

Level 8 Private Instruction (Saxophone)

Suggested Books, Etudes and Pedagogical Materials: An Annotated Guide by Shannon LeClaire

Books are rated on a four star system, four stars (****) being the highest recommendation.

Books and Pedagogical Resources on Specific Topics

Altissimo Register:

Robert Luckey, Ph. D. Saxophone Altissimo: High Note Development for the Contemporary Player (Lafayette, LA: Olympia Music Publishing, 1992, Second ed. revised and expanded, 1998).

**** By far the best altissimo book available. As the date of publication indicates, this is the most up to date book about the saxophone altissimo register. The fingerings given are for modern instruments and are therefore more applicable than those found in older books. This book includes fingerings specific to each saxophone, a feature missing from several other popular altissimo books. There are more than 300 high note fingerings for Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Baritone Saxophones. For each altissimo note, between two and ten fingerings are suggested, and on average, five are given. Another selling point for this book is the excellent information concerning embouchure, jaw position, air velocity and reed/mouthpiece setups as they relate to the altissimo register. The author states that the book is “a comprehensive approach for both classical and jazz players” and the book stays true to this objective. There is an entire chapter devoted to fingerings for altissimo passages in selected alto saxophone solos from the classical repertoire, with different suggestions for horns with a High F# and those without a High F#. The book also includes eight jazz etudes written over the changes to “Groovin’ High” that incorporate altissimo notes. The book also includes many excellent overtone exercises and extended range exercises.

Rosemary Lang, Beginning Studies in the Altissimo Register (Indianapolis, IN: Lang Music Publication, 1971).

*** Excellent book if you can find it in a library somewhere. No longer available.

Eugene Rousseau, Saxophone High Tones (Bloomington, IN: Etoile Music, Inc., 1978).

*** Excellent book, but not as comprehensive as the Luckey. The author emphasizes overtone practice and the book includes extensive overtone exercises. Contains fingerings specific to soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones.

Jean-Marie Londeix, Tablature des doigtés comparés harmoniques (Paris, France: Leduc, 1971/76).

*** Excellent altissimo fingering chart written by a master.

Sigurd M. Rascher, Top Tones for the Saxophone (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1941).

** As the first book published about the altissimo register, written by the world's first altissimo virtuoso, this book is of historical interest. As a practical book, it is flawed because the fingerings are severely limited in number and the fingerings are limited to the alto saxophone. Also, as Robert Luckey points out in the preface to his book, many of the fingerings do not work well on modern instruments manufactured in the 1960's and after. However, the book is still an excellent source of overtone exercises. Rascher also emphasizes the "ear" (being able to pre-hear an altissimo note before attempting to play it) as an important key to competence in the altissimo register.

Ted Nash, Ted Nash's Studies in High Harmonics (New York: MCA Music, 1946).

** Like Rascher's Top Tones mentioned above, this book is good, but somewhat outdated.

Donald Sinta and Denise Dabney, Voicing: An Approach to the Saxophone's Third Register (Laurel, Maryland: Sintafest Music Co., 1994).

Circular Breathing:

Trent Kynaston, Circular Breathing for the Wind Performer (Miami, FL: Warner Bros. Publications, 1978).

**** Comprehensive and methodical approach to learning how to circular breath. The book also deals with various problems a wind player will encounter when trying to apply this technique to his/her horn. Twenty pages.

Quarter Tones:

Jean-Marie Londeix, Hello! Mr. Sax, ou les Parametres du Saxophone (Paris, France: Leduc, 1988, Engl. translation by William H. Street).

**** Contains a quarter-tone fingering chart that presents numerous fingering options. Explanation of quarter-tone notation.

Ronald Caravan, Preliminary Exercises and Etudes in Contemporary Techniques for Saxophone: Introductory Material for the Study of Multiphonics, Quarter Tones and Timbre Variation (Medfield, Massachusetts: Dorn Publications, 1980).

*** Explanation of quarter-tone notation. Contains a quarter-tone fingering chart, but only presents one fingering for each quarter-tone. In the authors experience, not all of these fingerings work well. The student should be presented with more options.

Multiphonics:

Daniel Kientzy, Les Sons Multiples aux Saxophones (Paris, France: Editions Salabert, 1982).

**** Hands down, the best book to date on this topic. This book is not a method book, but a comprehensive catalogue of multiphonics. Includes a notation index and an explanation of such. Separates multiphonic fingerings by instrument (ex. 139 multiphonics for alto saxophone). Gives exact pitches in each multiphonic, indicating quarter-tone pitches where applicable. Multiphonic pitches are given in concert and transposed versions. The catalogue includes other useful information about each multiphonic including possible trills, shortest note duration for a given multiphonic, etc., making the book especially useful for composers and improvisors.

Ken Dorn, Saxophone Technique-Volume I, Multiphonics (Medfield, Massachusetts: Dorn Publications, 1975).

*** A standard book on multiphonics that has been around for awhile. Nowhere near as comprehensive as the Kientzy (mentioned above).

John Gross, Multiphonics for the Saxophone (Advance Music, 1998)

***The publisher states, "This practical and easy to understand guide contains 178 different note combinations with extensive diagrams and concise explanations." Written by a jazz player for jazz players.

Double Tonguing:

Larry Teal, The Art of Saxophone Playing (Princeton, New Jersey: Summy-Birchard, 1963).

**** The best book every written on saxophone fundamentals. Includes instruction on how to double tongue in the chapter on tonguing.

Books On Contemporary Techniques (General)

Daniel Kientzy, L'Art du Saxophone (Paris, France: Salabert). Extracted from Saxologie (Paris, France: Salabert, 1993).

**** Indispensable bible of techniques. Contains short explanations and examples of 100 contemporary techniques. The booklet comes with two CDs, one containing demonstrations of each technique by the author. This book was extracted from Saxologie, the author's doctoral dissertation, in which Kientzy attempted to exhaustively catalogue every contemporary saxophone technique available to each of the seven saxophones (sopranino to contra bass). The second CD contains pieces written for each of the seven saxophones, demonstrating a plethora of contemporary techniques.

Jean-Marie Londeix, Hello! Mr. Sax, ou les Parametres du Saxophone (Paris, France: Leduc, 1988, Engl. translation by William H. Street).

**** Outstanding book. 84 pages. Catalogue of saxophone techniques, traditional and contemporary, with brief explanations. Includes: trills, altissimo chart, intonation fingering chart, quarter-tone fingering chart, muliphonics, table of attack parameters, explanation of flutter tongue, etc.

John Sampen, Chance Music: Notation and Performance for the Saxophonist (Chicago: Northwestern University, D.M. Dissertation, 1985), available from ProQuest

**** Outstanding dissertation by one of the worlds leading performers of contemporary saxophone music.

Francis Cournet, Thésaurus du Saxophoniste: Tablature générale de doigtés (Paris, France: Gerard Billaudot, 1992).

**** Two volumes. Exhaustive series of saxophone fingerings charts for every conceivable fingering need. (Includes microtones and microtonal trills).

Hubert Prati, Approche de la Musique Contemporaine (Paris, France: Gerard Billaudot, 1986).

Michael J. Leonard, Extended Technique for the Saxophone (Sherborn, MA: J. Michael Leonard, 1989).

Etude Books

Ronald Caravan, Preliminary Exercises and Etudes in Contemporary Techniques for Saxophone: Introductory Material for the Study of Multiphonics, Quarter Tones and Timbre Variation (Medfield, Massachusetts: Dorn Publications, 1980).

*** The title explains the content. Delivers a good introduction to contemporary techniques. Etudes are short (1 page), musical and remain focused on the topic at hand. Two major shortcomings include a quarter-tone fingering chart limited to one fingering per pitch, and introductory multiphonics that are not necessarily easy to produce.

Ronald Caravan, Paradigms I: For Alto Saxophone (Medfield, Massachusetts: Dorn Publications, 1976).

**** A series of ten short etudes that serve to introduce the most common contemporary techniques. Provides a “Key to Symbols” with very brief explanations of effects. These etudes are graded. The first six etudes serve to introduce the techniques. The last four etudes are more difficult and all encompassing. Highly recommend for the alto saxophonist interested in contemporary techniques. Although Caravan claims that these etudes can be adapted for the other saxophones, this author does not recommend it.

Ronald Caravan, Paradigm II: For Alto Saxophone (Medfield, Massachusetts: Dorn Publications, 1994).

**** An etude/composition that picks up where etude #10 from Paradigms I left off.

Guy Lacour, Douze Esquisses dans le Style Contemporaine pour Saxophone Seul, Alto ou Tenor (Paris, France: Gerard Billaudot, 1987).

**** Twelve contemporary etudes equally playable on alto or tenor.

Nicolas Prost, Douze Etudes Complète pour les Jeunes Saxophonistes du XXIème Siècle (Paris, France: Lemoine, 1995).

**** Introduction to odd time signatures, proportional notation, mutiphonics, bisbigliando (microtonal trills) and different types of attack. Written for young saxophonists, these etudes are very musical as well as playable.

Edward Diemente, Mirrors IV (Medfield, MA: Dorn Publications, 1974).