

BETWEEN CLASSICAL AND JAZZ: PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES IN CONTEMPORARY SAXOPHONE EDUCATION

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-672-0-15>

In the contemporary music-pedagogical landscape, the saxophone emerges as a versatile instrument operating at the intersection of different stylistic systems – namely, the classical (academic) and jazz traditions. Such a position entails specific requirements for the professional training of the saxophonist, which cannot be limited solely to the acquisition of technical skills or a stylistically homogeneous repertoire. Instead, the development of flexible and multidimensional performance mastery – capable of adapting to diverse artistic contexts – becomes a pressing concern. Within the classical tradition, primary emphasis is placed on intonation accuracy, control of sound production, and articulatory discipline, whereas jazz performance foregrounds phrasing, rhythmic flexibility, and improvisational freedom. In the training of the contemporary saxophonist, these approaches enter into a productive dialogue, shaping a performer capable of combining structural clarity with creative variability.

Both Ukrainian and international musicological scholarship has accumulated substantial experience in studying the methodological foundations of saxophone instruction. These studies address issues of classical instrumental training as well as the specific characteristics of jazz performance, including the development of improvisational thinking, modal-harmonic orientation, and phraseological freedom. However, most existing methodologies function within the boundaries of individual traditions, which complicates the formation of a holistic pedagogical model suitable for the contemporary saxophonist.

Current educational realities necessitate a conceptual rethinking of the accumulated methodological experience. The expansion of stylistic boundaries within the repertoire, the increasing role of intergenre forms, and the active integration of the saxophone into chamber and ensemble practices highlight the relevance of an integrative approach to instruction. In this context, methodological strategies aimed at shaping performance mastery should be grounded not only in technical proficiency but also in the development of performance awareness, aural anticipation, and stylistic flexibility.

A fundamental component of saxophonist training in both traditions remains focused work on sound production and articulation. Articulations such as *legato*

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and *détaché* serve as basic models that support the development of a stable and controlled sound. Their acquisition is most effective when based on major and minor scales in all keys, employing the full range of the instrument. Such practice contributes not only to technical confidence but also to the establishment of a unified timbral standard essential for both classical and jazz performance contexts.

Breathing technique plays a particularly significant role in the development of performance mastery. Controlled diaphragmatic breathing ensures continuity of the airstream, intonation stability, and the plasticity of musical phrasing. In this respect, the classical and jazz traditions share methodological principles, allowing breathing to be considered a universal performance resource independent of stylistic affiliation.

The subsequent stage of saxophonist training is associated with the development of auditory control and performance anticipation. The ability to foresee the sound of the next phrase, its harmonic support, or a timbral shift is crucial both in the interpretation of classical repertoire and in improvisational practice. It is at this level that the transition occurs from mechanical reproduction of musical material to conscious and intentional performance action.

Within the jazz tradition, the development of improvisational skills is based on the assimilation of modal and chromatic models, as well as work with typical harmonic progressions, particularly the II–V–I progression in major and minor keys. The use of approach tones to chord tones contributes to the logical coherence of melodic motion and enhances expressive phrasing. An essential methodological condition in this process is inner hearing and clear awareness of the harmonic context prior to the actual execution of the phrase.

Equally significant in the formation of performance mastery is work with transcriptions. The analysis and reproduction of improvisations by outstanding jazz saxophonists help establish benchmarks for stylistic thinking, expand the performer's phraseological vocabulary, and integrate aural experience into personal performance practice. In combination with classical discipline in intonation and articulation, transcriptions become an effective means of shaping an individual performance style.

The integration of classical and jazz methodologies does not imply a mechanical combination of exercises but rather the construction of a unified pedagogical logic. This logic is based on the gradual complication of performance tasks, a transition from stable structures to variable models, and the development of the ability for immediate creative response within a given musical context. In this regard, the classical and jazz traditions should be viewed not as autonomous or mutually exclusive systems, but as equal participants in a dialogue – each with its own performance priorities and

pedagogical strategies – that mutually enrich the process of saxophonist training.

Thus, methodological strategies for developing saxophonist performance mastery within classical and jazz traditions can be understood as an open, dialogical model of professional training. Within this model, the classical tradition ensures technical stability and sound culture, while the jazz tradition contributes cognitive flexibility and improvisational freedom. This approach integrates technical reliability, conscious sound production, aural anticipation, and improvisational creativity. It corresponds to contemporary requirements of professional music education and opens perspectives for training a versatile saxophonist capable of full artistic realization across diverse stylistic and performance contexts.

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