A PERFORMANCE PROJECT FOR SAXOPHONE ORCHESTRA CONSISTING OF FIVE PERFORMANCE EDITIONS FROM THE RENAISSANCE, BAROQUE, CLASSICAL, ROMANTIC, AND MODERN ERAS

Marcus Daniel Ballard
University of Southern Mississippi

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by

Marcus Daniel Ballard

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved:

August 2007
The University of Southern Mississippi

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ABSTRACT

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by Marcus Daniel Ballard

August 2007

The popularity of the saxophone orchestra has spread immensely in recent years. Many universities and conservatories throughout the United States have founded large saxophone ensembles of ten or more players, and professional groups are continuing to emerge across Europe and Asia. With such rapidly growing popularity, it is only natural that composers have begun to write challenging compositions for the saxophone orchestra that utilize extended techniques and the highest range of the instrument. However, many of these modern works are extremely difficult and not accessible to many younger, less experienced players.

Many saxophone teachers and performers look to the music of the past centuries to find works that are suitable for transcription that can be played by ensembles of various sizes and skill levels. These arrangements provide saxophone students with pieces from musical styles less familiar to them, allowing them to become more versatile musicians and artists.
Transcriptions can be useful teaching tools for young ensembles of "new" instruments (e.g., saxophone, euphonium, and tuba) with a sparse repertoire. This project is designed to provide saxophone ensembles with five new transcriptions, one from each of five major musical style periods and to encourage others to pursue transcriptions in performance and teaching.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the dissertation adviser, Dr. Lawrence Gwozdz, for his suggestions and expertise. I would like to especially thank Dr. Gwozdz for continuing to keep the bar raised, for challenging me, and for teaching me how to be a better musician and teacher. Without his input and encouragement, this project would never have come to fruition. He has been a true inspiration to me, and a wonderful influence on my career.

I would also like to thank Ms. Judith Anne Still, daughter of William Grant Still, for allowing me to transcribe her father’s wonderful organ music for saxophones. I am grateful for Ms. Still’s kindness, and her dedication to the continuance of her father’s musical legacy is truly inspirational.
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INTRODUCTION

The saxophone orchestra has become an increasingly popular performance medium in recent years. Professional touring and recording ensembles exist internationally, and many universities and conservatories around the globe have saxophone orchestras in residence, ranging in size from groups of five to twelve members to massive orchestras with upwards of 100 players. This development is a result of the efforts of dedicated performers, students, and teachers to perpetuate the vision of the saxophone’s inventor, Adolphe Sax (1814-1894).

Although the saxophone was not patented until 1846, preliminary work had already been completed on an early prototype, a bass saxophone in C, for the 1841 Belgian Industrial Exhibition.1 This early version of the saxophone was damaged at the last moment, however, and was not shown.2 Sax took his new creation with him when he moved to Paris in 1842, where he began to establish rapport with a number of successful composers, including Hector Berlioz and Jean-Georges Kastner, key figures in introducing the saxophone to the public. Berlioz transcribed his Chant Sacré, originally for voices, to demonstrate six of Sax’s instruments: soprano saxhorn in E-flat, contralto saxhorn in B-flat, tenor saxhorn in E-flat, bass clarinet (upon which Sax had made many improvements), baritone saxophone in E-flat, and bass saxophone in C.3 The performance of this arrangement occurred in 1844, two years before the saxophone was patented. Also in 1844, Kastner (who had already used the bass saxophone in his opera

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3Ibid., 175.
Le dernier Roi de Juda} wrote his Methode Complète et Raisonnée de Saxophone which could be applied to all the members of the family. Kastner’s method book included the first original solo and ensemble works for the saxophone: Variations faciles et brillantes and Sextuor. The Sextuor reveals that the concept of the saxophone family was very much alive well before the instrument’s patent date in 1846, indeed, before the completion of the entire gamut of saxophones.\(^4\)

Adolphe Sax envisioned his family of saxophones with multiple purposes in mind. He felt that, as a member of the symphony orchestra and military band, the instrument added a new color to the music, blending with the strings and serving as a medium between the brass and woodwinds.\(^5\) The saxophone’s capabilities led Sax to believe that his instrument could be equally successful en masse. Much like the Renaissance viol consort, the saxophone family used as a cohesive unit led to even more possibilities of ensemble sounds and textures.

The concept of the saxophone orchestra led to the “saxophone craze” in America during the early part of the twentieth century. The saxophone ensemble became a popular feature on the Vaudeville stage, one of the most famous groups being a costumed ensemble of professional saxophonists known as The Six Brown Brothers. In Europe, saxophonist and composer Gustav Bumcke founded the first German saxophone orchestra in the late 1920s. During the 1930s, the saxophone became associated with jazz, and the use of the saxophone in symphony orchestras and operas declined. The

\(^4\)Sigurh Rasch, notes from the preface to his arrangement of Georges Kastner’s Sextuor (Ethos Publications, 1982).

saxophone orchestras and ensembles were replaced by the saxophone sections of the dance bands. The rekindling of performance activity of such ensembles resumed during the latter half of the century, represented by the efforts of Sigurd M. Raschèr (The Raschèr Saxophone Ensemble, U.S.A), David Bilger (The Saxophone Sinfonia, U.S.A), Jean-Marie Londeix (Ensemble International de Saxophones de Bordeaux, France), and Linda Bangs-Urban (Süddeutches Saxophon-Kammerorchester, Germany).

Very little original music for the saxophone was composed between 1844 and 1900, therefore teachers rely heavily on transcriptions of works from other style periods to help their students become more versatile musicians. In the most recent published bibliography of saxophone repertoire, Répertoire Universel de Musique pour Saxophone, Jean-Marie Londeix lists 862 published works for saxophone ensembles of more than four players. Roughly 140 of these are transcriptions, mostly from the Baroque period. The trend in transcribing for the saxophone ensemble has been to adhere to the more popular composers of the representative style periods. The Medieval and Renaissance periods have remained relatively untouched, represented by just a few transcriptions of works by Palestrina. Transcriptions from the Baroque are dominated by Bach, Händel, and Vivaldi. The Classical and Romantic periods are also rather poorly represented, with a handful of transcriptions of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Grieg.

Many transcriptions provide the saxophonist with only the music, leaving them to determine how the piece should be performed. In most cases, the student has had no experience with music of the particular period, making it especially difficult to render an

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accurate performance of the work. This dissertation seeks to remedy this problem by offering performance editions of five works, each from a different musical era. The chapters consist of biographical information about each composer, notes about the composition, an account of the transcription process, suggestions for accurate performance practice, and scores of each transcription.

Each of the works presented in this project was chosen for the purpose of strengthening specific musical elements, as well as familiarizing saxophone students with styles not indigenous to the instrument. These editions will also serve the field of saxophone performance by representing composers whose oeuvres have been virtually untapped by transcribers for the saxophone orchestra. They reflect a diversity of compositional styles ranging from contrapuntal to homophonic and explore a wide variety of musical languages.

The imitative counterpoint found in Giovanni Gabrieli's *Canzona Primi Toni à 10* requires the performers to be sensitive to the material being passed between voices. Students will learn the important practices of yielding to the melodic material when playing an accompanying part, recognizing the presence of the melody and bringing it to the forefront, and matching the style of consecutive entrances. Working to achieve a homogeneous ensemble sound and good intonation is also a focus of this arrangement.

Music of the French baroque displays a characteristic style that is foreign to most saxophone students. The three instrumental movements from the opera *Les Indes Galantes* by Jean-Philippe Rameau were chosen specifically to teach saxophone students the proper performance of baroque ornaments, while simultaneously acquainting them with the uniqueness of the French style. Therefore, included in the score are examples
showing the proper method of performing the ornaments, as well as an explanation of
notes inégales. While the correct performance of ornaments and application of notes
inégales are particular areas of focus with this transcription, the ensemble sound is
equally important. Having the students play with a light, relaxed sound will aid in the
execution of ornaments and further capture the style of the music.

François-Joseph Gossec’s Sinfonia also focuses on the importance of the light
ensemble sound characteristic of the Classical period. The more relaxed playing
approach required for this transcription is necessary in maintaining the tempo of the two
faster movements, and helps with expressive playing in the slow middle movement.
Ornamentation and harmony are given less attention, with greater emphasis placed on
melody and the rhythmic drive of the piece.

Melody is also the main concentration in the transcription of Carl Nielsen’s Little
Suite, which aims at teaching students the qualities of expressive playing and sensitivity
to dynamic changes. Harmony is also of great importance in this work, as reflected in the
lush, often chromatically shifting chords found throughout each movement. Because
some students may not be accustomed to the less conventional progressions and
resolutions found in late Romantic music, good intonation is necessary in helping them
gain an understanding of the harmonic language of the period.

Several musical elements are present in the arrangement of the Elegy by William
Grant Still. The importance of both melody and harmony comes from the homophonic
texture of the work. Good intonation and cohesive ensemble playing are traits that can be
learned from this type of transcription. The song-like quality of the melodic writing
teaches students the benefits of confident solo playing and emphasizes the importance of musical phrasing.

The difficulty of the transcriptions varies from one work to the next, ensuring that even the most experienced ensembles will be able to benefit from the challenges presented above. The Canzona and Elegy are the least difficult technically and are accessible to most ensembles. Rameau's Les Indes Galantes and the Gossec Sinfonia are slightly more difficult and are likely more suitable for collegiate rather than high school level ensembles. The Little Suite is the most difficult of the five, demanding a much higher level of musical maturity than the others.

The final published versions of these arrangements will include notes for the conductor and performers addressing the history of the composer, playing style, and suggestions for the performance of ornaments. It is my goal to provide teachers with a variety of quality music of contrasting styles for the purpose of improving the musicianship of their students.
CHAPTER I

GIOVANNI GABRIELI (1554-1612): CANZONA PRIMI TONI À 10

Italian organist and composer Giovanni Gabrieli was a key representative of Renaissance music in Venice. He had a very close relationship with his uncle Andrea, even following in Andrea’s footsteps to study with Orlande de Lassus at the Court of Duke Albrecht V in Munich. Giovanni became the organist for the San Marco cathedral in 1585, and eventually took over the role of principal composer after his uncle’s death in 1586. Gabrieli edited a large number of collections of his uncle’s works for publication, some of which included his own music as well.

Giovanni Gabrieli is known almost entirely for his sacred vocal and instrumental music. His output consists mainly of motets and other settings for both vocal and instrumental ensembles, works specifically for instrumental ensembles, and compositions for the organ. He also composed a large number of secular madrigals and liturgical motets from the 16th century. His earliest music shows the obvious influences of Orlande de Lassus and Andrea Gabrieli. Andrea even included five large-scale motets and five madrigals of Giovanni’s in his collection entitled Concerti of 1587.

The first comprehensive volume of Gabrieli’s works was the Sacrae Symphoniae of 1597. This is not to be confused with a later compilation from 1615, often published as Symphoniae Sacrae or Sacrae Symphoniae II. The 1615 set contains mostly works for ensembles of voices with instruments, while the 1597 set contains mostly instrumental music. Gabrieli used from four to as many as twenty-two voices in his vocal and

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2Ibid., 390.
instrumental works. The compositions found in the 1597 *Sacrae Symphoniae* range in size from six to sixteen voices, while the 1615 set ranges in size from seven to nineteen voices. Until the 1597 collection was published, most instrumental canzonas were written for four voices.³

Most of Gabrieli's music before 1597 made use of a technique known as "cori spezzati" or "separated choirs." These works were scored for multiple choirs of similar instrumentation to be placed spatially around a cathedral. The musical material in these works was often developed by means of responsorial playing among the various choirs, with some changes of mode. In the *Sacrae Symphoniae*, the works display a style in which the musical material is developed as more of a dialogue. Rather than having separate choirs, there is often a single ensemble in which the material is passed between individual voices or groups of voices.

In the "cori spezzati" works, counterpoint was created through the timbral differences between the two choirs of instruments or voices. In the *Sacrae Symphoniae*, the counterpoint is produced by the trading of melodic material throughout the voices of one large ensemble. Therefore, the counterpoint relies less on changes in tone color, and more on register changes and the number of voices imitating each other. The simple harmonies found in these works are often diatonic, with cadential passages that are created by the exchanges between these voice groupings. Because Gabrieli was one of the transitional figures between the Renaissance and Baroque periods, these compositions show a greater use of dissonance, and a wider range of tonal centers. The textures are simple, with a greater importance placed on melodic elements and timbral contrasts.

Gabrieli often did not indicate specific instrumentation in his scores, therefore misconceptions regarding performance practice frequently arise. One such misconception is that Gabrieli had difficulty deciding how his music should be performed. Church payroll records that list the musicians hired for his performances reveal that he was often careful with scoring, only omitting specific designations of instruments which he presumed to be obvious.4 Rearranging and rewriting would have occurred depending on the tastes of the individual and the performing forces on hand.5

Unless the ensemble size was specified, the performing ensemble Gabrieli used was usually quite small. Eight instrumentalists sufficed for most of his motets, while twenty singers and twenty instrumentalists were in the ensemble all of the time (seven of which were simply playing continuo parts).6 The ensembles for the large instrumental works consisted largely of cornetti and trombones, supplemented by either violins or violas and an occasional bassoon. These were often accompanied by theorboes and chitarrones, and supported by bass stringed instruments. Recorders and shawms were never specified, but were used according to some of the pay records.7

The Transcription Process

Gabrieli’s instrumental compositions are effective even in modern settings. Arrangers must make careful decisions when transcribing Gabrieli’s music for today’s ensembles. Clifford Bartlett and Peter Holman specified that choirs of equal pitch or


5Ibid., 28.

6Ibid., 26.

7Ibid., 27.
range (either instrumental or vocal) should have the same scoring. For example, in a work made up of multiple antiphonal choirs, a string choir should not be mixed with a woodwind choir. One should also not assume that voice or instrument parts were ever doubled.8

While vocal works of the Renaissance have been arranged for instrumental ensembles, the importance of the text and the use of techniques such as word painting make it difficult to render an accurate representation of the music. Gabrieli was a suitable composer for this project based on the large scope of his instrumental compositions. Upon researching the existing saxophone orchestra repertoire, I found six works by Gabrieli arranged for various combinations of saxophones. Three of these works were arranged for saxophone quartet, one for three quartets arranged in the "cori spezzati" style, and one for two quintets arranged in the same manner. Only one of the compositions, Canzona XV arranged by Jean-Marie Londeix, was for a large saxophone orchestra that utilized more than simply the standard voices of the quartet (soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone).

I chose a work from the Sacrae Symphoniae of 1597 because they were mostly instrumental and scored for a large number of performers, particularly the Canzona Primi Toni à 10 which fits within the range of the saxophone orchestra. Also, the work is technically undemanding, making it feasible for ensembles of all experience levels. The contrapuntal nature of this composition will be beneficial in teaching young saxophonists good ensemble playing habits, awareness of intonation tendencies, and playing with a good tone quality in order to achieve blend.

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8Ibid., 28.
For this project, I referred to a performance edition by Paul Winter who, like Gabrieli, gave no indication of specific instrumentation in the score. Winter changed the moveable clef symbols used by Gabrieli to the more common treble, alto, and bass clefs and also included his own indications of tempo, dynamics, and phrasing. Because the score had no specific instrumentation, this work is easily accessible to any ensemble of like instruments. Since the ranges of the ten parts matched the ranges of the saxophone family, there was no arranging necessary in the creation of this performance edition for saxophones. The parts were simply transposed for the individual members of the ensemble, as shown in Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saxophone Orchestra Instrumentation</th>
<th>Instrumentation of Gabrieli’s <em>Canzona Primi Toni à 10</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soprano 1</td>
<td>Part 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soprano 2</td>
<td>Part 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altos 1-4</td>
<td>Parts 3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenors 1 and 2</td>
<td>Parts 7 and 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baritone</td>
<td>Part 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>Part 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. The scoring of Gabrieli’s *Canzona Primi Toni à 10* for saxophone orchestra.

Many high school and early college students do not own a soprano saxophone. I have included optional alto saxophone parts to replace the two soprano parts in the event that soprano saxophones are not available. Likewise, bass saxophones are very expensive and not many public school and collegiate music programs own them. An optional part for a second baritone has been included to replace the bass saxophone part.

**Editorial Changes**

Dynamic markings indicated in the piece have been retained from Paul Winter’s performance edition of the original. Because neither of the two editions of the *Canzona* gave indications of tempo and articulation, it was necessary to provide these for the benefit of less experienced ensembles in which the members might not be familiar with
the style of Renaissance music. In order to maintain the majestic spirit of Gabrieli’s music, I have indicated a tempo of seventy beats per minute (to the half note). In the triple-meter section beginning at measure 75, I have followed Paul Winter’s suggestion that the tempo of the half note in the duple portion become the tempo of the dotted half note. Likewise, when the duple section returns in measure 88, the dotted half-note tempo becomes the half note tempo. A gradual ritard has been added at the return of the duple meter, and a heavier articulation style is suggested as an interpretive gesture to end the piece.

The style of articulation in Gabrieli’s instrumental music (particularly for brass) varies frequently depending on the performing ensemble. For this edition, I have given articulation suggestions that I believe capture the style of the work, and can be executed easily on the saxophone. In general, softer sections are to be played more legato, but with a crisp articulation to the eighth notes. Louder sections should be played with more separation, especially following dotted notes.

This arrangement of Gabrieli’s Canzona Primi Toni à 10 was designed to teach saxophone students the benefits of good ensemble playing. The imitative counterpoint present in this work requires everyone in the saxophone orchestra to play in the same style, maintain a constant tempo, yield to other players’ entrances, and play with good intonation and tone quality. All of these traits create the homogeneous sound that is characteristic of the saxophone orchestra and ensures that individual sounds will not overpower the ensemble. One great benefit of transcriptions is that they are suitable for any type of performance and are received well by all varieties of audiences. The
*Canzona* can be used at any point in a concert program, but especially as an opener or fanfare.
Canzona primi toni à 10

Giovanni Gabrieli (1554-1612)
arr. by Marcus Ballard

2006

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Canzone primi toni a 10

Sop. Sx. 1
S. Sx. 2
A. Sx. 1
A. Sx. 2
A. Sx. 3
A. Sx. 4
T. Sx. 1
T. Sx. 2
B. Sx.
Bass Sax

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Canzone primi toni a 10

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Canzone primi toni a 10

Sop. Sx. 1
S. Sx. 2
A. Sx. 1
A. Sx. 2
A. Sx. 3
A. Sx. 4
T. Sx. 1
T. Sx. 2
B. Sx.
Bass Sax
Canzone primi toni a 10
CHAPTER II

JEAN-PHILIPPE RAMEAU (1683-1764): INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC FROM LES INDES GALANTES

French composer and theorist Jean-Philippe Rameau was born into a very musical family. His father was an organist who served in two churches in the Dijon region, and was mostly responsible for the music education of his children. Since Rameau did not become known as a theorist or a composer until after the age of forty, details about his early life are quite sketchy. He was also very secretive about the first half of his life, even with close friends and acquaintances.¹

In 1722, he moved to Paris to oversee the publication of his Traité de l'harmonie (Treatise on Harmony).² Rameau wrote several treatises on harmony, counterpoint, and the art of accompanying, making him as notable a theorist as he was a composer. It was in Paris that he would write his treatises as well as his first compositions, consisting of incidental music for the theatre, and cantatas and motets for his various church appointments. Throughout the middle 1720s, more of his music was published, including several cantatas and collections of keyboard works.

Above all, Rameau favored operas.³ His first opera, Hippolyte et Aricie, was received with mixed reactions of praise and disgust. The critics despised the almost "Italian" character of many of his operas, preferring the more traditional French style of


³Sadler and Christensen, 781.
Some of Rameau’s operas, however, achieved some success with the public and critics. One of the most successful was *Les Indes Galantes*, an “opera-ballet” composed in 1735.

*Les Indes Galantes* or “The Gallant Indies” comes from Rameau’s earliest period of operas. Its popularity is reflected in the 64 performances between 1735 and 1737. The exotic locations portrayed in *Les Indes Galantes* are divided into four “entrees” set respectively in a Turkish garden, a desert in the Peruvian mountains, a Persian market, and a village in the North American forests. Three of the “entrees” culminate in some sort of ritual: the adoration of the sun in “Les Incas de Peru,” a Persian flower festival in “Les fleurs,” and the ceremony of the Great Pipe of Peace in “Les sauvages.” The latter of the three was likely inspired when Rameau attended a performance given by two Louisiana Indians at the Théâtre Italien in 1725.

The librettist was Louis Fuzelier, who used ethnic settings to develop Enlightenment themes involving the interactions and conflicts between European and foreign cultures. The main “entrees” are interspersed with short dance movements. The music chosen for this project consists of the overture, a Musette in the form of a rondeau, and the Chaconne finale.

Cuthbert Girdlestone describes the overture as “reflecting the readiness of Rameau to get away from the tradition of Lully” and “much more melodic than earlier

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4 Sadler and Christensen, 781.
5 Ibid., 781.
6 Girdlestone, 323.
7 Ibid., 780.
8 Ibid., 791.
French overtures.\(^9\) The introduction is almost fugal in nature, giving way to a "Vite" section with a theme of wide leaps of sevenths and octaves, and a counter-subject of running scales. It is a rather lengthy overture which Girdlestone considers suitable for concert performance.\(^10\)

The *Musette en Rondeau* is a very lyrical, lilting dance. The form follows the structure ABACA. The absence of the flute, coupled with the addition of a musette (a French instrument similar to the accordion) gives the movement a very "reedy" sound, reflecting its pastoral nature. The Chaconne begins in D minor with a very heavy quality. The proceeding section in D major is much lighter with the addition of majestic trumpets and timpani. Girdlestone cites a statement from a 1777 article in the *Journal de Paris* which suggests that the Chaconne was originally composed for Rameau’s opera *Samson*.\(^11\) Its purpose in that opera was to "call the people to worship at the feet of the True God."\(^12\)

The Transcription Process

The Baroque period is represented in the saxophone orchestra repertoire mostly by the works of Bach, Händel, and Vivaldi. The music of French Baroque composers has remained relatively untouched except for an arrangement of the overture to Lully’s opera *Armide*. For this reason, I decided to arrange a composition by a French composer in an attempt to encourage saxophonists to further explore French Baroque music. The ornate compositional style of the French Baroque can be used to teach saxophone ensembles the

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\(^9\) Girdlestone, 324.

\(^{10}\) Ibid., 324.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 347.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 348.
important traits of delicate ensemble playing, and proper performance of Baroque ornaments.

I was drawn to *Les Indes Galantes* and these particular movements because they represented the French style of the period, and because the use of ornamentation was not so excessive as to be too difficult for the saxophone. These instrumental movements were also scored for a small orchestra, making it possible for all of the parts to be covered in the arrangement.

In order to transcribe a work such as this for a saxophone ensemble, a few aspects of the original score needed to be changed. Since the three movements chosen for the transcription were in keys that would hinder the ability of the performers to execute the ornaments and technical passages, each movement was transposed up a minor second.

The figure below shows Rameau’s orchestration for the overture, the corresponding scoring for saxophone orchestra, and any special treatments of parts necessary for the arrangement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flute 1 and 2</th>
<th>Soprano 1 and 2</th>
<th>Second soprano covers the trumpet part in the <em>Chaconne</em>.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oboe 1 and 2</td>
<td>Soprano 1 and 2</td>
<td>Oboes omitted unless independent from the flute. Sopranos cover oboe parts in the <em>Musette</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bassoon 1 and 2</td>
<td>Baritone 1 and 2</td>
<td>Occasionally covering a bassoon part that is too high for the baritone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violins</td>
<td>Altos 1-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violas</td>
<td>Tenor 1 and 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuo</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>Harpsichord omitted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. An explanation of the saxophone orchestra scoring.

The assignment of the string parts was based on the timbre and range of the instruments available in the saxophone orchestra. The violin parts fit well within the range of the alto saxophone, and the timbre of the alto adds a richness to the overall sound of the piece. In
its middle and high tessitura, the tenor saxophone can assimilate a viola-like timbre, making it perfect for covering the viola parts. The string bass part is best suited for the E-flat contrabass saxophone; however, because of limited production and extremely high cost, there are very few ensembles that have a contrabass at their disposal. Therefore, some of the notes of the string bass were taken up an octave to fit within the range of the bass saxophone.

Editorial Changes

While I have attempted to remain as true to the original composition as possible, there were some editorial changes made to the transcription in order to make it playable for saxophones. Very few of the slur markings found in the arrangement existed in the original score. The slurs and phrase markings were added to give the music an elegant character and to eliminate the heaviness caused by over-articulation on the saxophone. In following suggestions by Robert Donington, the slurs were restricted to groups of two to four notes, except in the more virtuosic sweeping runs in the Chaconne.13 I retained the dynamic markings indicated in the original score as suggestions for balance. In an attempt to capture the abrupt “terraced” dynamic changes, no indications of crescendo and decrescendo were added.

Performance Practice Suggestions

One of the truly unique characteristics of Baroque music lies in the ornamentation. There are many helpful books and treatises available to students and performers that cite various performers, composers, and theorists of the time regarding the correct performance of Baroque music. In order to perform this transcription as

accurately as possible, the performance practices of the French Baroque must be applied strictly. The three movements of *Les Indes Galantes* present the saxophonist with three main performance practice considerations: the trill, the appoggiatura, and the application of *notes inégales* (unequal notes).

**Trills**

As a general rule, all standard Baroque trills begin on their upper note (“prepared” if the upper note is prolonged, “unprepared” if the upper note is shorter). In the three movements of this arrangement, the trill (*tremblement* in French) is notated in two ways (see Figure 2). The first is a brief trill (two or three repercussions) which begins on the upper note and leaves a small amount of length at the end of the note that is being trilled. The second is a much longer trill which continues to the next note. Figure 3 shows how each type of trill should be performed.

![Figure 2. The two types of trills found in *Les Indes Galantes*.](image)

![Figure 3. Proper performance of the two types of trill found in *Les Indes Galantes*.](image)

**The Appoggiatura**

The appoggiatura (*coulé* or *port-de-voix* in French) is commonly referred to as a grace note in modern terms, and appears frequently in the *Chaconne* in two forms: preceding a quarter note (passing appoggiatura), and preceding a dotted half or half note.

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(accented appoggiatura). The performance style of each appoggiatura shown in Figure 4 was suggested by Johann Joachim Quantz in his treatise *On Playing the Flute*.

![Figure 4. Suggested performance style of appoggiatura.](https://example.com/figure4.png)

In the case of the accented appoggiatura preceding a dotted quarter note (the second example of Figure 4), Quantz’s suggested method of performance results in an unnecessary prolonging of dissonance on the downbeat. For this reason, I have suggested the method shown in Figure 5.

![Figure 5. Alternative method of performing appoggiatura preceding a dotted quarter note.](https://example.com/figure5.png)

**Notes Inégales**

The French practice of *notes inégales* (unequal notes) should be applied throughout the arrangement. The overture should be performed as a typical French overture, with over-dotting occurring on dotted rhythms, and passages of stepwise eighth and sixteenth notes given an uneven lilting motion. An example from the overture displaying both applications is shown in Figure 6.

---


16 Donington, 453.

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This lilting character should also be applied in the *Minuet en Rondeau* as indicated by the slurs written over pairs of eighth notes in Rameau’s original scoring. The exception to the application of *inégal* is the *Chaconne*. In this movement, the fast tempo hinders the use of inequality, which would cause the lilting motion of the lines to become burdensome.

A lack of understanding of Baroque style is the most common problem for saxophonists performing transcriptions from this period. Being familiar with the differences between types of ornaments and how they should be performed is only a small step in the direction of an accurate performance. Though many Baroque composers were influenced by composers from different countries, each nationality has its own style. Saxophonists must also be aware of how Baroque music sounds. Instruments of the period were not built to the same specifications as they are today. The saxophone performer must be able to adapt to play with a more transparent sound, and a lighter style of articulation.

For saxophone students, knowing the music of Bach and Händel is not sufficient to becoming familiar with Baroque style. There is a need for more variety in the body of Baroque transcriptions and arrangements for the saxophone. It is my hope that this project will encourage others to explore more of the French and English Baroque composers. The pathway to a better understanding of Baroque style for saxophonists is through exposure. Encouraging saxophone students to listen to Baroque music and

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\(^{17}\text{Ibid., 458.}\)
perform transcriptions will ultimately make them better teachers for future generations of students.
Ouverture 54

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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Les Indes Galantes
Musette en Rondeau
Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764)
arr. by Marcus Ballard

Moderé

Soprano Sax.

Alto Sax. 1

Alto Sax. 2

Tenor Sax.

Baritone Sax.

Bass Saxophone

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Musette en Rondeau

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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Chaconne

S. Sx. 1

S. Sax. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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Chaconne

S. Sax. 1

S. Sax. 2

A. Sax. 1

A. Sax. 2

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Bass Sax.
Chaconne

S. Sx. 1

S. Sax. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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Chaconne
Chaconne

S. Sx. 1

S. Sax. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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CHAPTER III

FRANÇOIS-JOSEPH GOSSEC (1734-1829): SINFONIA IN G MAJOR OP. 12, NO. 2

François-Joseph Gossec, a Flemish composer of the Classical period, was very active in France. Gossec displayed musical talent from early childhood and reputedly possessed a beautiful voice. He sang in the collegiate church of Walcourt from age 6, and received training on the violin, harpsichord, harmony, and composition from Jean Vanderbelen at the chapel of St. Pierre in Maubeuge. Further studies as a chorister came from the Antwerp Cathedral with André-Joseph Blavier. In 1751, Gossec went to Paris and became a violinist and bassist in the private orchestra of the fermier général of Paris. In 1755, he succeeded Johann Stamitz as the director of the orchestra until the patron’s death in 1762.

His earliest music consisted of solo sonatas for violin and bass, duos for flutes or violins, and 24 symphonies, the earliest of which were for strings only. The chamber works reflect Italian influences, while the symphonies are heavily steeped in the German tradition, particularly of the Mannheim school. Influenced by Stamitz, he added a Minuet and Trio movement to his three-movement form, and included separate parts for winds. Also from this early period is the Symphonie périodique in D, which was one of the first orchestral works in France to use clarinets.¹

Gossec eventually turned to stage works and large-scale vocal works. He continued to write instrumental chamber works and symphonies, making use of the growing number of wind players coming to Paris from Germany. He developed a quality of richness in sonority that was not found in the works of other French composers of the

time. He founded his own orchestra in 1769, which commissioned new works and
introduced guest artists. Gossec composed many symphonies for this orchestra which
feature harmonic progressions through remote keys. He also wrote twelve string quartets
and became the first person to conduct a Haydn symphony in France.\(^2\)

He continued to compose symphonies, operas, and ballets until the ascension of
Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799. He eventually gave up writing operas after the failure of
his *Le double déguisement* and devoted his life to teaching.\(^3\) He wrote solfege and
singing methods, as well as treatises on harmony and counterpoint. When Louis XVIII
dissolved the Conservatoire in 1816, Gossec lost his teaching position and spent his final
years in the Paris suburb of Passy.

The *Sinfonia* was first published in 1769 as the second of *Six Simphonies à
grande orchestre dédiées à Son Altesse Monseigneur le prince Louis de Rohan
coadjuteur de l'évêché de Strasbourg par F. J. Gossec d'Anvers. œuvre XII. à Paris chez
M. Venier éditeur etc.* It appeared in London the next year as No. XXXIII of *The
Periodical Overtures in 8 parts. Printed and Sold by R. Bremmer, at the Harp and
Hautboy opposite Somerset-House in the Strand.*

The work, from the same year that Gossec founded his own orchestra, displays
many of the characteristics of the Mannheim School, including several examples of
"rocket" themes. There is no Minuet and Trio movement: the three-movement scheme
consists of Allegro molto, Andante moderato, and Presto. The relationship between tonic
and dominant is used as a pivot point through which Gossec modulates to different keys.

\(^2\)Ibid., 187.

\(^3\)Jean-Louis Jam, "Marie-Joseph Chénier and François-Joseph Gossec: Two Artists in the Service
For example, the development section of the first movement begins in D major, and eventually modulates to A and E. A chromatic sequence then leads to a pedal D before the recapitulation. The slower second movement begins in C major, and has a short development which functions in a similar way to the first movement. The final Presto is in a fast duple meter which remains mostly within the keys of G major and D major.

The Transcription Process

The Classical period is represented by transcriptions for saxophone and piano. Arrangements of pieces by Mozart and Beethoven can be found in the literature for saxophone quartet, but little exists for the saxophone orchestra with the exception of three works by Mozart (Turkish March, Rondo-Serenade No. 10, and Titus Overture), and one by Haydn (Oxford Symphony). Jean-Marie Londeix’s *Répertoire Universel de Musique pour Saxophone* lists transcriptions of four works by Gossec: a Rondo Tarantelle from *La fête du village* and a Gavotte for alto saxophone and piano, an Ouverture for two alto saxophones, and a Sonata for saxophone in B-flat and piano. I wanted to arrange a piece that would emphasize the same lightness of ensemble playing as the Rameau arrangement, but slightly more difficult than the Gabrieli and Rameau transcriptions.

I also wanted to implement the sopranino saxophone, which is pitched in E-flat and sounds an octave higher than the alto. The sopranino adds a unique color to the saxophone orchestra and can have quite a dramatic effect, especially when doubled an octave lower by either the soprano or alto. The sopranino can be difficult to play in tune due to its extremely small size. The slightest imperfection in the construction of the mouthpiece and any minute variations in the size of the tone holes can have a drastic

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effect on the intonation tendencies. However, an experienced player with a good sense of pitch and tone control can manage these tendencies with relatively little difficulty.

The original orchestration of the symphony lent itself well to the saxophone orchestra as shown in Figure 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oboes</th>
<th>Soprano 1 and 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horns</td>
<td>Altos 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Violins</td>
<td>Soprano/Alto 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Violin</td>
<td>Alto 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violas</td>
<td>Tenor 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cello/String Bass</td>
<td>Baritone/Bass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. An explanation of the saxophone orchestra scoring.

Editorial Changes

The original key of G major was lowered a major second in order to accommodate the key-range of the saxophone. All of Gossec's phrase markings, dynamic indications, and articulations were retained. Fast tremolos, which are not idiomatic on the saxophone, were rewritten as shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2](image)

Figure 2. The rewriting of tremolos in the saxophone orchestra arrangement.

Slurs were also added to long passages of sixteenth notes in the third movement to promote an elegant approach to certain passages in the strings.
Performance Practice Suggestions

Because Gossec was influenced by the Mannheim School, the common characteristics of French music during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (especially notes inégales) do not apply to this symphony. All rhythms should be played precisely as they appear on the page, with the exception of a grace note preceding an eighth note that is followed by two sixteenths. This type of figure is commonly found in the Classical period (especially in the music of Mozart and Haydn), and should be performed as four sixteenth notes as shown in Figure 3.

![Figure 3. The proper performance of grace note figures.](image)

This work has much less ornamentation than the Rameau transcription in the previous chapter. As indicated in the original score, trills should be performed beginning on the written note unless preceded by a written upper grace note (see Figure 4).

![Figure 4. Example of a trill beginning on the upper note.](image)

The performers should strive to achieve a light ensemble sound with a lively character. Crisp articulation and careful attention to dynamic contrasts will keep the arrangement from sounding too heavy. Also, the use of faster, narrow vibrato on longer tones will contribute a lightness of sound and ensure a more accurate representation of the style.

The saxophone is an instrument known for its ability to project its sound and power, especially in large numbers. It is possible, however, for a saxophone orchestra to
obtain a more transparent character through control of dynamics, and by utilizing the saxophonist's ability to change the color of his or her sound. It is important for every member of the ensemble to remain aware of this and work together to play with a more relaxed, lighter sound.

The music of the Classical period is a great avenue through which saxophonists can practice and master these techniques. The ability to perform works of varying styles widens the spectrum of sounds that the saxophone orchestra is capable of producing. The Classical period represents a serious void in the body of transcribed literature for the saxophone orchestra. It is my hope that this transcription will encourage other arrangers to explore the wonderful music of this era and help fill the gap in the repertoire.
Sinfonia Op. 12, No. 2
I. Allegro molto

François-Joseph Gossec (1734-1829)
arr. by Marcus Ballard

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
I. Allegro molto

Sno. Sx.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sx.

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I. Allegro molto

Sno. Sx.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sx.
I. Allegro molto

Sno. Sx.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sx.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
I. Allegro molto
I. Allegro molto
I. Allegro molto
I. Allegro molto

Sno. Sx.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sx.

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I. Allegro molto

Sno. Sx.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sx.
I. Allegro molto

Sno. Sx.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sx.

\[ p \text{ cresc. poco a poco...} \]

\[ f \]

\[ p \text{ cresc. poco a poco...} \]

\[ f \]

\[ p \text{ cresc. poco a poco...} \]

\[ f \]

\[ p \text{ cresc. poco a poco...} \]

\[ f \]
I. Allegro molto

Sno. Sx.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sx.
I. Allegro molto
Sinfonia Op. 12, No. 2
II. Andante moderato

Francisco-Joseph Gossec (1734-1829)
arr. by Marcus Ballard

Andante moderato $\frac{1}{4} \cdot 92$

Sopranino Sax.

Soprano Sax.

Alto Sax.

Tenor Sax.

Baritone Sax.

Bass Sax.

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II. Andante moderato

Sno. Sax.

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Bass Sax.

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II. Andante moderato

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

cresc. m\textit{f}
II. Andante moderato

Sno. Sax.

S. Sax.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

B. Sax.

Bass Sax.

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II. Andante moderato

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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II. Andante moderato

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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II. Andante moderato
Sinfonia Op. 12, No. 2
III. Presto

François-Joseph Gossec (1734-1829)
arr. by Marcus Ballard

Presto $\frac{1}{4} = 144$

Soprano Sax.

Alto Sax. 1

Alto Sax. 2

Tenor Sax.

Baritone Sax.

Bass Sax.
III. Presto

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx.

cresc.

A. Sx. 1

cresc.

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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III. Presto
III. Presto

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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Sno. Sax.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.
III. Presto

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.
III. Presto

Sno. Sax.

S. Sax.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

\( p \)
III. Presto

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III. Presto

[Saxophone parts]

Sno. Sax.
S. Sx.
A. Sx. 1
A. Sx. 2
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Bass Sax.

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CHAPTER IV

CARL NIELSEN (1865-1931): LITTLE SUITE FOR STRINGS, OP. 1

Danish composer Carl Nielsen was one of the most important of the generation of composers who were active in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He composed in all the main genres of the time but is best known for his six symphonies. He is revered in Denmark for his large output of popular strophic songs. His activities as a conductor and teacher made him the most influential Danish musician of his time. Nielsen’s international popularity was sporadic during his lifetime, and has grown steadily since the 1950s, particularly in Britain and the United States.

Nielsen’s family lived on the island of Funen, and Nielsen often said that he had the sights and sounds of the island in front of him when he composed. His music is influenced by song and dance that he learned from his mother, and by the underlying forces of nature and human character, which became constant sources of inspiration for his compositions.

The Suite for Strings, op. 1, also called the Little Suite was completed in 1888, before Nielsen became a violinist at the Royal Chapel. It was probably not the first work he had ever composed, but it was the first to make a major impression on the public at its performance at Tivoli on September 8, 1888. It was for this reason that he gave it the label “op. 1”, with a dedication to Orla Rosenhoff, his teacher at the conservatory.

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Rosenhoff was the only teacher Nielsen respected, and the only one to whom he felt indebted.\textsuperscript{3}

The \textit{Little Suite} is a serenade-like piece in three movements, reminiscent of the string serenades of Grieg and Mozart. The middle movement features a waltz which is a reflection of his ability to write tuneful melodies. Like Grieg's \textit{Serenade}, the main theme of the first movement returns in the "Finale." The work displays many similarities to the music of Brahms and Wagner. The presence of hemiolas in the \textit{Intermezzo}, and the haunting melodies in the outer two movements bear a striking resemblance to the symphonies of Brahms. Wagner's influence can be heard in the chromatically shifting harmonies and lengthy phrases.

The melodic content of the \textit{Little Suite} shows influences from the folk songs and dances of his childhood, especially in the first two movements. The use of folk music as an inspirational source was a common trend in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a stark contrast, the \textit{Finale} is reminiscent of the soaring "rocket" themes and driving rhythms of the Classical period. This mixture of Classical, Romantic, and folk influences is present throughout his later works as well.

The Transcription Process

Works for string orchestra are a common resource for saxophonists and arrangers of works for saxophone orchestra. Both ensembles are made up of different voices of the same instrument family; however, great care must be taken when choosing a work for strings to ensure a successful transcription without sacrificing the musical integrity of the original piece.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 41.
For Nielsen’s *Little Suite*, many decisions were made regarding instrumentation and voice doubling. The romantic nature of this piece is well-suited to the expressive potential of the saxophone; however, the wide instrument range of the string family poses a problem in the transfer process. Changing the range of a musical line from the original work can often ruin the total effect of the transcription. In the *Little Suite*, it was impossible to avoid having to place certain lines in a lower octave, even after transposing the arrangement to a lower key (down a major second from the original). However, the only notes that had to be altered were the string harmonics on the chords at the end of the *Intermezzo*, which were written down an octave.

Another common problem with transcribing string orchestra music for saxophones is the issue of doubling parts. In a string orchestra, several players will be performing the same part. This is essential to a string orchestra in order to make the ensemble sound full. In the saxophone orchestra, one or two players together can sound as full as an entire section of violins.

Additionally, whereas having multiple string players on one part helps mask bad intonation, doing so in a saxophone orchestra only magnifies the tuning problems. Therefore, it is best to avoid unison doublings in the saxophone orchestra, unless it occurs in a section where more strength is needed. In most cases (especially when involving the sopranino saxophone), an octave doubling is much stronger.

Having the alto saxophone double the sopranino part an octave lower allows the sopranino player the freedom to play the part comfortably above the reinforcement. It also provides the sopranino player with a strong pitch reference, which is helpful, considering the intonation tendencies of the instrument. For this transcription, unison
doubling was used only to keep important lines from being overpowered when the full ensemble is playing.

Figure 1 shows how the original string orchestration was arranged for the saxophone orchestra.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violin I</th>
<th>Sopranino/Soprano 1</th>
<th>Occasionally used alternately for changes in timbre. Soprano 1 also covers the higher of the second violin parts when they divide.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violin II</td>
<td>Soprano 2/Altos 1-3</td>
<td>Also doubles the sopranino part at a lower octave for support in its higher range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>Alto 3/Tenor 1 and 2</td>
<td>Alto 3 covers higher viola parts during triple-stops; otherwise it covers the second violin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cello</td>
<td>Baritone 1 and 2</td>
<td>Baritone 2 occasionally doubles the bass part for strength.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>String Bass</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. An explanation of the saxophone orchestra scoring.

Editorial Changes

Nielsen’s phrase markings were all maintained for this arrangement.

Articulations were left mostly intact with the exception of the pizzicato markings.

Though the saxophone technique known as “slap-tonguing” produces a pizzicato-like effect, the result is not as delicate as true string pizzicato. Therefore, any pizzicato markings in the string orchestra score were marked as staccato in the saxophone parts, and should be played with a light, crisp articulation. Tremolos were either omitted or re-written at larger note values, with the exception of the eighth note triplet tremolos in the *Intermezzo* and *Finale*.
Performance Practice Suggestions

Though the *Little Suite* poses no specific performance practice concerns in the way of ornaments, there are certain issues of dynamics and phrasing of which saxophonists should be aware. Members of each section of the saxophone orchestra should be conscious of the role of their particular part. For example, if a part being played by two or more people is marked *fortissimo*, it is not necessary for each person to play at that exact dynamic level. If everyone involved plays at half the dynamic level, the same effect is produced without overpowering the ensemble. The melodic material should be audible at all times, and dynamic levels can be adjusted to ensure that the melody is never covered.

String music of the Romantic period often presents the problem of breathing for saxophonists. Romantic music often contains long phrases, and saxophonists must make careful decisions regarding where to take a breath. Suggestions for appropriate places to breathe have been indicated in the score of this arrangement. These markings are only suggestions, and can be changed if needed, providing that doing so does not severely interrupt the musical line.

For saxophonists, arrangements of string orchestra music from the Romantic period can be extremely beneficial for learning qualities of expressive ensemble playing. Good musical phrasing, careful control of dynamics, and communication between ensemble members are essential skills needed for the development of musical maturity. Proficient arranging through careful use of voice doubling, and a knowledge of the saxophone’s tendencies can result in a challenging yet rewarding transcription that remains as true as possible to the original composition.
Little Suite Op. 1
I. Präludium

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)
arr. by Marcus Ballard

Andante con moto $J = 56$

Sopranino Sax.

Soprano Sax. 1

Soprano Sax. 2

Alto Sax. 1

Alto Sax. 2

Alto Sax. 3

Tenor Sax. 1

Tenor Sax. 2

Baritone Sax. 1

Baritone Sax. 2

Bass Sax.
Little Suite Op. 1
II. Intermezzo

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931)
arr. by Marcus Ballard

Allegro moderato $J = 176$

Sopranino Sax.

Soprano Sax. 1

Soprano Sax. 2

Alto Sax. 1

Alto Sax. 2

Alto Sax. 3

Tenor Sax. 1

Tenor Sax. 2

Baritone Sax. 1

Baritone Sax. 2

Bass Sax.
II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.

S. Sax. 1

S. Sax. 2

A. Sax. 1

A. Sax. 2

A. Sax. 3

T. Sax. 1

T. Sax. 2

B. Sax. 1

B. Sax. 2

Bass Sax.

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II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.
II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.
S. Sx. 1
S. Sx. 2
A. Sx. 1
A. Sx. 2
A. Sx. 3
T. Sx. 1
T. Sx. 2
B. Sx. 1
B. Sx. 2
Bass Sax.

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II. Intermezzo
II. Intermezzo
II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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II. Intermezzo
II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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II. Intermezzo
II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.  

S. Sx. 1  

S. Sx. 2  

A. Sx. 1  

A. Sx. 2  

A. Sx. 3  

T. Sx. 1  

T. Sx. 2  

B. Sx. 1  

B. Sx. 2  

Bass Sax.  

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II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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II. Intermezzo

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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II. Intermezzo
II. Intermezzo
II. Intermezzo
II. Intermezzo
III. Finale
III. Finale

Sno. Sax.
S. Sx. 1
S. Sx. 2
A. Sx. 1
A. Sx. 2
A. Sx. 3
T. Sx. 1
T. Sx. 2
B. Sx. 1
B. Sx. 2
Bass Sax.

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III. Finale

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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III. Finale

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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III. Finale

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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III. Finale
III. Finale

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx. 1

S. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

A. Sx. 3

T. Sx. 1

T. Sx. 2

B. Sx. 1

B. Sx. 2

Bass Sax.

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CHAPTER V

WILLIAM GRANT STILL (1895-1978): ELEGY FOR ORGAN

William Grant Still is considered to be the most important and highly influential African-American composer to date. He was active during a time when racial tension in the United States was rampant, frequently resulting in deadly outbursts of violence against the black community. The persistent hatred and racial bigotry made it difficult for African-Americans to make respectable livings for themselves and their families, but Still would not be denied. Despite everything, he became the first black American to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra (the Rochester Philharmonic under Howard Hanson, 1931), to conduct a white radio orchestra ("Deep River Hour", 1932), to conduct a major orchestra (Los Angeles Philharmonic, 1936), to have an opera produced by a major company (Troubled Island, City Opera of New York, 1949), and the first to receive a series of commissions and performances from major orchestras. His compositions and arrangements have stood the test of time, earning him the nickname "the Dean of African-American composers" in the press.

Still was born on May 11, 1895 in Woodville, Mississippi. His music education included studies at Wilberforce University in Ohio and the Oberlin Conservatory. While pursuing his career in New York, Still was offered the opportunity to study with avant-garde composer Edgard Varèse in Boston. He would later note that Varèse was his most important teacher because he encouraged him to pursue his expressive nature.

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William Grant Still's music reflects the influence of his African-American heritage. His works often contain the modal inflections of blues music, as well as African-American spirituals. Blues melodies appear quite frequently in *From the Land of Dreams* (considered to be his first composition) and his *Afro-American Symphony*. Irregular phrase lengths and blues-related harmonies are also frequent characteristics of his works.

William Grant Still was no stranger to the saxophone. In 1954, he composed an original work entitled *Romance* for saxophone and piano, which he later scored for a small orchestra. The work was dedicated to saxophonist Sigurd Raschèr, who began corresponding with Still in January 1951, after discovering that the two shared a mutual friend in New York. Still also arranged his piano work *Quit Dat Fool' nish* for Raschèr, to be paired in performance with the *Romance*.

**The Transcription Process**

Although William Grant Still is considered an influential composer, his music is rarely heard by audiences; and with the exception of the *Afro-American Symphony*, it is rarely studied by music students. Because Still's name should be familiar to most saxophonists, I believed that a saxophone orchestra arrangement would attract the attention of teachers and ensemble conductors. This arrangement will be a useful tool for teaching saxophone orchestra members how to achieve a blended ensemble sound.

My transcription of the *Elegy* for organ was done with permission from Still's daughter, Judith Anne Still, who operates William Grant Still Music, Inc. in Flagstaff, Arizona. She remains very active in continuing to reach current audiences with her late

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3 Letter from Sigurd M. Raschèr to William Grant Still, January 1951, The William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers, University of Arkansas Libraries.
father's music, permitting transcriptions of works that she feels will be successful when arranged for another medium. When I contacted Ms. Still about the possibility of transcribing her father's Elegy for saxophone orchestra, she quickly responded to express her interest in the project and her willingness to publish the arrangement.

The Elegy, composed in Los Angeles in 1963, was part of a series of commissions by the West Coast chapters of the American Guild of Organists. The autograph manuscript can be found in the William Grant Still and Verna Arvey Papers at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. It is a very serene, reflective work, deeply rooted in the Negro spirituals that influenced so much of his music. Spirituals were a type of song that developed during the period of slavery in the United States. They normally consisted of alternating musical lines with a refrain, and were often sung in unison.4 A particular characteristic of spirituals is the use of microtonally flatted notes, usually lowered thirds, fifths, and sevenths. Their frequent melancholy theme of death was meant to suggest a spirit that has already left this earth.5

The form of the Elegy consists of an opening A section (refrain) in the key of C minor, a contrasting B section in the key of G minor, and a return of the opening A section to close the work. The A sections are very melodic with symmetrical phrases, much like the refrain of a spiritual. The B section is much more agitated, consisting of leaps rather than step-wise melodic lines. The phrases in the B section are very irregular in length; a common characteristic of Still's music. Longer phrases at the beginning and end of the section are contrasted with very short, two-measure phrases toward the middle.

5Ibid., 287.
The closing A section is the same length as the first, but with a short three-bar coda at the end.

The sound of the saxophone orchestra has often been compared to that of an organ with all of the stops pulled. Organ compositions, especially those of this style, work exceptionally well for saxophone ensembles of any size. Many of the organ works of Johann Sebastian Bach have been arranged for saxophone orchestra with great success. Carl Anton Wirth and David Heinick, two composers who have written multiple original works for the saxophone, have both arranged their own organ works for saxophone orchestra, having recognized the similarities between the two media.

William Grant Still understood the expressive qualities of the saxophone, as he was able to hear a recording of Sigurd Raschèr which the famous saxophonist had sent to him in Los Angeles. In the Elegy for organ, the lyrical opening melody is very idiomatic to the saxophone. The work's lush sonorities and expressive melodic lines match quite well with the rich voices and legato playing of which the saxophone orchestra is very capable. The Elegy is also made up mostly of regular four-bar phrases, which is ideal for making decisions as to where the players should breathe.

An important feature of the organ is the use of stops to change the sound and tone color of the instrument. Most organs will have different stops to imitate reed instruments, brass instruments, bells, and strings. The color palette of the saxophone orchestra is limited. Assigning melodic lines to different members of the ensemble will produce the effect of a change of tone color, though not as drastically as the organ. Therefore, it is important to vary the placement of the melodic line within the ensemble, especially when a change of stop is indicated in the organ score. For example, in the B section of the
Elegy, Still indicates an octave stop to be added. Here, the alto saxophone was added an octave below the sopranino, which is already playing the melody. The sopranino also moves into a higher register at this point, producing the effect of an octave stop being pulled. Eight measures before the end of the B section, the melody is written to be played on the eight-foot flute stop. Instead of using the soprano or sopranino, the melody was written in the upper register of the alto, which is very flute-like. In the last two measures of the B section, the melody is to be played using a clarinet stop. In order to achieve an effective change of tone color, the melody was written in the low register of the sopranino.

Editorial Changes

The arrangement adheres very closely to the dynamic markings indicated by the composer with one exception. The dynamic level at the beginning of the A section is marked *mezzo-piano* in the first A, and *piano* in the second A. In the arrangement, the melody is played by the first alto in both sections. To be sure that the melody is heard, the alto part has been marked *mezzo-forte* in the first A section, and *mezzo-piano* in the second. The accompanimental parts were left unchanged. Still’s original phrase markings were also left unchanged because they enhance the shape of the melodic lines.

Performance Practice Suggestions

Dynamics, phrasing, tempo, vibrato, and ensemble blend are the prominent performance practice concerns in the arrangement of the *Elegy*. Each member of the saxophone orchestra should follow the dynamic markings carefully to ensure that the melodic material is always heard. The melody is often presented as a solo line which is passed between different voices to create a change in timbre and should be played with
confidence and expression. Vibrato in the ensemble is encouraged; however, it should be kept to a minimum in the accompanimental parts.

Breathing should occur at the ends of four-bar phrases, especially in the A sections. Subsequently, the phrases should be played as if sung, with emphasis on the range of the musical line. Accompanimental figures should be given similar direction in order to support the melody. This requires a level of communication not only between the ensemble and conductor, but amongst the ensemble members themselves. This type of communication will allow the conductor certain freedoms with tempo, eliminating discrepancies within the ensemble.

The members of the saxophone orchestra must also work together to achieve a blended sound. To make a successful arrangement of an organ composition, the ensemble must sound as a single, polyphonic instrument. While careful attention to dynamics will help this, every person in the ensemble should attempt to produce a similar tone quality, with warmth and tonal beauty being of utmost importance. Only the person playing the melodic line should be immediately perceived by the audience.

Though the arrangement of Still’s *Elegy* for organ is not technically demanding, the levels of musicianship and ensemble control needed for a successful performance make it very challenging. Ensembles of varying experience levels can benefit from the skills that are acquired through the performance of this type of composition. The *Elegy* is beautiful when played on the organ. That beauty is retained in the arrangement for saxophone orchestra; however the expressive qualities of the saxophone give the work its own unique character.
As the saxophone orchestra continues to increase in popularity, there is little doubt that its body of repertoire will continue to grow as well. Through the efforts of many dedicated teachers and performers, composers are being presented with a wide array of new and interesting uses for the saxophone. The resulting compositions have begun to include the use of extended techniques such as multiphonics, microtonal writing, and the incorporation of electronics to create new sounds that have never been heard previously in the saxophone orchestra repertoire.

As more saxophonists turn their attention to these new technically demanding works, it is important not to ignore the music of our past. Without the innovations explored by the great composers of the past centuries, the music of today could not exist. It is through the study and understanding of all musical styles that we learn the fundamentals of musicianship, and gain the skills necessary to comprehend the ever evolving music of our present and future. Through transcriptions such as those presented in this dissertation, saxophonists of varying experience levels can enjoy the opportunity to grow as musicians, making them more effective teachers for their future students.
Elegy

William Grant Still (1895-1978)
arr. by Marcus Ballard

Slowly $j = 63$

Score

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Elegy

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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Elegy

Sno. Sax.

S. Sx.

A. Sx. 1

A. Sx. 2

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bass Sax.

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