



Saxophone Instrumental Update 1



Hello everyone. This is intended to give some general tips and hints to apply to your practice sessions at home. The most important thing is to enjoy playing your instrument while also improving a little bit each time too.

FOCUS OF THE WEEK – ARTICULATION

We all know that playing the right notes in the right order is only the beginning of learning to play the music correctly. Composers are careful to show us exactly how the music should sound, some notes are tongued, some are slurred and then we have staccato, accents and tenuto markings to adhere to among others.

If you are just starting to learn the saxophone begin by identifying how to tongue and how to slur, watch our video tutorial on this [hyperlink](#)

Scales are one of the best ways to improve your articulation. Practise F major, G major and D minor either tongued or slurred until you have a good flow the them. If you are Grade 1 or 2 work on going all the way up the octave in one breath then breathe at the top and go back down the scale, this applies whether you are tonguing or slurring. By Grade 2 you should be aiming to play the whole 1 octave scale in one breath. When you have 12ths or 2 octaves you may still need to breathe at the top.

Grade 4 and above

Use your scales and arpeggios to improved your mixed articulation. Try them staccato rather than tongued, it should be harder work! Then do 2 notes slurred and 2 notes tongued. In the arpeggios do 2 slurred and 1 tongued so you get a pattern of 3. Once you've got the hang of that you can reverse the pattern, 2 notes tongued and 2 slurred etc. If you're feeling brave try to tongue 1, slur 2 and tongue 1. You could try placing an accent on the first note in each group of 4 in a scale and on the first note in each group of 3 in an arpeggio. The more you can get used to different combinations of tonguing the easier your pieces will be.

Watch and listen to Jess Gillam play Milhaud:Scaramouche – 3. Brasileira <https://youtu.be/PgFSYioCcm8> and take note of all the different articulations you can hear, it's a great piece!

A good practise routine!

1. **Warm up** with long notes – spending the first minute of your practice session on these will give you the best start, it warms up your instrument, your fingers and muscles, your breathing and, of course, your reed. Listen to the sound you make throughout, make it as warm and beautiful as you can.
2. **Scales** – Don't groan! Every piece of music you play is based on scales and arpeggios, we just don't always notice because we get caught up in the lovely melodies. Again, you don't need to spend all your practice session on these but a good 5 minutes of concentration will pay dividends when you get to your pieces, with the bonus that you'll make your teacher very happy when you play them confidently at your next lesson!





3. **Pieces** – Yay! The bit that students usually enjoy the most and if you’ve done points 1 and 2 above you will be fully warmed up and ready for action. Practising pieces should be like putting a jigsaw together, don’t just play them through, that’s playing, not practising. Look at it in sections, if there’s a tricky bit you always make a mistake in, slow it down, do the tricky bit over and over again until your fingers find the flow of the changes. Once you can play those few bars confidently, start a bit earlier in the piece and fit it all back together again.

Remember – you don’t have to practise the whole piece each time, it’s fine to work on a different section each day and then put the jigsaw together at the end of the week, you’ll see real progress that way.

Good luck!



Mrs Bell’s Challenge of the week



Dance Monkey



The link below will take you to a recording of Dance Monkey with the accompaniment and the notes are on the screen. There are a lot of tied notes which make it look more complicated than it sounds so maybe listen to it first <https://youtu.be/XBWyE1v8--I> as it’s a very repetitive motif and you’ll soon be able to play along by ear. Give it a go and if you’re feeling brave do a video of yourself playing it and send it in to #musicakirkleesathome, we’d love to see them. Have fun!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_AwdliN0IM



**CHALLENGE
ACCEPTED**