal tones, there are fewer options for saxophone. While warming up, saxophonists should focus primarily on tone. This can be quickly forgotten in beginning band when brass players are struggling to play the correct partial, but playing with a pure sound requires training that can be generated from the warm up.

Warmups are also an excellent way to get students familiar with the fingerings of the extreme high and low register. The best way to work on this is with a slurred descending triad pattern, played slowly. Starting in the key of B \flat major, have the student play an F5 for three beats. Then on descending quarter notes move to D, middle B \flat , F4, then low D, C, and ending on a low B \flat held for four beats. The exercise should be played in every key, ascending a half step each time, until the starting note is high F#6. The exercise can be played with either a straight tone or vibrato, depending on the ability level of the student.

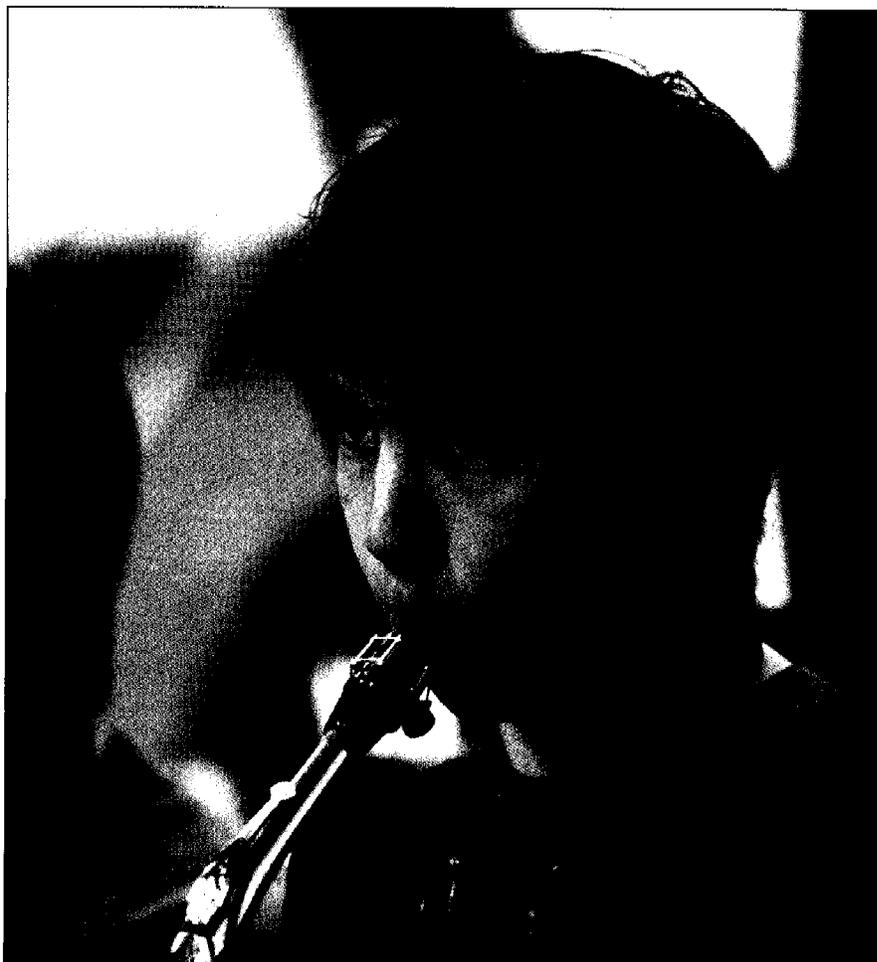


Photo by Kirby Fong

Saxophone Warmups

By Sean Murphy



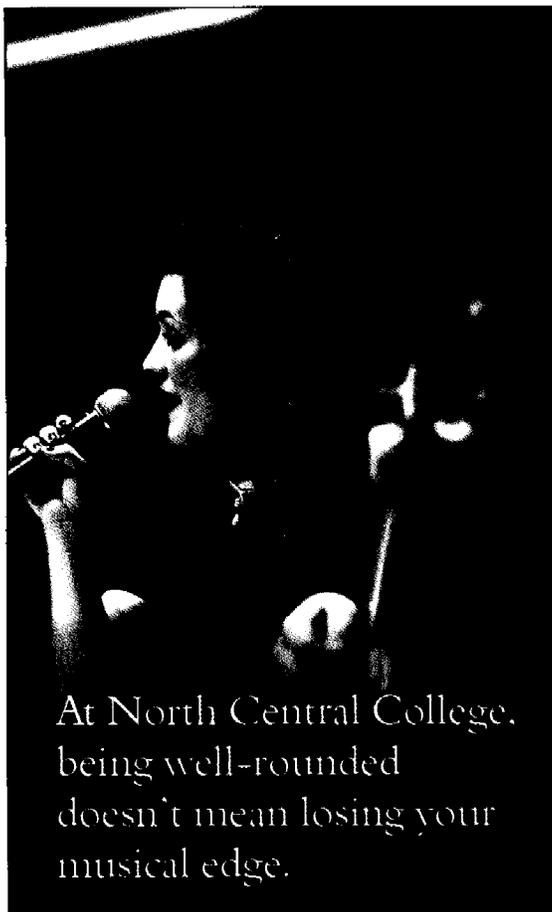
This same exercise can be expanded to incorporate intonation into the warm up. Once the exercise has been learned in all keys and registers, a drone can be added. Drone references can either be purchased commercially or recorded with a synthesizer. Some tuners also produce drones. For example, the first descending exercise begins on a written F; when played on an E \flat saxophone it should be paired with a drone on concert D \flat . Each note of the exercise, which includes the fifth,

third, and root of a D \flat chord, should be held until it is in tune with the drone.

Another component of a sound saxophone warmup is work on manipulating pitch. A good way to practice this is to have students play only the mouthpiece. An alto saxophone mouthpiece should produce a concert A. Any pitch either drastically higher or lower than this shows that the embouchure is either too loose or too tight. After students can play the correct pitch, they should begin to explore bending the pitch up or down by half and whole steps, slowly increasing the interval in either direction, with the goal of a one octave range on the mouthpiece.

When students can do this, mouthpiece playing can be regularly included in the warmup. Have students play the first three scale degrees of any key on the mouthpiece. Eventually this can be expanded to the first five scale degrees, and an entire scale if possible, always using a pitch reference such as a piano. More advanced students can work on major, minor, augmented, and diminished scales and triads by playing only the mouthpiece. Also, familiar tunes and folk songs can be used as exercises to expand the student's abilities on the mouthpiece.

Overtone are a third aspect of a good saxophone warm up. Much like brass instruments, saxophones can also



At North Central College,
being well-rounded
doesn't mean losing your
musical edge.

**NORTH
CENTRAL
COLLEGE**



Our students choose from
majors in music, music
education or jazz studies and
also pursue countless other
passions.

2011 Freshman Visit Days:
Monday, January 17
Saturday, April 16

2011 Transfer Visit Day:
Saturday, February 12

2011 Fine Art Audition Days:
Saturday, February 19
Thursday, February 24
Saturday, March 5

Find out more by calling
630-637-5800
Or visit us online at
northcentralcollege.edu

NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE • NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS • 630-637-5800 • NORTHCENTRALCOLLEGE.EDU

produce multiple partials in the overtone series. This is possible through voicing, a concept that allows saxophonists to play various pitches with one fingering. Saxophone overtones are effective when produced using low B \flat through E. Low B \flat is the best note to start on; without changing the fingering or adding the octave key, students should be able to produce the note an octave higher. Beyond this a fifth higher and then an additional octave can also be produced. When a student has mastered the ability to produce these notes in the overtones series, without any physical change to the appearance of the embouchure, the range of the exercise can be expanded to high D, high F, and then the altissimo register.

The benefits of incorporating overtones into the warmup process are numerous. By playing the fundamental of the series, low B \flat through D, the saxophonist is practicing long tones in the low register. Furthermore, they are practicing the articulation of these low notes numerous times. Student should not move to the next overtone until they are able to attack the fundamental cleanly.

Overtones can also be used as a tone matching exercise. An overtone produced on the saxophone will sound purer than that same note played with the traditional fingering because the



Sean Murphy is majoring in music education and saxophone at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. He recently performed at the US Naval International Saxophone Symposium and a NASA Conference. Murphy won the Slippery Rock University Concerto Competition and also received the university's most prestigious scholarship in music education.

OUR FRIENDS SAY IT BEST

"These new Blessing models are some seriously good horns."
—Rob Blowik

Contact your local dealer to try one!
E.K. Blessing
Elkhart, Indiana, USA
(978) 461-6111
www.blessingbrass.com

BLESSING

overtone is played with an entirely closed tube. Saxophonists can practice making the pitch of the traditionally fingered note as pure as the overtone. For example, the first overtone above the fundamental of a low B \flat is a written B \flat 4. Students should play the first overtone of B \flat , and then reattack the same pitch using the traditional fingering for B \flat 4. This exercise should be repeated until the discrepancies in tone of the two types of fingerings are minimized.

This can be expanded to playing major scales with overtones. A B \flat major scale could be produced by playing the first overtone of low B \flat through E \flat and then producing F through A with the second overtones of low B \flat , C, and D, ending with the third overtone of low B \flat .

Using overtones in warmups will also expand students' range. Slowly, if played daily, students will begin to develop an altissimo range, which is called for quite frequently in solo saxophone works.

The final component of a sound saxophone warm up is exercises to facilitate finger coordination. The first way to improve this aspect of playing is with the manipulation of a five note scale. This exercise, a variant of Marcel Moyse's flute scale patterns, is also known to some as Twiddles. This exercise is extremely effective in improving finger coordination in three difficult areas of the instrument: the low register spatula, the break between C5 and D5, and the palm keys. The exercise is played at a moderate tempo and begins by playing four beats of sixteenth notes between the first and second scale degrees of a key, which would be low B \flat and C in the case of the first exercise in the pattern. On the fifth beat the student should change to an ascending and descending five note scale in the same key. After four beats of this, the student then modulates one half step, in time, to B major by playing sixteenth notes alternating from low A \sharp (B \flat) to B, and continuing the pattern as before, only the five note scale now ascending to



2011 mpulse

summer performing arts camp
for high school students

July 3 - 16

Bassoon Institute
Clarinet Institute
Flute Institute
Horn Institute
Oboe Institute
Percussion Institute
Saxophone Institute
Theatre & Drama Academy
Trombone Institute

July 10 - 30

Musical Theatre Workshop

July 17 - 30

Harp Institute
Performing Arts Technology Camp
Summer Dance Institute
Vocal Arts Institute
Jazz Institute (NEW)

For more information, please visit us at:

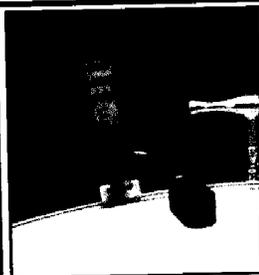
music.umich.edu/mpulse

mpulse@umich.edu

866-936-2660



University of Michigan School of
Music, Theatre & Dance



TIMP-TUNER™

- ✓ works even when other instruments are playing
- ✓ easy to use ✓ helps balance the heads
- ✓ an ear-training tool ✓ fast setup and changes

Get Your Timps in Tune!

See How it Works at www.protune.com

protune
CORP.

Box 1808, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
(845) 462-6452 info@protune.com

Brass Studies at New Jersey City University

Performance Degree Programs:

B.M. in Performance
M.M. in Performance

**Scholarships
available!**

Additional Programs:

B.A. in Music
B.A. in Music Education
B.A. in Music Business
M.A. in Music Education

**Great location!
Only 10 miles from
New York City.**

The Department's music programs are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

For further information please refer to our website at
www.njcu.edu/mdt.



Contact: Gilles Bernard, D.M.A.
Coordinator of Brass Studies
(201) 200-2081
gbernard@njcu.edu

National School Marching Award

Each year give your most deserving band members the student award, a 5" x 7" walnut plaque with a beautiful color picture, \$44. Engrave students' names on the matching walnut wall plaque for the band room. (10 1/2" x 13") \$82.



www.instrumentalistawards.com

The heart of music is not in your voice or your fingers.

It is not in the cold brass or lifeless wood of instruments.

It exists only in the reality that lies within your soul.

The heart of music is you.

At the Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music, we hear the song that is in you. We respect it. We nurture and train it. And we help it to find its way in the world.

Master your gifts at the U of M. It's affordable, it's distinguished, and it feels just right. Brilliant faculty prepare and inspire you, a world-renowned musical heritage awaits you, and you are surrounded by opportunities to shine. The University of Memphis – where aspiring musicians come to find the heart of music.

<http://memphis.edu/music>
music@memphis.edu
901.678.3766

THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music

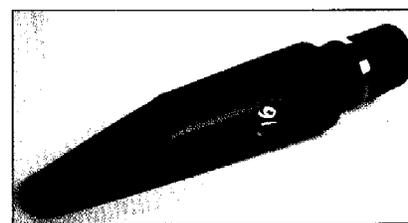
the fourth scale degree, E, as the starting pitch of the five note scale is now the seventh scale degree, A \sharp . The exercise can be ended with a descending, melodic pattern of scale degrees four, two, one, seven, one.

When this is played starting on the low spatula keys, it increases the student's left hand pinky coordination. When started on a C5, it allows students to focus on keeping the tone quality consistent while moving between C and D. Furthermore, the exercise can be played starting on any of the high palm key notes and will increase coordination between right and left hands in that register as well.

Structured daily warmups for saxophonists, consisting of work on tone quality, intonation, and technique, are just as essential as those brass players do. Be sure to keep the focus on sound quality even when working on technique; in the words of saxophone pedagogue Larry Teal, every study is a tone study. □

Vandoren Mouthpieces

Vandoren has released several mouthpiece models and a ligature for clarinets and saxophones. A V16 mouthpiece for baritone saxophone has been added to the line for soprano, alto, and tenor. The three models, B5, B7, and B9 offer flexibility and power while remaining easy to play. The M30 Lyre clarinet mouthpiece features a tip opening and facing length position directly between the 5RV Lyre and the M30. (www.vandoren.com)



King Drum Corps Mouthpieces

System Blue and Conn-Selmer introduced King System Blue Brass Mouthpieces, the first mouthpiece line designed specifically for marching brass. Available for trumpet, mellophone, baritone, euphonium, and tuba, the mouthpieces have a heavy feel and medium cup depth for a darker tone and air stability at loud volumes with a medium sharp bite for clear articulations. The Blue Devils used these mouthpieces beginning in the 2010 drum corps season. Prices range from \$107 for trumpet to \$146 for tuba. (www.conn-selmer.com)