

Saxophone Instrumental Update 2



FOCUS OF THE WEEK

DYNAMICS



We all know that getting the right notes in the right order is just the start of playing music. The more we can get used to changing the dynamics at sight, the better a musician we will become. Whether you know 3 notes or 43 notes we can all learn to differ the volume of our sounds depending on the demands of our music.

Long notes are the best way to focus on dynamic changes as they give us the opportunity to really listen to the sound we make and concentrate on how we blow the air stream into our instrument to make it get louder and quieter. Pick any note you like and play it for a slow count of 4, try it loud and then quietly, pay attention to what you are doing to change the volume. Always take a big breath before starting and exhale slowly.

If you are a more advanced player, Grade 3 and upwards in particular, try to find more changes of volume such as mp, mf, pp and ff and then extend your long notes to a count of 8 slow beats and work on a crescendo and diminuendo within one note. It should be quite hard work, so don't worry if you're slightly out of breath after a few minutes of this!

Now go back to your pieces and apply them where directed. Can you notice bigger differences now between sections? Perform for your family and ask them to tell you where the dynamics changed, sometimes we think we are doing big contrasts as we play but often need to exaggerate them to be obvious to our audience. If they put their hands over their ears you may be playing a bit too loud!!

John Coltrane 1926-1967



John Coltrane was one of the most popular jazz players of the 1950's and 60's and is a name every Saxophonist should be familiar with. He is an iconic figure of 20th Century jazz bringing American jazz to the forefront. Unfortunately, he died at the young age of 40 but made a massive contribution within those years. His albums, 'Giant Steps' and 'A Love Supreme' are very well known in the jazz world.

https://youtu.be/e-nB_TpzkvM Here is a link to his performance of 'In a Sentimental Mood', a jazz classic. Listen to his gorgeous warm sound, laid back rhythms and dynamic control. Inspirational!

Challenge of the week

<https://youtu.be/9ovyeHfTk04> Here's a link to Henry Mancini's 'Pink Panther' theme tune.

This is an iconic piece for the Saxophone and great fun to play. Practice a chromatic scale before tackling this one, it will really help you to get to know the semitone finger patterns needed for this music.

You could also think about which dynamic you want it to be played at, should it be loud and forceful or gentle and chilled? Try both and see which works best. Enjoy!

