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UTILISING CLASSICAL SAXOPHONE ARTICULATION TECHNIQUES IN JAZZ PERFORMANCE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER

I. Fundamental Differences Between Jazz and Classical Articulation 6

II. Established Approaches to Classical Articulation 11

III. Joe Allard – Bridging the Gap Between Jazz and Classical Traditions 18

IV. Applications of Classical Techniques in Jazz Performance 22

V. George Garzone – The ‘No-Tongue’ Approach to Articulation 27

CONCLUSION 30

APPENDIX

Interview with George Garzone 32

REFERENCES 38

INTRODUCTION

In speech, articulation is key to delivering a clear message. Not only does it provide clarity in one's words, articulation is vital for imparting character in a conversation. Conversation itself constitutes a form of improvisation, and as Charles Edmund writes:

> The spontaneous nature of spoken conversation is analogous to that of jazz performance.[1]

In a musical context, articulation may be defined as the art of note grouping by the use of legato and staccato.[2] When investigating the practical application of saxophone articulation, two indispensible components must be considered:

1) The physical process utilised to produce the articulation; and

2) The stylistic implementation of the articulation.

Overall mastery in articulation therefore cannot be achieved without proficiency in these two very unique skill sets, presenting a significant challenge to the aspiring musician. It should be noted however, that the relationship between these components is not entirely mutually exclusive. In short, the musician's ability to physically execute the desired articulations will always influence their stylistic performance. On the saxophone, the physical process of articulating is achieved primarily through a technique known as 'tonguing'. As Kyle Horch writes in The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone:

> The technique is quite simple: a spot very close to, but not absolutely on, the tip of the tongue (the same spot used when pronouncing the syllable DAH against the roof of the mouth) touches the tip of the reed just at the

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[1] David Charles Edmund, "The effect of articulation study on stylistic expression in high school musicians' jazz performance" (2009), 12.
[2] Larry Teal, *The Art of Saxophone Playing* (Summy-Birchard Inc., 1963), 87.

> moment the airflow begins, and comes away again, allowing the reed to vibrate freely during the sustain period of the note.[3]

With stylistic expression an indispensible component of jazz performance, one may expect to find a multitude of resources available on jazz articulation. As some scholars have pointed out, there are in fact very few resources on the subject, and fewer still when considering those related to the saxophone.[4] [5] One telling example of this is evidenced by David Baker's widely regarded method text 'Jazz Improvisation', in which (of a 126 page book) Baker dedicated less than half a page to articulation.[6] Jazz saxophonists have instead traditionally relied on developing articulation skills aurally,[7] and whilst effective in understanding stylistic intricacies, this method cannot directly address the placement of the tongue in the oral cavity that can affect efficiency of articulation. Many jazz educators agree that saxophonists require more concrete direction in articulation.[8] [9] [10]

Perhaps the most daunting task of the jazz saxophonist studying articulation is to understand the tonguing action itself. Saxophone students seem to have to approximate the articulations as heard on jazz records and therefore may find it problematic to accurately replicate the sounds being produced. The problem is further compounded by the fact that the tonguing action itself is hard to explain. It can be difficult for teachers to point to their oral cavity to explain the physical processes involved in varying articulations.[11]

For the jazz saxophonist, seemingly the next reasonable step in developing articulation technique is to investigate the instrument's classical tradition. During the 1930's, 40's, and 50's a small but prominent group of classical

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[3] Kyle Horch, *The Cambridge Campanion to the Saxophone*, ed. Richard Ingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 82.
[4] Edmund, "The effect of articulation study on stylistic expression in high school musicians' jazz performance," 17.
[5] Jill Sullivan, "The Effects of Syllabic Articulation Instruction on Woodwind Articulation Accuracy," *Contributions to Music Education* 33, no. 1 (2006): 2.
[6] David Baker, *Jazz Improvisation*, 2nd ed. (Van Nuys: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., 1983).
[7] Edmund, "The effect of articulation study on stylistic expression in high school musicians' jazz performance," 8.
[8] Sullivan, "The Effects of Syllabic Articulation Instruction on Woodwind Articulation Accuracy," 2.
[9] Edmund, "The effect of articulation study on stylistic expression in high school musicians' jazz performance," 17.
[10] George Garzone, "Interview by Jeremy Trezona," (2012).
[11] Sullivan, "The Effects of Syllabic Articulation Instruction on Woodwind Articulation Accuracy," 2.

saxophonists established themselves as pedagogues on the instrument.[12] These included Marcel Mule, Larry Teal, Sigard Rascher, Jean-Marie Londeix and Joseph Allard.[13] Far from advocating a single approach to articulation, many classical practitioners recommend experimenting with differing articulation techniques to find which is most suited to the performer both physiologically and stylistically.[14] [15] [16] [17] [18]

Unlike in the jazz tradition, however, these techniques tend to be specific and well documented.

As Jean-Marie Londeix writes:

> It must not be thought that the restrictive choice of types of attacks is the sole prerogative of that which we call 'classical' music. This is not the case. Indeed, we may note that in jazz, for example, the choice of attacks inherent to a particular type of articulation characterizing 'the style' is just as crucial and decisive.
>
> Nevertheless, the 'classical' diction seems more rigorous. Perhaps because it is more meticulously polished, and of an older and stricter tradition, it demands not only a similarity of attacks in all registers of each instrument, but calls for a severely limited choice of attacks, codified and parsimonious (by comparison with the large number of possible attacks available to all of the instruments together).[19]

In consideration of Londeix's comments, an important question arises for the jazz saxophonist: Can the articulation techniques advocated by classical pedagogues be appropriately and effectively utilised in a jazz context? Many jazz saxophonists may contend on grounds of stylistic differences that the articulation techniques of the classical diction are simply unsuitable for jazz performance, particularly when relating to improvisation. Yet, as mentioned

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[12] Debra Jean McKim, "Joseph Allard: His contributions to saxophone pedagogy and performance" (Dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 2000), 1.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Kenneth Douse, "The Saxophone," *The Instrumentalist*, no. September - October (1949).
[15] Glen Gillis, "Spotlight on Woodwinds: Sound Concepts for the Saxophonist (Part 2)," *Canadian Winds: The Journal of the Canadian Band Association* 7, no. 1 (2008).
[16] Horch, *The Cambridge Campanion to the Saxophone*: 82.
[17] Teal, *The Art of Saxophone Playing*: 80.
[18] George E. Waln, "Saxophone Playing," *The Instrumentalist*, no. March (1965).
[19] Jean-Marie Londeix, *Hello! Mr. Sax, ou, Paramètres du saxophone* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc & Cie, 1989), 88.

earlier, jazz educators continue to note a general deficiency in the articulation of jazz saxophone students, even in tertiary levels.[20] [21] [22] As prominent jazz saxophonist and educator George Garzone explained in an interview conducted for this paper:

> I think most of my career was based off of articulation – teaching these guys [jazz saxophone students] how to use it because no one really knows how to do it – just like what you were saying [earlier] and why you're writing your thesis – no one really talked about the fine line in articulation. The proof is in listening to these people play. Over-using articulation, or using it in the wrong places – it upsets the rhythm of what they're playing.[23]

Widely known for both his unique 'no-tongue' approach to articulation and the long list of saxophone luminaries that have sought his tutelage (including Seamus Blake, Joshua Redman, Donny McCaslin and Mark Turner)[24], Garzone also espouses the importance of classical study for the jazz saxophonist. When asked about his view on a jazz saxophonist studying classical technique, Garzone replied:

> Absolutely. I think the likelihood of a saxophone player understanding jazz is going to be much greater coming from his background in classical, rather than someone who just goes straight into jazz. It's fine, you can do that [go straight into jazz], but if you've had that discipline of studying classical you know how intense it is - and that's me.[25]

Given that such prominent jazz saxophonists as Michael Brecker, Kenny Garrett, Branford Marsalis, Eddie Daniels and David Liebman have all sought classical instruction in their careers, there is a clear precedent for the jazz saxophonist to investigate the classical tradition as a means of enhancing technical ability. This paper therefore, seeks to investigate the articulation techniques advocated by

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[20] Scott James Zimmer, "A fiber optic investigation of articulation differences between selected saxophonists proficient in both jazz and orchestral performance styles" (2002), 24-25.
[21] Joel Patrick Vanderheyden, "Approaching the classical style: a resource for jazz saxophonists" (Dissertation, The University of Iowa, 2010), 43.
[22] Garzone, "Interview by Jeremy Trezona."
[23] Ibid.
[24] ———, "George Garzone on Articulating with 8th Notes," in *An In-Studio Interview with George Garzone* (USA: Rico Reeds, 2010).
[25] ———, "Interview by Jeremy Trezona."

the most prominent classical pedagogues in the field, and assess their potential utilisation in jazz performance.

CHAPTER I: FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JAZZ AND CLASSICAL ARTICULATION

When compared with other orchestral instruments, the saxophone is a remarkably recent invention. Patented in 1846 by Adolphe Sax, the saxophone had been initially designed to combine the agility of a woodwind instrument with the power and projection of brass. [26] [27] Despite strong interest from composers such as Berlioz and Rossini shortly after it's invention,[28] the saxophone would not become a permanent fixture in the orchestra, instead finding it's place in the classical tradition through works specifically commissioned for the instrument, along with enthusiastic adoption by a growing tide of military and wind bands.[29] It would take until the early 20th century until the saxophone became popularised amongst the wider public, however early adoptions in the United States by vaudeville acts did little to promote the true capabilities of the instrument. For many in the early 20th century, both in professional and public spheres, the saxophone was viewed as somewhat of a novelty instrument.[30] As Larry Teal explains:

> From 1915-1919, it was possible that a typical saxophonist might have purchased an instrument on Thursday and by Saturday that same week made 35 cents on a vaudeville stage. The requirements for securing work as a saxophonist were low because there were almost no examples of what the instrument was capable of.[31]

Although vaudeville was seen by most as simply a source of entertainment, ragtime's early associations with both jazz and vaudeville may have contributed to those in classical circles considering jazz as an extension of this performance style. Perhaps for a similar reason, many classical pedagogues such as Marcel Mule viewed the popularisation of the saxophone in jazz music with a hint of regret:

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[26] Claus & Ventzke Raumburger, Karl, "Saxophone," in *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 352.
[27] Vanderheyden, "Approaching the classical style: a resource for jazz saxophonists," 3.
[28] Michael Segell, *The Devil's Horn* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 15.
[29] Vanderheyden, "Approaching the classical style: a resource for jazz saxophonists," 3.
[30] Ibid., 4.
[31] Michael Eric Hester, "A study of the saxophone soloists performing with the John Philip Sousa Band, 1893-1930" (9620397, The University of Arizona, 1995), 57.

> As you undoubtedly know, I have tried to prove that the saxophone, just like the other instruments, could have its place in the classical symphony orchestra and that it possessed all the qualities needed for it to be taken seriously, that it could play as soloist with the piano or orchestra, just like a violin or 'cello.
>
> In this, it seems to me, I have remained completely in agreement with the ideas of the inventor, Adolphe Sax, who at the time when he introduced the saxophone, around 1840, certainly had not foreseen the coming of jazz.
>
> I think that my conception of the saxophone is in no wise original or unusual, for it seems to me quite normal to wish to serve the cause of music, whatever the instrument may be. Isn't this the case for the clarinet, or the trumpet, or the trombone, or the guitar, all of which, however, are much used in jazz?[32]

Unsurprisingly, these two traditions of saxophone performance developed somewhat independently of each other for the majority of the early to mid 20th century. Whilst figures such as Mule strived to promote the saxophone as an orchestral instrument worthy of inclusion in conservatories across Europe,[33] jazz saxophone developed almost entirely as an aural tradition with very little formalisation by comparison.[34] For jazz saxophonists, stylistic intricacies forged on the bandstand soon influenced instrumental technique, and as Stephen Duke explains, the performance space itself may have played a key role in developing articulation style:

> The conceptual difference between classical and jazz is that silent ambience that does not exist in jazz. So when you're playing jazz, you're often playing into a microphone, there is a drummer playing, a bass player playing, and there is always some other sound happening. People are drinking, ordering food, and there is always noise going on. As I tell people, one sound you will never hear at Symphony Center in Chicago is 'Excuse me, may I have another drink here?' You never hear that sound, and if you do you're probably getting kicked out of there! The reason for that is because of the silent ambience. There is an incredible amount of time, money and research spent on the acoustics for halls that orchestras play in. Compare that with your typical jazz club where they have to add the reverb into the amplification. So, we're not even talking about the same environment that they're playing in, which is another big part of how the two styles had to have been shaped. Look at the difference in concept between an orchestra hall and a jazz club. Now you have some idea of why the attacks and releases are so different in each style.[35]

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[32] Marcel Mule, "The Saxophone," *The Instrumentalist*, no. March (1959).
[33] Ibid.
[34] Edmund, "The effect of articulation study on stylistic expression in high school musicians' jazz performance," 8.
[35] Vanderheyden, "Approaching the classical style: a resource for jazz saxophonists," 42.

As Duke makes clear in his comments, the ambient silence of the concert hall lends itself to a kind of technical precision that may never be fully realised if performed in a typical jazz club. By comparison, in the same article that he expresses regret for the public's single-mindedness in failing to associate the saxophone with music other than jazz, Marcel Mule expresses his own desire for the manner in which the instrument should be performed:

> Particularly, one has to avoid anything which might make it seem vulgar, one must strive for a noble, moving sound quality, and observe the most scrupulous exactitude in pitch. In the matter of expression, nothing must be left to chance.
>
> The saxophonist must always seek to take his inspiration from the string instruments, and thereby justify what a certain Paris music critic once wrote about it: "the saxophone, this cello of the brasses.[36]

Yet for all the talk of the demands of precision in the classical genre, could a real difference continue to exist between the articulation ability of modern jazz and classical saxophonists? It should be noted of course, that since the University of North Texas became the first university to offer a Jazz Studies degree in 1947,[37] jazz has been widely taught in universities worldwide, becoming a popular stepping-stone in the early stages of many young musician's careers. In the words of Edwards, Griffin and O'Meally in their 2004 book *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies*:

> One of the wondrous oddities of our current moment is that the best advice to a serious jazz player in training is not to drop out and study in New York's nightclubs but to attend one of the several conservatories where excellent jazz instruction, by accomplished jazz artists, is richly available."[38]

Despite the changing nature of jazz education, perhaps one should not underestimate the ongoing influence of the aural tradition in modern jazz instruction. As Scott Zimmer revealed in a 2002 study utilising fiber optics to

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[36] Mule, "The Saxophone."
[37] Edmund, "The effect of articulation study on stylistic expression in high school musicians' jazz performance," 28.
[38] B. Edwards, Griffin, F., & O'Meally, R. , *Uptown Conversation: The New Jazz Studies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 1.

study selective saxophonists' tonguing action, clear distinctions in articulation technique between jazz and classical styles are still prevalent:

> The exploratory study suggests that, generally, more tongue surface area touches the reed in jazz articulation than in orchestral articulation. Also, the entire tongue appears to move in jazz articulation, while the tip moves somewhat more independently of the middle and back of the tongue in orchestral articulation.[39]

In short, results of the study tend to suggest that classical performers exert more independence over their tongue than their jazz-based counterparts, giving credit to both Duke and Mule's comments. As jazz educators such as George Garzone continue to teach, an over use of the tongue when articulating can lead to jazz performers encountering serious problems with phrasing and rhythmic execution.[40] According to Garzone, failure to translate aural cues into an appropriate physical response may form the core of this problem:

> When people over-articulate, it's for two reasons. The naïve reason is they haven't been told that they're over-articulating, and the even more naïve reason is that they haven't *realised* that they're over-articulating. Students would often come to me not realising they had this problem and I would ask if they'd even heard themselves playing. Often their response would be 'Well I've listened to Michael Brecker and he articulates like this' to which I would reply 'Michael definitely doesn't articulate like this'. They hear it as a misconception. They hear it one way, but go at it from another angle, which is not what is happening at that moment. That's when I started to doubt how students hear these sounds; they don't process it the way it's actually being played.[41]

The problems many saxophone students experience when attempting to develop articulation technique aurally are surely compounded by a lack of printed resources on the subject. In research conducted for this paper, this author could find only one item of print material outside of university academia that specifically related to jazz saxophone articulation – a supplement to a 1998 volume of the *Saxophone Journal*, authored by University of Kentucky Professor Miles Osland. In his supplement, Osland lists 7 different phrasing examples of

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[39] Zimmer, "A fiber optic investigation of articulation differences between selected saxophonists proficient in both jazz and orchestral performance styles," 24-25.
[40] Garzone, "Interview by Jeremy Trezona."
[41] Ibid.

articulation cells being utilised over 8th note lines. The supplement however, still does not address or clarify the technical process of tonguing, instead serving as an example of stylistic implementation. As most jazz saxophonists could surely profess, the current state of jazz articulation education seems to revolve around the 'back-tonguing' technique (often simply referred to as 'jazz articulation')[42], a process that involves articulating the up-beats of a given 8th note line.[43]

Fig. 1 – Notated back-tonguing technique.

Given the multi-faceted nature of modern jazz music, a point of contention when considering back-tonguing is the technique's ongoing relevance to modern musical situations. In the words of George Garzone:

> In a certain period in time like the 40's and 50's they were using that kind of articulation, but as time went on they got away from that. I think for the young students these teachers never really hip them to progress, and as music moved on it went forward but no one showed them.[44]

The problems students encounter when pursuing jazz saxophone articulation study therefore may be considered twofold. Firstly, there is a lack of information compiled on the differing implementations of jazz articulation – i.e. which notes may be accented in a given musical phrase, and secondly, there is a lack of information afforded to jazz saxophonists on the tonguing process itself, particularly those that could be considered unique or especially important within the jazz genre. The back-tonguing technique, whilst vital to understanding swing based jazz music, cannot sufficiently address the deficiencies in these two critical areas.

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[42] Chris Farr, "How To Execute Jazz Articulation," (USA: Andreas Eastman Winds, 2012).
[43] Miles Osland, "Jazz Eighth Note Phrasing Cells," *Saxophone Journal* 22, no. 6 (1998).
[44] Garzone, "Interview by Jeremy Trezona."

CHAPTER II: ESTABLISHED APPROACHES TO CLASSICAL ARTICULATION

Contrary to a popular assumption, there is no singular, 'correct' method of classical saxophone articulation, as the procedures advocated for tonguing often vary widely between teachers and performers.[45] [46] It is vital therefore, to investigate several of the most prominent approaches to classical articulation technique, for in the words of Larry Teal:

> An expert performer will usually base his advice on the system that he has found most successful for his personal needs.[47]

Often referred to as the father of American saxophone, Larry Teal's legacy on saxophone performance was codified with the release of his comprehensive instructional text *The Art of Saxophone Playing* in 1963. As the first full time professor of saxophone at any American university[48], Teal's text has been widely quoted and seen as highly authoritative on the subject of saxophone techniques and performance. For the jazz saxophonist, an engaging feature of Teal's text is to consider the placement of the tongue during the tonguing process. Teal suggests three unique placements:[49]

1) Tip of tongue to tip of reed
2) Slightly back of tip of tongue to tip of reed, or
3) Anchoring the tip of the tongue on the lower teeth and bending the tongue to the tip of the reed

According to Teal, performers with a large oral cavity and short tongue will find that tip-to-tip tonguing is advantageous, whilst if the cavity is small and the

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[45] Sullivan, "The Effects of Syllabic Articulation Instruction on Woodwind Articulation Accuracy," 2.
[46] Waln, "Saxophone Playing."
[47] Teal, *The Art of Saxophone Playing*: 79.
[48] "Honorary Member: Laurence (Larry) Teal," North American Saxophone Alliance, http://www.saxalliance.org/honorary-members/laurence-larry-teal.
[49] ———, *The Art of Saxophone Playing*: 79.

tongue long, the third method is likely to be preferable. The majority of players however, find that the best results are produced by touching the tip of the reed with the top part of the tongue at a point slightly back from its tip.[50] An important feature of Teal's methodology is the small portion of the tongue that is actually required when articulating, contrary to the overuse frequently demonstrated by jazz students.[51] [52] As Teal explains, the tongue should not serve as an air valve, but instead simply prevent the reed from vibrating.[53] In this way, it matters little how much area of the tongue makes contact with the reed, for even a small area is sufficient to regulate the reed's vibration. In words that validate the results of Zimmer's fiber optic study, Teal stresses:

> A correct tonguing stroke requires that *the front portion of the tongue be controlled independently of any of the other factors which make up the embouchure*.[54]

Teal develops these fundamentals of tongue placement further by introducing three primary syllables for saxophone tone separation: 'too', 'doo' and 'la'. Regardless of genre, most saxophonists are likely to recognise the T syllable (e.g. 'too' or 'ta') as their primary tonguing stoke, as it is readily taught to students as a means of producing a clear, stable attack. 'Doo', whilst not used as extensively, allows for a softer and more connected style, just as the pronunciation of the word indicates. The 'doo' syllable requires that the tongue be in a slightly flatter and more rounded shape at the tip, creating a softer attack. Of the three syllables Teal prescribes however, the 'la' syllable seems the most elusive. As he explains:

> The "la-la-la" type, while seldom used, is a valuable acquisition for certain subtle phrases. The tongue merely brushes the reed tip and the result is the lightest possible separation – the effect is really felt rather than actually heard. It must be an extremely delicate stroke and requires much practice to control but is used by advanced players to artistic advantage. Some artists go so far to touch but one side of the reed.[55]

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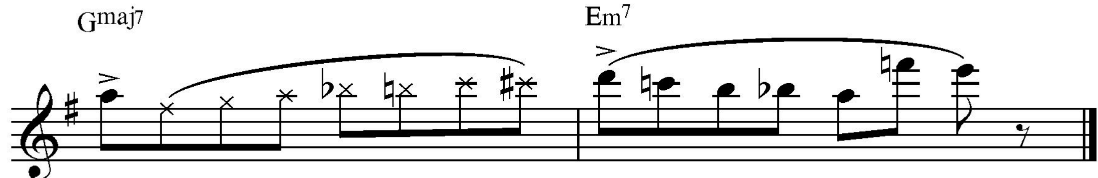
[50] Ibid., 79-80.
[51] Garzone, "George Garzone on Articulating with 8th Notes."
[52] Zimmer, "A fiber optic investigation of articulation differences between selected saxophonists proficient in both jazz and orchestral performance styles," 24-25.
[53] Teal, *The Art of Saxophone Playing*: 79.
[54] Ibid., 82.
[55] Ibid.

When considering the application of this technique in jazz performance, one can immediately draw comparisons with the 'tongue muting' technique employed by saxophonists of the swing era and beyond. Whilst rarely (if ever) formalised, this particular device is evidenced extensively in the playing of saxophonists such as Sonny Rollins and Johnny Griffin.[56] In Russell Peterson's account, the similarities with Teal's description are uncanny:

> I tend to do lots of tongue 'muting' as I call it. Again, no one ever taught this to me, I just heard guys do it and started imitating. I put a bit of tongue on the corner of the reed, so it's still vibrating, but it's been muted a bit. When I release my tongue, I get a nice, fat accent.[57]

In an excerpt below of Johnny Griffin's solo on *The Way You Look Tonight* from his lauded album *A Blowin' Session*, Griffin employs the technique to ghost a chromatic style passage before releasing the tongue on a chord tone on beat one of the following bar. The result is something akin to a mini explosion, as the tension built tonally during the muted passage is released with a heavy accent at a significant point in the phrase, both harmonically and rhythmically.

Fig. 2 – Excerpt of Johnny Griffin's solo on *The Way You Look Tonight* (1:18), from *A Blowin' Session* (1957).



Although the 3 syllables prescribed by Teal open up new tonal possibilities for the saxophonist, one classical pedagogue, Jean-Marie Londeix, takes this syllabic approach to articulation several steps further. In his book *Hello! Mr. Sax, Ou, Paramètres Du Saxophone*, Londeix identifies three perceptible parts of the tone: attack, duration and ending. For Londeix, the two transitory components – the

[56] Garzone, "Interview by Jeremy Trezona."
[57] Vanderheyden, "Approaching the classical style: a resource for jazz saxophonists," 92.

attack and ending, are particularly significant. For each of these transitory components, Londeix presents a table containing a notated example of the articulation, a name for the technique, a graphical representation of the sound and a suggested syllable for achieving the desired articulation.

Fig. 3 – Transient attack of the sound, *Hello! Mr. Sax, Ou, Paramètres Du Saxophone,* p. 92

PREMIER TRANSITOIRE DU SON
TRANSIENT ATTACK OF THE SOUND

Notation ***Notation***	**Appellation** ***Name***	**Symbole d'attaque** ***Symbol of the attack***	**Equivalence phonétique** ***Phonetic equivalence***
ou *or*	attaque simple *simple attack*		voyelle (O, A...) *vowel (O, A...)*
	piqué *detached*		Ta
	point allongé *lengthened*		Ta'
	barre *tenuto*		Taa
ou *or*	louré *legato*		Da
	accent *accent*		Ka
	accent piqué *accent-staccato*		Ka'n
	accent-barre *accent-tenuto*		Kaa
	shunté (1) *shunted*		hha
Ø	son pris à la limite du silence *sound beginning from absolute silence*		
ou *or* slp	slap		Sket'
ou *or* Tsp	tongue-slap		bruit de langue et d'anche à hauteur déterminée par la note marquée *noise of the tongue and reed at the nuance determined by the note so marked*
sfz	sforzando		*sf*

(1) ⊂ *ppp* ⊂ *pp* ⊂ *p* etc. = son shunté jusqu'à la nuance indiquée. (Pourrait également se noter : Ø < *ppp* ; Ø < *pp* ; Ø < *p* ; etc.

sound shunted to the marked dynamic level. (Could also be notated : Ø < ppp ; Ø < pp ; Ø < p ; etc.

92 A.L. - 27.489

Fig. 4 – Decay transient of the sound, *Hello! Mr. Sax, Ou, Paramètres Du Saxophone,* p.94

DEUXIEME TRANSITOIRE DU SON
DECAY TRANSIENT OF THE SOUND

Notation *Notation*	**Appellation** *Name*	**Symbole de fin** *Symbol of the end*	**Equivalence phonétique** *Phonetic equivalence*
ou *or*	attaque simple *simple attack*		voyelle *vowel*
	piqué *detached*		.... n'
	point allongé *elongated dot*		.... t'
(1)	allégé *lightened*		.... nn'
	barre *tenuto*		.... a
	louré *legato*		fin de consonne douce (D) *end of soft consonant (D)*
	accent *accent*		.... a
	accent piqué *accent-staccato*		.... n'
	accent-barre *accent-tenuto*		... ha
Ø	son rendu progressivement au silence *sound diminished progressively to silence*		
	slap		...kt'
	tongue-slap		bruit de langue et d'anche à hauteur déterminée par la note marquée *noise of the tongue and reed at the nuance determined by the note so marked*
	slap ouvert *open slap*		ouak'
sfz	sforzando (note haussée d'un degré dans l'échelle des nuances) *sforzando (note raised one degree above the marked nuance)*		

(1) point en fin de liaison.
detached at the end of a tied or slurred note.

Although there are many more subtle variations on the syllabic approach to articulation advocated by classical pedagogues (syllables include tah, ti, di, tu)[58] [59] [60], one can be almost certain that to date, no other classical pedagogue has prescribed a more thorough method for approaching the process of articulation than Londeix. With the wide variety of approaches espoused by classical pedagogues, one may wish to consider the validity of the aforementioned techniques in the jazz genre. The reader should be reminded of course, about the differing objectives of the two traditions. In the words of Larry Teal:

> Use of the word "attack" for the start of a tone implies an explosive or forceful assault which, except in isolated instances, has no place in artistic performance.[61]

Here is surely a key point of difference between jazz and classical articulation, yet one standout principle that classical pedagogues seem to unanimously agree on is the lightness of the tonguing action that is required to achieve articulation efficiency. In this, saxophonists may find a concept that is readily transferrable into jazz performance. As Rick VanMatre explains:

> There is a misconception that classical tonguing is light and jazz tonguing is heavy, but that only applies to special accents or cutoffs in jazz. Most intermediate and beginning jazz saxophonists need to work on getting their tongue lighter on the reed in both jazz and classical playing. In classical music, it could be said that the goal is to have as little of the tongue touch as little of the reed as possible; whereas in jazz; having more of a "blob" of tongue touching more of the reed is probably a good thing, but only if it can be done in an extremely light way.[62]

Whilst some jazz instructors, such as Garzone, would continue to point out that too much surface area of the tongue is undesirable in jazz performance[63]; lightness of tonguing stroke, a focus on tongue placement and syllabic choice

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[58] Gillis, "Spotlight on Woodwinds: Sound Concepts for the Saxophonist (Part 2)."
[59] Douse, "The Saxophone."
[60] Waln, "Saxophone Playing."
[61] Teal, *The Art of Saxophone Playing*: 79.
[62] Vanderheyden, "Approaching the classical style: a resource for jazz saxophonists," 111.
[63] Garzone, "George Garzone on Articulating with 8th Notes."

appear to be the key considerations to be taken from mainstream classical pedagogy when approached from a background of jazz performance.

CHAPTER III: JOE ALLARD – BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CLASSICAL AND JAZZ TRADITIONS

With almost no professional saxophone instruction available in the early 20th century, most of the prominent saxophone pedagogues of that time did not possess formal university or conservatory saxophone training.[64] As a result, it became common practice for these instructors to develop their own pedagogical philosophies that they passed on to their students – evidenced in part by the wide variety of technical approaches advocated on articulation. Of these pedagogues, perhaps none have had more of a notable impact on the jazz tradition than Joseph Allard. As a performer proficient in both jazz and classical styles,[65] Allard's unique pedagogy focused intently on the anatomical aspects of saxophone performance. As one former student of Allard recalls:

> I never studied technique with Joe for a minute. Out of all the lessons I took, and I don't know if it was 100 or more over the years, they were all just about sound production. Mostly about anatomy. That's what Joe teaches you; constantly reminding you about the anatomy of what goes on when you're producing a sound, what's happening to your breathing, and your posture, and your muscles, and your jaw, and the sense that you have, the sensation in your voice box. It's just amazing.[66]

For this reason, Allard's teachings have widely transcended genre, attracting such distinguished students as Michael Brecker, Bob Berg, David Liebman, Eddie Daniels and Eric Dolphy.[67] Harvey Pittel, a prominent classical performer and former student of Allard's, attributes practically his entire teaching methodology to Allard.[68] Pittel, in turn, has taught such luminaries as Branford Marsalis, Kenny Garrett and Steve Mohacey.[69] This unique pedagogical approach by Allard sets his teachings apart from many other classical instructors of the time. As former student Jay Weinstein illustrates in documenting Allard's teachings:

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[64] McKim, "Joseph Allard: His contributions to saxophone pedagogy and performance," 1.
[65] Ibid., 3.
[66] Ibid., 4.
[67] Ibid., 28.
[68] "Harvey Pittel Presents the Saxophone Teachings of the Master, Joe Allard," (USA: Andreas Eastman Winds, 2012).
[69] Harvey Pittel, "Harvey Pittel - Official Website," http://www.harveypittel.com/launch.html.

> The beauty of Joe's principles is that they combine the physical tools that nature has given us with the laws of physics, as they relate to the sound production. The technical explanations are as simple as possible and you will see specific reasonings behind the ideas. This is in sharp contrast to different schools of thought that have no true basis other than "this is the way I do it" or "this is what I've found to work."[70]

Allard taught that articulation was an indispensible expressive device, in the same camp as dynamics and phrasing.[71] According to his methodology, the key to developing effortless articulation technique is predicated upon the tongue's position in the oral cavity. In this, two outcomes must be achieved: firstly, the tongue must be as relaxed as possible, and secondly, the tongue must be placed in a high position in the mouth, allowing for ease of the tonguing process. Allard formulated this concept based on his own study into the physiology of the oral cavity, and the natural function of the tongue.[72] Allard noted that when in a relaxed state, as in daydreaming, the tongue is positioned high and wide in the mouth.[73] In order to demonstrate this position to his students, Allard formulated a linguistic solution. In Allard's words:

> I usually try to get them to say something like "row, row, row your boat." Now, instead of saying "o" if you would say "re, re, r, e." In English we only have one "e," but in French there are three. You have the "eh," which is called the open e, and you have the "ee" which is called the closed e and you have what they call a neutral vowel, "uh." In the tongue there are thirty muscles going through different contractions to shape the mouth into all the different syllables we use in the English language. In the neutral vowel "e" none of these lingual muscles are used, that's the reason it's called neutral. You could actually let your tongue hang on your bottom lip – it's nothing more than a glottal expression, there's no lingual tension at all. So if you go from this "uh" and you take it to "ru"... the sides of the tongue touch in the widest part of the back and the tongue is wide as the widest part of the arch in the mouth.[74]

In a term borrowed from the field of aerodynamics, this high tongue position Allard advocated became known as 'forward-coning', and crucially, the technique had more than one immediate effect on the saxophonist's performance. When

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[70] Joseph Allard and Jay Weinstein, *Joe Allard's saxophone and clarinet principles* (Van Nuys: Backstage Pass, 1991).
[71] McKim, "Joseph Allard: His contributions to saxophone pedagogy and performance," 44.
[72] Ibid., 42.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 43.

comparing past students of Allard and Pittel, such as Michael Brecker, Bob Berg, Eddie Daniels, David Liebman, Branford Marsalis and Kenny Garrett, a common thread amongst the performers becomes readily apparent – each musician possesses a remarkably focused tone that is synonymous with their personal sound. In David Demsey's words:

> When I hear Ken [Radnofsky] and I hear Harvey [Pittel] and I hear [David] Liebman and Mike [Brecker] and Eddie Daniels, I still hear Joe. I hear that focus – there's such a focus in the sound that you can just tell that somebody studied with Joe.[75]

A common analogy used to consider the effect of the forward coning technique is that of a running garden hose; a faster stream is created when the opening is narrowed with one's finger, just as the velocity of the airstream in the oral cavity increases as a result of a higher tongue position. With this added velocity comes a more focused tone, and for many, this may be an unexpected but welcome byproduct of transitioning to Allard's articulation style.

In another point of difference with other prominent pedagogues, Allard compliments his principles of tongue placement with a unique approach to syllabic articulation. In this, Allard garnered his concept from a lesson with clarinettist Gaston Hamelin. As Allard recalls:

> I remember the very first thing Hamelin ever said after he heard me play. He thought I was French. He said that when I released my tongue from the reed in order to produce the sound, I did it like the Americans do. He said "But you are French, you know the difference between tu and teu. Whatever you do, don't say *tu* like the Americans, but say *teu*."[76]

In the teachings of other classical pedagogues, syllabic articulation often plays a key role in articulation fluency, however rarely is such a fine distinction as *tu* and *teu* made. In Allard's method, the French vowel maintains a high tongue position, with the tip of the tongue dropping only to the level of the upper teeth. In the

[75] Ibid., 28.
[76] Ibid., 40.

English pronunciation however, the tongue drops well below the upper teeth and creates a larger cavity at the front of the mouth. Allard's action therefore promotes a much more efficient use of the tongue, and a lighter tonguing stroke. Allard noted the greatest difficulty faced by his students, both at the New England Conservatory and in professional circles, was to achieve lightness in the tonguing stroke.[77] To this end, Allard developed exercises that he used with students to create awareness of this problem. As Ken Radnofsky explains:

> One was a long note exercise. We would begin with no tongue, get very loud and while the note was still going on, he'd have us barely articulate. We would touch the reed as lightly as possible, so that the tongue would interrupt the vibration of the reed without stopping it, teaching us to barely tongue. He'd have us practice it loud so that we'd learn to use a light articulation even though we were playing loud. A lot of students tongue hard when they play loud; Joe's exercise separated that.[78]

In this, the objectives of both Allard and mainstream classical pedagogy are aligned. A lightness of tonguing stroke and independence over the tongue is key to developing overall articulation proficiency – a critical point of consideration for the jazz saxophonist.

[77] Ibid., 44.
[78] Ibid.

CHAPTER IV: APPLICATION OF CLASSICAL TECHNIQUES IN JAZZ PERFORMANCE

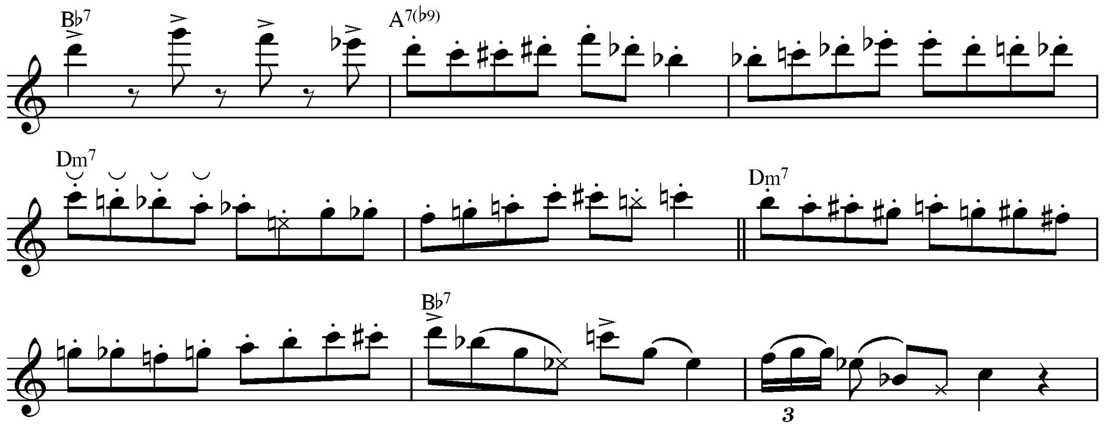
In a sense, much reasoning has already been provided for the potential implementation of classical articulation techniques into the vocabulary of the jazz saxophonist. It is clear, through both anecdotal and scientific evidence,[79] [80] that jazz saxophonists typically face difficulties with a heavy tonguing stoke, largely resulting from a lack of information afforded to them on effective articulation technique.[81] To this end, classical study may fill the gaps in knowledge of the performer, empowering the artist in their creative pursuit.

Yet, is it possible that these classical techniques may form new creative possibilities in their own right? It should be noted that a common view amongst jazz saxophonists seems to be that single tonguing each note does not lend itself well to the jazz genre, particularly in swing-based music. As a result, articulation study in jazz has become particularly focused on the aforementioned technique of 'back-tonguing'.

When examining the long list of prominent jazz saxophonists that have pursued classical study, it becomes clear that a variety of creative devices exist that result directly from study into classical articulation technique. For Michael Brecker, a precise articulation ability garnered from Joe Allard allows for the seamless execution of consecutive staccato 8th note phrases over an up-tempo swing composition, performed at 240bpm (see Fig. 5).

[79] Zimmer, "A fiber optic investigation of articulation differences between selected saxophonists proficient in both jazz and orchestral performance styles."
[80] Garzone, "Interview by Jeremy Trezona."
[81] Ibid.

Fig. 5 – Excerpt from Michael Brecker's solo (6:12) on 'Quartet No. 2, Part 2' – from *Three Quartets*, by Chick Corea.



Whilst other performers may be unable to execute these staccato passages without unsettling the phrasing and rhythm of their improvisation, Brecker proves that superior tonguing technique is the key to unlocking this creative device. As many jazz performers can attest, a tendency exists for 8th note passages to 'straighten out' organically as the tempo increases,[82] [83] perhaps lending themselves to a more classically influenced approach to articulation. The flawless execution displayed here by Brecker however, challenges the notion that single tongued passages are not suitable in jazz performance.

It is inevitable also, that heightened articulation ability will compliment the traditional back-tonguing technique widely taught in jazz education. In the below transcription (Fig. 6) of Branford Marsalis performing *Cheek to Cheek*, what at first may seem to the listener as consecutive single tongued passages, instead seem to be a precisely executed variant of the back-tonguing technique.

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[82] Ibid.
[83] Farr, "How To Execute Jazz Articulation."

Fig. 6 – Excerpt from Branford Marsalis' solo (0:57) on 'Cheek to Cheek' – from *Contemporary Jazz*.

As can be seen above, this presumed "HA – DA" vocalisation allows for the separation of the 8th notes (grouped in 2) without single tonguing each note. In a display of technical prowess however, Marsalis demonstrates his articulation facility by single tonguing consecutive 8th notes in bars 10, 18 and 19, providing a subtle contrast to the previous technique. This captivating articulation style forms the hallmark of the performance on this standard, for an artist renowned to traverse between jazz and classical genres.

For acclaimed alto saxophonist Kenny Garrett, precise and inventive articulation has become synonymous with his unique sound. As one critic wrote while reviewing his 2003 album *Standard of Language:*

> While lesser talents too often sacrifice articulation in the pursuit of passion, no matter how hard he blows (very, very hard in many instances), Garrett never compromises here, because he doesn't need to.[84]

Even when listening to the introduction of the first track - *What is this thing called love?,* one gets an immediate sense of the rhythmic playfulness Garrett is able to convey through his use of precise articulation.

Fig. 7 – Kenny Garrett's solo introduction on '*What is this thing called love?*' – from *Standard of Language*.

Garrett's tendency for building rhythmic tension in his improvisation is ideally complimented by his articulation ability, itself garnered from Harvey Pittel.

[84] Shaun Dale, "Standard of Language by Kenny Garrett," JazzReview.com, http://www.jazzreview.com/index.php/reviews/latest-cd-reviews/item/19798-.

There could be no clearer example of this relationship than Garrett's performance on *...Like The Rose*, taken from Jeff 'Tain' Watts' live album 'Detained at the Blue Note'. On this track, Garrett closes his solo by playfully targeting a single note, demonstrating both his skillful articulation ability and rhythmic inventiveness.

Fig. 8 – Excerpt from Kenny Garrett's solo on *...Like The Rose*, from Detained at the Blue Note, by Jeff 'Tain' Watts.

Through the performance of these prominent artists, we find that classical articulation study not only opens up new and creative stylistic devices, but that these may also compliment jazz styles. Whether the jazz musician chooses to implement them in this manner however, is an artistic decision based on one's own conceptual approach to performance.

CHAPTER V: GEORGE GARZONE – THE 'NO-TONGUE' APPROACH TO ARTICULATION

For world-renowned jazz saxophonist George Garzone, articulation has formed a critical component of his career, both in the roles of performer and educator. Garzone has noted several key challenges that the modern-day jazz saxophonist faces when considering articulation technique, the most prominent of which being a tendency to overstress the traditional back-tonguing approach:

> When young players are taught, they're taught to swing the 8th notes with the dotted 8th and the 16th, so people concentrate more on the rhythm of that sound but they never really address how the dotted 8th and 16th are played. So what happens is they bypass the whole situation of trying to play them smoothly, so when they start to play it they always end up playing it with a heavy 'T', [demonstrates] "TA TEE TA TEE TA TEE", so that to me is an example of overusing articulation.[85]

As Garzone describes, this overuse of articulation stems primarily from a heavy tonguing stroke, but also reflects a lack of focus on the appropriate implementation of articulation devices. In turn, Garzone developed a radical exercise to break students from their habitual use of heavy articulation – the 'no-tongue' approach:

> …when these young students were coming in, they were over articulating, and I tried to think what I could do to get rid of that right from the beginning. So I just figured 'OK, let's use no articulation at all.' So not only did it strip them down from heavily articulating, but I found it was really challenging even for myself, because it made me realise how much of a crutch the tongue is, because the tongue stabilised the time. I think that's one reason why people over articulate, to give solidity in their time, and not thinking or realising what they're doing to the sound of the 8ths notes as they go along. What I did was I would be like 'Ok, no articulation at all, even 8th notes, and base the articulation and the time off of how precise you are when you press your fingers down' – and that's really difficult.[86]

For Garzone, the implementation of the no-tongue approach brought added freedom, as the phrases being performed were seemingly released from stylistic constraints. As mentioned earlier, 'jazz articulation' - also known as 'back-

[85] Garzone, "Interview by Jeremy Trezona."
[86] Ibid.

tonguing', generally only lends itself to a very straight-ahead style of performance, borne from the swing and bebop styles of the 30s, 40s and 50s. As a modern innovator who regularly incorporates aspects of free jazz performance in his original group *The Fringe*, Garzone felt increasingly compelled to overhaul his own articulation style:

> …of all the heavy articulators I ever heard in my life, the worst was myself… I realised I needed to get rid of the articulation, and when I did it was so intense to lose it, but once I did I realised it allowed my playing the opportunity to be less directional, and I could stab at whatever I wanted. I could play wider intervals, where when you articulate, even when you play a light jazz articulation it's only going to head the direction of your line one way - and that's straight-ahead; but when you lose the articulation completely, the possibility of playing whatever you want is right there…[87]

Whilst the no-tongue approach to articulation at first appears incongruous with the classical techniques detailed in earlier chapters, Garzone identifies this exercise as the first step in the jazz saxophonist overhauling their approach to articulating on the instrument. In fact, Garzone credits much of his awareness of articulation style to the training he received from classical saxophonist Joe Viola in his early career:

> Talking about him [Joe], his concept of how he played his instruments was so [light], he had this feather touch – and I think that's where I got it from because I never heard anyone that had a sound like that…

> …Being with Joe, I realise now that even the way that I play free with *The Fringe* is really based off a classical background. When I listen back to it, it's free and it's crazy, but there's solidity to it that I think he gave me. He would say 'Sure, play free and do all of that crazy stuff, but do it this way'. It gives it validity.[88]

Throughout this process of searching for a unique articulation style, Garzone's own investigation has led him to eventually reintroduce the tonguing action into his performance, albeit in the lightest way possible:

[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

> This whole articulating thing, if you use "TA" it's backpressure to the reed and then a release. So anything with a 'T' stops the reed, shuts it down and then opens it up again, like a mini explosion. So what I did was, I developed this syllable called 'Da', which is less than 'T'. I went from 'T' to 'D', and the 'D' was a lot less dynamic than the 'T'. But then I was even able to down play the "Da', to the point where it almost wasn't there, so I would play no articulation even 8th notes to this light 'Da' which is probably the lightest moment of articulation that you could possibly have. That's what I'm investigating right now – the distance between nothing and the beginning of something.[89]

What is particularly striking about this method is its resemblance to the techniques espoused by classical pedagogues, and in particular, Joe Allard. This precise attention to syllabic articulation, coupled with an exceptionally light stroke of the tongue, forms the basis of both Allard's articulation technique and wider classical pedagogy. To remind the reader of the exercise Allard prescribed:

> We would begin with no tongue, get very loud and while the note was still going on, he'd have us barely articulate. We would touch the reed as lightly as possible, so that the tongue would interrupt the vibration of the reed without stopping it, teaching us to barely tongue. He'd have us practice it loud so that we'd learn to use a light articulation even though we were playing loud.[90]

Although Garzone was in close proximity to Allard at various points in his career (both taught at the New England Conservatory), it is curious to note the two never engaged in a lesson,[91] leading Garzone to develop this technique entirely independently, save for the ongoing influence of Joe Viola's early instruction. In several ways, Garzone's arrival at a light articulation style - informed by close attention to syllabic use, represents a clear endorsement of many of the principles of classical articulation pedagogy and their relevance to jazz saxophonists.

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[89] Ibid.
[90] McKim, "Joseph Allard: His contributions to saxophone pedagogy and performance," 44.
[91] Garzone, "Interview by Jeremy Trezona."

CONCLUSION

As in jazz performance, jazz education has continued to evolve in the early 21st century. Whilst few would debate the ongoing influence of aural instruction in jazz programs worldwide, there is perhaps a declining emphasis on classical instruction in the formative years of the jazz saxophonist. In the words of Garzone:

> …when I started with Joe [Viola] a lot of it was classical, because back then in the 60's, they felt you needed an understanding of how to play this instrument, rather than saying 'OK, here's a ii-V-I', which often happens now.[92]

Yet, for all of the undeniable benefits of aural instruction in jazz education, it is hard to deny the limitations of this method in developing a saxophonist's articulation facility. In this respect, perhaps it would be advisable for instructors to take on the responsibility of imparting effective articulation technique onto their students; or alternatively, the students themselves must carefully investigate the array of techniques at their disposal. Garzone explains:

> A lot of it comes from simply not knowing and having to be told. In high school, I used to blame the bandleaders or teachers because a lot of these guys maybe never figured it out for themselves, so if you're with a teacher that doesn't hear that either, those [articulation] techniques get shot by the wayside. It's really congruent to who you're with.[93]

Furthermore,

> Joe [Viola] never said to me 'You're over articulating', but I don't think he had to, because I figured it out on my own. When I did, because of my understanding of the classical tradition, it helped me put everything together and realise what I needed to do.[94]

[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

When considering articulation study, it is important to remain mindful of the two underlying components of the technique: physical execution and stylistic implementation. As previously mentioned, the styles in which articulation devices are implemented in performance are entirely one's own artistic decision. It should be noted however, that technical facility in this area is a critical aspect of performance that all saxophonists should seriously consider - regardless of genre. To this end, many principles of classical articulation technique may be considered universal. For the jazz saxophonist, the principles of tongue placement, a light tonguing stroke, and syllabic use may all be viewed as prerequisites in achieving technical proficiency in articulation. As Branford Marsalis points out:

> Personal technique is very different from actual technique… My brother Wynton used to say that classical music helped him to develop actual technique, as opposed to personal technique.[95]

For many, the goal of achieving technical facility on their instrument could be driven by a desire to be afforded every creative opportunity as an artist – whether performing in a traditional setting or pushing the boundaries of musical convention. Although classical study may be considered prescriptive by nature, in addition to physiological differences between performers, distinctions in personal interpretation will always account for a rich variety of articulation techniques amongst modern saxophonists, irrespective of genre. In this way, classical articulation study not only avails the artist new techniques during performance, but through added facility on the instrument, enables the artist more freedom in their artistic pursuit.

[95] Vanderheyden, "Approaching the classical style: a resource for jazz saxophonists," 83-84.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE GARZONE

20th of August, 2012
Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
Conducted by Jeremy Trezona

1) *What are the challenges jazz saxophone students face when approaching articulation?*

That's a good question. I think the biggest challenge is not to overuse it. When young players are taught, they're taught to swing the 8th notes with the dotted 8th and the 16th, so people concentrate more on the rhythm of that sound but they never really address how the dotted 8th and 16th are played. So what happens is they bypass the whole situation of trying to play them smoothly, so when they start to play it they always end up playing it with a heavy 'T', [demonstrates] "TA TEE TA TEE TA TEE", so that to me is an example of overusing articulation. In a certain period in time like the 40's and 50's they were using that kind of articulation, but as time went on they got away from that. I think for the young students these teachers never really hip them to progress, and as music moved on it went forward but no one showed them. So when they came into college and they had to deal with someone that knew enough to say 'Look, you need to lose that articulation', it becomes an issue. So for me, my entire career has basically been that! I never thought of making a history of how you're articulating, like what you're doing your thesis on, [but] I've been doing this thesis all my life trying to understand at the beginning 'Why does this guy sound like that? What's making this sound so nasty?' Then I realised it was an overuse of articulation. It wasn't wrong, it was just the way that they were doing it.

2) *In the video presentation you did for Rico Reeds, you mentioned your use of a 'no-tongue' approach to articulation. Can you explain how and why you developed this method?*

It's kind of tied into what I just said – meaning that when these young students were coming in they were over articulating, and I tried to think what I could do to get rid of that right from the beginning, so I just figured 'OK, let's use no articulation at all.' So not only did it strip them down from heavily articulating but I found it was really challenging, even for myself, because it made me realise how much of a crutch the tongue is because the tongue stabilized the time. I think that's one reason why people over articulate, to give solidity in their time, and not thinking or realising what they're doing to the sound of the 8ths notes as they go along. What I did was I would be like 'Ok, no articulation at all, even 8th

notes, and base the articulation and the time off of how precise you are when you press your fingers down' – and that's really difficult.

3) *Do you recommend this technique as a practice method only, or is this something you would also apply in performance?*

I apply it in performance because of all the heavy articulators I ever heard in my life, the worst was myself. I came from a pretty legit background studying with Joe Viola, and it wasn't his fault, but I took from studying all the classical repertoire articulating like that, and then when I heard my first [jazz] record I realised 'Woah. That's too much". I realised I needed to get rid of the articulation, and when I did it was so intense to lose it, but once I did I realised it allowed my playing the opportunity to be less directional, and I could stab at whatever I wanted. I could play wider intervals, where when you articulate, even when you play a light jazz articulation it's only going to head the direction of your line one way and that's straight ahead, but when you lose the articulation completely, the possibility of playing whatever you want is right there – meaning wide intervals. To me, wide intervals are intervals larger than a perfect fourth. You can't play those wide intervals in succession if you're heavily articulating.

- Do you think you were able to do that because you had that technique to begin with, that was taught to you by Joe [Viola]?

Yes. 50% of it came from the strict learning of these arpeggios and the classical etudes, but the other 50% came from not articulating. It was really great to have those studies but then when you moved into a completely different style of music, it warranted you not playing it the same way you would play traditionally.

4) *Could any of the problems caused by an over-use of articulation stem from a lack of effective tonguing technique?*

Pretty much. It's self explanatory – if it's too heavy, it's too heavy. When you're playing the saxophone, or any instrument, you've got to really approach it from a gentile side. The moment you start doing anything in any excess, it's multiplied times a hundred, or a thousand. Whether it's articulating, or blowing, or volume, or dynamics or anything, it's got to be used with sensitivity most of the time. This whole articulating thing, if you use "TA" it's backpressure to the reed and then a release. So anything with a 'T' stops the reed, shuts it down and then opens it up again, like a mini explosion. So what I did was, I developed this syllable called 'Da', which is less than 'T'. I went from 'T' to 'D', and the 'D' was a lot less dynamic than the 'T'. But then I was even able to down play the "Da', to the point where it almost wasn't there, so I would play no articulation even 8th notes to this light 'Da' which is probably the lightest moment of articulation that you could possibly

have. That's what I'm investigating right now – the distance between nothing and the beginning of something.

- *So very efficient use of the tongue?*

Yes – because when you don't tongue at all and occasionally drop in a 'Da', or when you go from nothing, to a little bit, to tonguing every note with that light sensation, it solidifies everything and gives your time more stability - but it's not overly played so that it sounds too heavy.

5) *As you mentioned earlier, you studied with Joe Viola at the Berklee College of Music. What was Joe's view on articulation study, and do you still incorporate any of these principles into your performance and/or teaching today?*

Constantly. I think most of my career was based off of articulation – teaching these guys how to use it because no one really knows how to do it – just like what you were saying [earlier] and why you're writing your thesis – no one really talked about the fine line in articulation. The proof is in listening to these people play. Over-using articulation, or using it in the wrong places – it upsets the rhythm of what they're playing.

Talking about him [Joe], his concept of how he played his instruments was so [light], he had this feather touch – and I think that's where I got it from because I never heard anyone that had a sound like that. The soprano sounded like the English horn, and he used to play English horn with me when we played through some of his exercises. When he would go from English horn to soprano they sounded the same and I wondered 'How does he do that?' I started with him when I was about 15 or 16, and all through that even though I was young and probably kind of naïve, my ear almost always said 'How does he get that sound?' – and it was just that he never really bashed the keys when he played. His airstream and fingers were so precise that it wasn't necessary for him to heavily articulate anything. I think back now, and I think that's probably where I got it from, because I never forgot how he sounded. I never met anyone again that sounded like Joe Viola, and anyone who studied with him would say the same thing. If you heard this guy, he was unique. He studied with Marcel Mule, and he [Mule] didn't let many people study with him - Joe was selected through a whole sea of people.

I would say that it comes from Joe because he made me realise that the tongue was not necessary to really accentuate [the notes], because it comes more from the fingers. What happened was when these kids came in it was an uphill battle to get them not to use it [over-articulation], because if you go into the professional scheme like that, it gets rough.

6) *Do you incorporate any of Joe Allard's teachings into your own performance?*

Not really, because they were two different camps. Joe Viola taught at Berklee and Joe Allard taught at NEC (New England Conservatory). I got to know Joe Allard later because I taught at NEC also, and we would talk, but we never had a lesson or anything like that. They were two different styles – Joe Allard had this way of blowing where you would slope the tongue from the back down to get kind of a 'HHEEEE' sound, which when I would play I said to myself 'Wow, this is really cool, the sound is really direct', but it would be like re-learning the instrument again. By the time I got hip to that I was about 30 or 35 years old, and to change at that point in my career was [too] radical.

- *I'm sure by that stage in your career you would have also developed your own unique sound, which you'd shaped over time.*

Yes, definitely.

- *From what you've mentioned about Joe Viola, there seems to be a common thread amongst a lot of classical pedagogues – that they focus on a 'light' tonguing approach. It seems as though jazz saxophonists who aren't exposed to the right articulation technique can end up with quite heavy articulation that can potentially get in the way of phrasing and intonation.*

When people over-articulate, it's for two reasons. The naïve reason is they haven't been told that they're over-articulating, and the even more naïve reason is that they haven't *realised* that they're over-articulating. Students would often come to me not realising they had this problem and I would ask if they'd even heard themselves playing. Often their response would be 'Well I've listened to Michael Brecker and he articulates like this' to which I would reply 'Michael definitely doesn't articulate like this'. They hear it as a misconception. They hear it one way, but go at it from another angle which is not what is happening at that moment. That's when I started to doubt how students hear these sounds; they don't process it the way it's actually being played. A lot of it comes from simply not knowing and having to be told. In high school, I used to blame the bandleaders or teachers because a lot of these guys maybe never figured it out for themselves, so if you're with a teacher that doesn't hear that either, those techniques get shot by the wayside. It's really congruent to who you're with. Being with Joe [Viola], I realise now that even the way that I play free with The Fringe is really based off a classical background. When I listen back to it, it's free and it's crazy, but there's solidity to it that I think he gave me. He would say 'Sure, play free and do all of that crazy stuff, but do it *this* way'. It gives it validity.

7) *What is your view on a jazz saxophonist studying classical technique?*

Absolutely. I think the likelihood of a saxophone player understanding jazz is going to be much greater coming from his background in classical, rather than someone who just goes straight into jazz. It's fine, you can do that [go straight into jazz], but if you've had that discipline of studying classical you know how intense it is - and that's me. When I started with Joe [Viola] a lot of it was classical, because back then in the 60's, they felt you needed an understanding of how to play this instrument, rather than saying 'OK, here's a ii-V-I', which often happens now. By having that strict legit background, when they start throwing things around like 'Don't articulate, or articulate light, or play even 8th notes', it's all there. It was easier for me to conceptualise all that because I had to figure a lot of it out on my own. Joe never said to me 'You're over articulating', but I don't think he had to, because I figured it out on my own. When I did, because of my understanding of the classical tradition, it helped me put everything together and realise what I needed to do. A lot of it, even with the younger kids, is that they need to be told what the story is, and it doesn't happen [often enough]. You can tell the student who's been around the right teacher because he can come in and pick up these new concepts like a piece of cake, but if someone comes in who hasn't been told or instructed what to do, it's evident in their playing. It's better to correct those techniques early on, because when they get to college, those students already have the wrong way of playing engrained into them and it's difficult to break them from that. It's challenging even for good players to do some of these non-articulated exercises.

8) In your expansive career, have their been any teachings or comments by fellow musicians that have significantly influenced your concept of articulation?

People realise that I'm not articulating as heavy because when they go out and listen to other players, they're very distinct about what they're hearing, and when they don't hear something that they're used to hearing all the time it sounds radically different. Even when you go to the triadic approach, I figured out that whole concept, and it's so radically different because no one plays that way – I'm the developer of it. It wasn't as if I got it all from Coltrane – I did a little bit, but I reorganised it. With a harmonic, rhythmic or articulation concept, if it's less like what's around it, it's going to be noticeable, so a lot of it was found and sought out because of the unlikelihood of [the technique]. It's not like I'm the only one who plays like that, if you listen to Lovano and players like that they also play in a similar way. It helped me a lot because it opened up my playing. You can't do a random chromatic approach, you can't do wide intervals, you can't do pot-shotting over the harmony if you're using heavy articulation because it just narrows you down.

9) Finally, do you have any other comments about articulation, from a stylistic or technical perspective, that you'd like to share?

You've got to go and figure it out on your own because there's no 'one way' to do it. I'm working on the distance between no articulation and the lightest articulation known to man, so this distance in between is an area that I'm investigating. It's really a non-sound; it's a non-existing area, because it's nothing to the beginning of something. So if you say to me 'How do you play it?' you need to go and figure it out [yourself] because the way I go 'Doo Doo Doo' and the way you go 'Doo Doo Doo' are two different things, they're going to sound different – and no two people are going to sound the same, it's just the way it is. The hip thing about it is you can give this to people and they can spend their whole life trying to figure it out, and they'll get it, but it'll never be the same way twice.

- *One thing I noticed in your performance last night was that you muted the reed with your tongue, and released it to bring the sound back, almost like an explosion. I've noticed that in the playing of Johnny Griffin also.*

Yes, and Sonny [Rollins] as well. Really what you're doing is closing the reed down, and the sound is reacting off of the vibration of the horn. It's not really a big deal, but when you do it and you let go of the reed and it plays again, it's a continuation of what you're doing but coming into a fuller sound.

- *When you do that, do you use the side of your tongue?*

No – I go straight on and close the thing right down. If you wanted to play it, you would go ahead and figure out how to do it because there's got to be a certain amount of air in there to keep the reed vibrating.

-- End of Interview --

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