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THE INFLUENCE OF SIGURD RASCHER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAXOPHONE REPERTOIRE

ELEANOR ANNE SCALES

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters by Research.

The University of Huddersfield

August 2020

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Abstract

Sigurd Rascher was one of the most influential saxophonists of the Twentieth Century. Rascher's prolific career as a concert saxophonist and his reputation for his pedagogy paired with his pioneering work on the altissimo register of the saxophone ensured that a large body of repertoire was written by composers for the saxophone from across the world. His successful career is a testament to his dedication to the instrument. This being said, how exactly did Rascher champion the technique of altissimo and how has that effected the types of works written for the saxophone since?

This research seeks to contextualise Rascher's career as a saxophonist with the surrounding musical and political environment to help assess the extent to which Rascher played a part in the development of saxophone repertoire. This research is paired with two case studies of three different works written for Rascher. These case studies stand as a practical exploration of the methods Rascher used on works that were written for him. The research into and the exploration of these case studies culminated in two recitals where I had a chance to put my findings into real performance situations. Each case study finishes with a reflection of my findings and how these relate back to the central assessment of Rascher's influence on the development of saxophone repertoire.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Sigurd Rascher (b.1907-d.2001) was one of the most influential saxophonists of the twentieth century and was an important figure in the development of classical saxophone repertoire during this time. This dissertation seeks to explore the career of Sigurd Rascher as a saxophonist and pedagogue and the subsequent effects of his influential career on the development of saxophone repertoire.

When I started playing the saxophone, almost ten years ago, I was not aware of the gamut of possibilities available to the instrument. I had started the instrument comparatively late at aged fourteen and I had thought that in my three short years of playing that achieving my grade 8 meant I had learnt all there was to know about the saxophone. When I became seriously interested in studying the saxophone and on studying music as a whole, I started looking into universities and music colleges and discovered that I had a lot to learn about the instrument. In the years that followed I started researching into the saxophone's history, repertoire and the like, while also focussing my energies on improving my technique and ability on the instrument. It was through this research that I became aware of the altissimo register and it became a technique I devoted some time and energy to when I started to learn Paul Creston's *Sonata*, which has one altissimo G as part of the climax of the first movement, during my second year of undergraduate study. From there I realised that there was a distinct discourse emerging within my reading around and practice of the altissimo register. This discourse was around Rascher and Marcel Mule and their very different contributions to the saxophone. I became aware of Rascher championing altissimo and from there my idea for this masters project began to take shape.

Sigurd Rascher was a German born saxophonist whose active career spanned between 1930-1977. The years of his early career were spent in Europe, where he performed concertos commissioned or dedicated to him with orchestras from across Europe, before he relocated to America in 1941. The years following the move to America continued to be fruitful for Rascher, with more commissions and dedications, concerto performances, solo recitals, the

release of Rascher's aide to altissimo pedagogy *Top Tones*¹ and teaching at various institutes. Rascher is thought to be responsible for the major development in the utilization and pedagogy of the saxophone's altissimo register, having championed the technique since his early career in Europe. Thomas Dryer-Beers states in his chapter titled *Influential Soloists in the Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone* that:

Rascher's lifelong efforts passionately promoting the utilisation and mastery of the altissimo register have resulted in the acceptance of a range of over four octaves by both composers and performers.²

This statement is one of the catalysts for this exploration of Rascher's career as a saxophonist. It leads me to ask questions such as: Why was Rascher so passionate about altissimo and its utilisation within works? How did he contribute to the acceptance of a range of over four octaves by saxophonists and composers alike? To assess such questions in this thesis I have employed a two-stranded approach to help me understand Rascher and repertoire development, by combining a written discourse and a practical auto-ethnographic approach. This portfolio therefore comprises of a written thesis and two recital recordings, which together reflect on '*The Influence of Sigurd Rascher on the Development of Saxophone Repertoire.*'

1.1. Methodology

In order to reflect on '*The Influence of Sigurd Rascher on the Development of Saxophone Repertoire*' I have employed the following methodological approaches:

1. Contextualisation of Rascher's career and its relation to the historical events of the time. I am not seeking compare Rascher's career to his contemporaries, apart from in chapter 3, *Forging a Career Outside Europe* where Rascher's career progress is measured against that of Marcel Mule. This is because Mule was at the epicentre of the saxophone's progress in Europe and it is useful to draw comparison to Mule,

¹ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone: Four-Octave Range*, 3rd ed (New York: Carl Fischer, 1983).

² *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone*, ed. by Richard Ingham, Cambridge Companions to Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 42.

whose contribution to the saxophone was arguably similar in dissemination to that of Rascher's.

2. I have taken the decision to explore works written for Rascher in the form of case studies which relate directly to the two recitals that also form part of this portfolio. This dissertation is not looking into every piece that was ever written for Rascher. Over 200 works were written for or dedicated to Rascher and it would be impossible for me to investigate each one in this thesis. The main focus of this thesis is on concertos written for Rascher and larger ensembles and therefore my chosen case studies reflect this decision and line of enquiry.
3. In order to assess my case-studies I have used a two-pronged approach. I have used traditional musical analysis techniques to unpick the case studies and I have then linked this to my autoethnographic research which has taken place concurrently to the written research. By using my practice and preparation of the case studies for the two recitals as research into the case studies it has helped me to understand the techniques and points discussed from a genuine performer's perspective and it also allows me to draw upon and reflect on the practices of Rascher.

1.2. Literature Review

Much of the literature on saxophone that is in current circulation is designed for a general audience, rather than for in depth study. Books such as *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone* edited by Richard Ingham³, *The Saxophone* by Stephen Cottrell⁴ and *Saxophone* by Paul Harvey⁵ provide good general overviews of the saxophone and its development and reception through time, but these are aimed at a wider audience and do not go into depth. As is typical with many 'history of instrument' books these examples do not engage with

³ Ingham, (1998).

⁴ Stephen Cottrell, *The Saxophone*, The Yale Musical Instrument Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

⁵ Paul Harvey, *Saxophone* (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007).

current developments in musicology, or methods such as auto-ethnographical research. They do however provide a good place to begin research and helped me to find areas to develop further. They also provide material to help assess Rascher's place in the saxophone's current historiography, which is often written by saxophonists, for saxophonists and thus tends towards a biased view of the instrument – a rose-tinted-glasses approach as it were.

In order to contextualise this history, I have turned to a wider range of sources which include books such as the *The Weimar Republic* by J. Hiden⁶, *Different drummers: jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany*⁷ and *The twisted muse: musicians and their music in the Third Reich*,⁸ both by Michael Kater, as well as *Most German of the arts* by Pamela Potter⁹ to explore the musical culture that Rascher found himself in as a Saxophonist at the beginning of his career in Germany. These have helped me to build a picture of the challenges that Rascher faced and help to assess his influence and position in saxophone history and the wider relationship between music and the political situation in the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany.

There are limited scholarly sources on the technique of saxophone playing. *The saxophone: The art and science of playing and performing* by John Harle¹⁰ is a collection of two books that discusses the science behind the saxophone, such as aspects of resonant tone production, the science of breathing, and how these relate to technique and playing. This is written from a modern-day perspective, so it is important to remember that Rascher would not have necessarily conceptualised his playing in the same way as some of the things discussed in this book due to it being written nearly 90 years after Rascher was starting his saxophone career.

⁶ J. W Hiden, *The Weimar Republic*. (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014).

⁷ Michael H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁸ Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁹ Pamela Maxine Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹⁰ John Harle, *The Saxophone: The Art and Science of Playing and Performing*, 2 vols (London: Faber music, 2017), I; John Harle, *The Saxophone: The Art and Science of Playing and Performing*, 2 vols (London: Faber music, 2017), II.

Joe Wolfe's '*Saxophone acoustics: an introduction*'¹¹ has helped me to further my understanding of acoustics in relation to the altissimo register, especially in terms of understanding the harmonic series and partials.

Upon researching I have come across very little literature relating to the saxophone's presence in Germany before the formation of the Weimar Republic in 1918. There is a small selection of repertoire, including a series of study books, by German composer called Gustav Bumcke.¹² Bumcke had even instigated the first German Saxophone Orchestra and dedicated his primary compositional efforts to creating works for the saxophone.¹³ Some of his more well-known works for the saxophone include the *Notturmo Op. 45* for baritone saxophone and pedal harp and *Scherzo Op. 67* for alto saxophone and piano. These works by Bumcke represent one of the most important contributions to the saxophone in Germany during this time. It is worth noting that the early history of the saxophone in Germany would be a fruitful area for further research.

There are two categories of primary sources relevant to this study. The first is books written by saxophone players, which give an insight into how players viewed the instrument across the last 100 years or so. A lot of this output falls under the category of method and exercise books, such as Gustav Bumcke's *Saxophon-Etüden Opus 43*¹⁴, Jean-Marie Londeix's *Playing the Saxophone Book 2*¹⁵, Rob Buckland's *Playing the saxophone*¹⁶ and Marcus Weiss and Giorgio Netti's *The Techniques of Saxophone Playing*¹⁷. This significant body of material gives snapshots of developing approaches to the instrument through time.

¹¹ Joe Wolfe, '*Saxophone Acoustics: An Introduction*', *Music Acoustics*, 2020
<<https://newt.phys.unsw.edu.au/jw/saxacoustics.html>>.

¹² Gustav Bumcke, *Saxophon-Etüden Opus 43*, 5 vols (Hamburg: Anton J Benjamin, 1927), I–V.

¹³ Association of German Saxophonists, '*Gustav Bumcke Life and Work*', *ARDESA*, 2020
<<https://www.ardesa.de/gustav-bumcke.html>>.

¹⁴ Bumcke, (1927), I–V.

¹⁵ Jean-Marie Londeix, *Playing the Saxophone Book 2* (Paris: Edition Henry Lemoine, 1974).

¹⁶ Rob Buckland, *Playing the Saxophone* (Sandbach: Astute Music, 2012).

¹⁷ Marcus Weiss and Giorgio Netti, *The techniques of saxophone playing*, 3rd edn (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2015).

The second and most significant area of primary sources are those written by Rascher himself. Rascher's *Top-Tones for the saxophone*¹⁸ is a method book to help saxophonists produce and utilize the altissimo register. Rascher's method book is widely accepted as one of the best methods for learning to produce the altissimo register. It was the first book of its kind and similar method books were not published until many years after the first edition of *Top Tones*. *The Rascher Reader*¹⁹, a book compiled by Lee Patrick and Carina Rascher, contains Rascher's own writings on a variety of topics including music, saxophone and culture. A significant archive of materials relating to Rascher are held in Reed Library at the Fredonia State University of New York. Unfortunately I have not been able to visit this in person, but the selection published in *The Rascher Reader* has allowed me to gauge Rascher's approach as *The Rascher Reader* has a carefully curated selection of material. This makes *The Rascher Reader* an invaluable source as it has enabled me to investigate Rascher's work and career from his personal viewpoint and has helped me to understand Rascher's motivations and approach to the saxophone.

In this project I have drawn on these sources to examine the implications of culture and context on Rascher's career as well as drawing on primary sources to ascertain what impact Rascher had on the development of saxophone repertoire. The following chapters will include information on Rascher's early career, his career outside Europe, Rascher and altissimo and the two recitals as case studies. These will form a discourse on Rascher's career and its relationship to the development of saxophone repertoire during this time.

¹⁸ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*.

¹⁹ *The Rascher Reader*, ed. by Lee Patrick (New York: The State University of New York at Fredonia, 2014).

Chapter 2: Rascher's Early Career

Sigurd Rascher's early career coincided with a complex time in history. Rascher started his career in the 1930s in Germany but by the end of that decade Rascher had moved away from the continent of Europe altogether by re-locating to the United States of America. This chapter aims to lay out Rascher's biography, to assess the saxophone's status in Germany during the 1930s and its correlation to Rascher and his move to the United States of America. It will also give details of the saxophone's history: in order to contextualise Rascher's early career.

2.1. Sigurd Rascher – A Biography

Rascher was born in Germany on 15th May 1907. He began his school life began in Arlesheim, Switzerland before continuing in Stuttgart, Germany. He studied clarinet at the Stuttgart Musikhochschule between 1928 and 1929 under Philipp Dreisbach, who was principal clarinet with the Stuttgart Orchestra and professor at the Musikhochschule²⁰. Dreisbach was a notable clarinet player in Germany at this time but despite his tutelage with Dreisbach Rascher claimed that he struggled to earn money playing the clarinet. The popularity of dance band music had increased during this time due to the influence of jazz music coming across from America. As a result, Rascher said he had started playing the saxophone out of necessity, in order to join a dance band. After a couple of years of playing he became unsatisfied with it. He discovered through practice that there was an array of possibilities available to him because of the versatility of the saxophone.²¹ The significance of this is that if it were not for the artistic freedoms of the Weimar republic then Rascher would have not had the training opportunity he had as a result of the dance band. After finishing his study in Stuttgart Rascher moved to Berlin in 1930, where he began his professional career as a saxophonist, playing with the Berlin Philharmonic when they needed a Saxophonist for modern orchestral work.²² Rascher was appointed professor of saxophone at the Royal Danish Conservatory in Copenhagen in 1933 and subsequently at Malmö

²⁰ Eric Hoeprich, *The Clarinet*, The Yale Musical Instrument Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 235.

²¹ Erich Kleppel, 'Meister des Saxophons: Sigurd M. Rascher', *TIBIA*, 1979, p. 401
<www.moeck.com/uploads/tx_moecktables/1979-3.pdf>.

²² Kleppel, p. 401.

Conservatory in Sweden in 1934.²³ Rascher played in many major performance venues across Europe during the 1930s and even toured to Australia and Tasmania in 1938.

In 1939 Rascher made his United States of America debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and then with the New York Philharmonic at Carnegie hall, making him the first saxophonist to have appeared as a soloist in a subscription concert by either orchestra.²⁴ Rascher made the permanent move to the United States of America with his family in 1941.²⁵ At this point Rascher had already had some important works for the saxophone written and dedicated to him, including the Edmund Von Borck *Concerto* (1932), the Alexander Glazunov *Concerto* (1934), Lars-Erik Larsson's *Concerto* (1934), Jacques Ibert's *Concertino da Camera* (1935), Eric Coates *Saxo-Rhapsody* (1936) and the Frank Martin *Ballade* (1938). After World War Two ended he began to concertize in Europe again and the rest of his career saw tours around America, Europe and Australia. During the course of his career Rascher performed with over 250 orchestras from across the world.²⁶ Aside from concert tours and orchestral performances, Rascher taught at various American musical establishments during his career, including Eastman School of Music, Yale University, Julliard School and Manhattan School of Music.²⁷ He also published his well-known method book to the altissimo register, *Top Tones* alongside other method books, arrangements and transcriptions for saxophonists. Rascher was an avid writer and wrote several essays on the topic of music, saxophone, culture, nature and on the anti-nuclear movement throughout his life. Rascher's active playing career ended in 1977 on the eve of his 70th birthday, where he played Alexander Glazunov's *Concerto* for one final time with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra. Despite retiring from playing, Rascher continued to teach across America. Ronald Caravan argues that Rascher's principle legacy lies in his advocacy for the saxophone, allowing it to be received as a vehicle for serious expression during the twentieth century.²⁸ Other writers

²³ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 3.

²⁴ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 3.

²⁵ Dorn Publishers, 'Sigurd M. Rascher', *Saxophone Journal*, 2020

<<https://www.dornpub.com/saxophonejournal/sigurdrascher.html>>.

²⁶ George Gelles and Peter Schmelz, 'Rascher, Sigurd', *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2002)

<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000022910>>.

²⁷ Dorn Publishers, 'Sigurd Rascher'.

²⁸ Dorn Publishers, 'Sigurd Rascher'.

on the saxophone such as Paul Cohen, Thomas Liley and Stephen Cottrell argue that Rascher's main legacy was his development, use and teaching of the altissimo register.²⁹ Whatever his principle contribution, Rascher's career as a saxophonist was rich and varied and this made him one of the most well-known saxophonists of the twentieth century.

2.2. Saxophone History – Adolphe Sax: The Saxophone's Invention and Early Classes at Paris Conservatoire

Adolphe Sax, a Belgium instrument maker, created the first prototype of a saxophone in 1841. This saxophone was known as a 'Bass saxophone in brass'. Adolphe Sax (1814 – 1894) was born in Dinant, Belgium. Sax took up the flute and clarinet and studied at the Royal School of Music in Brussels. Through his knowledge of acoustics Sax improved the bass clarinet by repositioning the tone holes which were then covered by cups and he improved the intonation and ergonomics of playing. The patenting of this design in 1838 and its subsequent success helped to solidify Sax's reputation as an instrument maker.³⁰ However, Sax's career was not without its controversies with Sax being at the centre of legal disputes between instrument makers and even the subject of assassination attempts.³¹

Sax invented the saxophone for a number of reasons. These reasons help us to understand the saxophone's history up until Rascher's active period and therefore help to highlight and contextualise Rascher's position as a saxophonist. Sax was visited by a high ranked officer from the French army in 1842, who expressed his concern over the state of French military music. With the knowledge that French military bands were considering reform, Sax saw an opportunity for a potentially financially rewarding association with the French military. Military music in France formed an integral part of the musical landscape within the nineteenth century. Marching bands were expected to play outside and as such needed good projection. The projection of wind instruments such as the clarinet and flute was not as powerful as that of brass instruments. Sax

²⁹ Ingham, (1998), p. 49; Dorn Publishers, 'Sigurd Rascher'; Cottrell, (2012), p. 252.

³⁰ Cottrell, p. 13.

³¹ 'The Joy of Adolphe Sax: A Major Exhibition Brings Together Rare Saxophones for the First Time since 1877', *Independent* (London, 10 August 2014), section Culture <<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/features/the-joy-of-adolphe-sax-a-major-exhibition-brings-together-rare-saxophones-for-the-first-time-since-9660320.html>>.

declared in his Saxophone patent that string instruments were feeble in the open air and that they are rendered useless because of this feebleness. As such Sax went on to say:

Struck by these various drawbacks, I have sought a way to remedy this by creating an instrument which, by the character of its voice, can blend with string instruments, but which possesses greater strength and intensity than these. Better than any other, the Saxophone can finely modify its sounds [sic] to give the qualities just mentioned and to preserve a perfect evenness throughout its range.³²

The saxophone was the ideal ensemble instrument, particularly for the French military bands. Its tone could blend in with brass, woodwinds or strings, but because of its single reed mouthpiece and conical bore it had good projection and therefore could be better heard outside when used in marching bands. This ensured that the saxophone had a small but strong hold in France.

Sax founded the first saxophone class at the Paris Conservatoire in 1858 and taught there until 1871. The saxophone class was closed because the military students were mobilized for the war. This is an indication of the high importance of the military use of the saxophone at this time in France. At the time a large proportion of the teaching at the conservatoire was aimed at providing musicians for the French military.³³

Sax ensured that a small amount of solo literature was available for the saxophone, realising that without such literature he could not promote his instrument further. Many of these pieces were written as *solos de concours* or *Fantaisies* by composers such as Demersseman and Singeleé for the Paris conservatoire annual examinations.³⁴ This was common of much wind and brass repertoire composed during the mid to late nineteenth century. Instruments like the flute and clarinet enjoyed being able to go back to older pieces such as concertos by canonical composers, but the saxophone did not have this luxury due to its later invention.

³² Cottrell, (2012), p. 38.

³³ Cottrell, p. 34.

³⁴ Ingham, (1998), p. 53.

At the time of the saxophone's invention Adolphe Sax was aware of the saxophone's capability for producing notes high in the harmonic series due its conical core and the design of the mouthpiece. This meant that in the hands of someone who had learnt the technique, altissimo was possible. Ingham argues:

Sax was... aware that the saxophone was capable of producing tones above high F.... Although these high notes are not notated in any of the Sax publications, it is possible that Sax taught altissimo notes to his more advanced students. It would therefore not be unreasonable to assume that these talented students might have employed some high notes in the endings of the Sax Publications.³⁵

2.3. The Saxophone in Germany

Rascher grew up and matured into adulthood through a changeable era in German history where he would have seen and experienced first-hand the tidal sweeps of change through Germany's economy, culture and industry. Rascher was just 7 years old when World War One began and was 11 by the time the war ended in 1918. He was a mere adolescent during the start of the Weimar Republic and was a young adult by the time that the National Socialist Party had started gaining in popularity. This constant change in the foundations of German culture had implications for Rascher's career and on our understanding of the saxophone's place in Germany's musical history.

On the one hand the saxophone had been invented for use within classical music, but though commonplace in the military music of France it had failed to get a full-time place in the modern orchestra. This meant that the saxophone was not a regular feature within modern orchestral repertoire or in chamber music of this era. The saxophone also did not have a place in most conservatoires during this time. One of the main reasons for this is that there were very few accomplished saxophonists around who could teach at such a level. The saxophone's lack of popularity and its lack of orchestral repertoire meant that it would not have been a particularly good instrument to study during this time in Germany. This is because at this time conservatories were often linked to other institutions such as orchestras. For example, the Stuttgart

³⁵ Ingham, (1998), p. 15.

conservatory provided musicians for the Stuttgart Philharmonic orchestra. Bumcke taught saxophone at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin, which today is part of the Berlin University of the Arts, after recognising that there were few good saxophonists in Berlin at this time.³⁶ The Saxophone's absence in German conservatoires serves as an example of the saxophone not having a place within German art music in this era.

To understand how this occurred we must understand a little on the formation of the Weimar Republic. During the end of World War One, the people of Germany were beginning to blame the Kaiser, Wilhelm II, for the troubles that the country was facing, therefore blaming him for their suffering.³⁷ The German people saw the Kaiser as the only remaining obstacle between them and the end of the war. This growing tide of unhappiness within Germany led to a collapse of order thus people were drawn to the ideas of political change, no matter how far reaching this could be.³⁸ The Kaiser was forced to abdicate and this led to the formation of the Weimar Republic on November 9th 1918 and the subsequent ceasefire signalled the end of the war.³⁹ The war had been particularly gruesome and the lives of millions of soldiers were lost from all countries involved with many millions more casualties and wounded too. The end of the war represented a newfound hope for the German people. An attitude of optimism and a desire for change arguably sped up the changes in cultural tastes.

As discussed, the use of the saxophone in pre-Weimar Germany was on the whole very uncommon, however during the Weimar Republic its popularity gained due to tidal cultural changes. The popularity of jazz during 1920s in America swept across the Atlantic and through Europe, bringing with it the cultures and associations of the genre. The new and invigorating popularity of Jazz in 1920s Germany, along with renewed and positive financial prospects in the mid-1920s meant that this particular decade was known as the 'Germany's Golden Twenties' or its 'jazz age'⁴⁰. In this decade the entertainment industry, including all forms of art, expanded

³⁶ Association of German Saxophonists, 'Gustav Bumcke', 2020.

³⁷ Hiden, (2014), p. 1.

³⁸ Hiden, p. 2.

³⁹ Hiden, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Daniel Michaels Bell, 'The Saxophone In Germany, 1924 to 1935' (The University of Arizona, 2004), p. 17
<<https://repository.arizona.edu/handle/10150/290020>>.

rapidly and there were healthy audiences attending such events which included concerts of jazz repertoire featuring the saxophone, such was the free and expressive nature of the Weimar Republic. Music was able to bring social solidarity to a country and to a society so divided by war, due to this there was a huge growth in amateur music making within the country.⁴¹ The introduction of new technology which acted as a dissemination devices, such as radios and records helped to more widely disseminate the new style of music, jazz, to audiences across Germany. Therefore, jazz as a genre benefitted in 1920s Germany from these new technologies as well as the expressive freedoms of the state. Furthermore, the increase in trade with the US as a result of post-war settlements accelerated the influence of US culture in Germany.⁴² Jazz became associated with African-American tradition, which would eventually have serious implications for the genre in Germany during the 1930s.

After World War One, Germany had become heavily reliant of American loans. The financial climate in Germany became desperate after the Wall Street Crash and great depression in America, because the American crisis had financial implications for German society too. Too use a well-known quote 'when America sneezes the whole world catches a cold' and this was certainly true for Germany. This state of affairs and the German government's failure to react in a favourable way meant more extremist voting patterns become apparent. The Nationalist Socialist Party, the far right, were rapidly gaining in popularity.

By the time the that Hitler came to power in 1933 it was clear that the Nazi's agenda toward Jazz was severe. Joesph Goebbels, Nazi propaganda minster, is quoted as saying 'everyone knows, America's contribution to the music of the world consists merely of jazzed-up Nigger music, not worthy of a single mention.'⁴³ The director of the Berlin Conservatory also was quoted to have said 'Now you can go packing with all your Jazz' on the day Hitler came to power.⁴⁴ The

⁴¹ Potter, (1998), p. 1.

⁴² Cottrell, (2012) p. 32.

⁴³ Clarence Lusane, *Hitler's Black Victims: The Historical Experiences of Afro-Germans, European Blacks, Africans, and African Americans in the Nazi Era*, Crosscurrents in African American History (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 184.

⁴⁴ Lusane, (2003), p. 84.

disillusioned Nazi party blamed American music for taking away from the national effort and they blamed America for their economic plight. Lusane argues:

There was no mistaking the connection between jazz and Negrophobia by the Nazis. Goebbels's approach to the problem was multifold and even contradictory as he tried to resolve an impossible contradiction. On the one hand, the black and Jewish role in jazz was indisputable and thus made the music unacceptable on fundamental principles. On the other hand, the music was popular not only among a significant number of the population but among German soldiers and even Nazi members themselves. Given this paradox, with its local variations of celebration and repulsion, Goebbels tried unsuccessfully to ban jazz-related activities and create a Nazi version of jazz time and time again. The attacks on jazz – officially labelled *Entartete* ('degenerate') and called "uncouth and tasteless music" – were part of a larger agenda of cultural control implemented by the Nazis after coming to power.⁴⁵

This meant that almost as quickly as jazz grew within Germany it fell back out of fashion. This meant that the saxophone, because of its associations with jazz and therefore with people of colour, fell into demise.

For Rascher this created a constantly changing culture during the period of his childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. By the time that Hitler came to power in 1933 Rascher had been focussing on classical saxophone playing for three years and had already had commissions written for him by composers such as Edmund Von Borck, who had written Rascher a concerto in 1932.⁴⁶ Despite Rascher focussing on classical saxophone technique and repertoire the reputation of the saxophone was already tainted in Germany by 1933 because of the National Socialist views on the music of jazz, so the saxophone was inculcated by association. However, if it were not for the jazz and dance band traditions influencing German music in the 'golden' 1920s then Rascher would not have started to play the saxophone. Rascher himself chose to start focussing on the other possibilities of the saxophone.

⁴⁵ Lusane, pp. 184–85.

⁴⁶ Kleppel, (1979), p. 401.

As a result of such difficulties for the saxophone, Rascher was forced to leave Berlin in 1933. He moved to Copenhagen, Denmark, to teach at the Royal Danish Conservatory. Rascher made associations with many composers in Europe after he moved away from Germany and in the years between his move from Germany and his permanent re-location to the United States of America in 1941 a number of the most well-known works for the saxophone known today were written.

Chapter 3: Forging A Career Outside Europe

When Rascher made his permanent move to the United States of America his career continued to flourish. In this chapter I will look at Rascher's career in America to help us assess the impact of Rascher on the development of saxophone repertoire. I will then look at what Rascher was doing in comparison to Marcel Mule, a notable French contemporary of Rascher's, to help further assess Rascher's contribution to the saxophone.

3.1. Rascher in America

Rascher's move to the USA was a positive step for his career. He had been successful while he was in Europe, gaining many works which were written for and dedicated to him, orchestral performances, solo performances with orchestras as well as tours around Europe, the USA and Australia. This success continued for Rascher in the USA. The USA offered more teaching opportunities, the release of his popular publication *Top-Tones* and touring around the USA. It gave Rascher a chance to further his brand and disseminate his musical ethos to a wider audience.

3.1.1 Repertoire

Rascher continued to inspire composers to write for the saxophone throughout his entire career. One important factor for Rascher was his maintaining of connections and friendships with composers, particularly those in Europe. This meant that a variety of works were written for or dedicated to Rascher throughout his career. Ronald Caravan argues that Rascher's recognition of the need for quality saxophone repertoire led him to pursue relationships with composers who could in turn enlarge the available repertoire for the saxophone. Caravan argues that because of this, Rascher did more to develop the legitimacy of the saxophone on the concert platform than any other saxophonist had done before him.⁴⁷

Throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, a preponderance of the significant new saxophone solo and chamber repertoire would appear with the familiar dedication to Sigurd M. Rascher, products not just of his ongoing

⁴⁷ Dorn Publishers, 'Sigurd Rascher'.

commitment to motivate some of the world's finest composers, but also in part the result of genuine close friendships he developed with so many. Among them were Larsson, Glaser, and von Koch in Sweden; Jacobi, Dressel, and Genzmer in Germany; Haba, Macha, and Reiner in Czechoslovakia; and Benson, Brant, Cowell, Dahl, Erickson, Husa, and Hartley in the United States. And it is not without significance that among all the pieces written for and dedicated to him during his life, not one was commissioned. He inspired new music, he never needed to purchase it.⁴⁸

While Caravan argues that Rascher had works written by some of the 'World's finest composers', it is worth mentioning that, objectively, the composers who wrote for Rascher were not the most well-known or the most-influential composers of the twentieth century. Rather, they were good composers who wrote with an understanding of the saxophone and a relationship with Rascher, which in turn cultivated many seminal works for the instrument, in spite of the fact that these composers were neither the 'most-known' or the 'most-influential.' Rascher had genuine relationships with composers, which led to the composition of many works for the saxophone.

Some of the works written for and dedicated to Rascher during his time the USA include:

- Henry Brant, *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra* (1941)
- Ingolf Dahl, *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble* (1949)
- Werner Wolf Glaser, *Allegro, Cadenza e Adagio* (1950)
- Carl Anton Wirth, *Idlewood Concerto* (1954)
- Warren Benson, *Concertino for Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble* (1955)
- Erland Von Koch, *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra* (1959)
- Karel Husa, *Elegie et Rondeau* (1960)
- Wolfgang Jacobi, *Concertino für Altsaxophon und Kammerorchester* (1961)
- John Worley, *Claremont Concerto* (1963)
- Waldemar Welander, *Concerto* (1964)

Interestingly many composers who wrote for Rascher fall under these categories: Those who were German but fled to America during World War 2 or suffered persecution in Germany because of their religion, such as Ingolf Dahl and Wolfgang Jacobi, who both had Jewish ties.

⁴⁸ Dorn Publishers, 'Sigurd Rascher'.

Those whose interests lie with writing for wind instruments and the saxophone, such as Warren Benson, Henry Brant and John Worely. The final category is those who are from Scandinavian and Nordic countries and those from occupied countries or countries which became German territory during the war (such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria etc.) such as Lars-Erik Larsson, Werner Wolf Glaser, Karel Husa, Erland Von Koch and Waldemar Welanders.

It seems to me that Rascher gained commissions from composers whom aligned with his own personal experiences and values. He was gaining commissions from composers who already knew about the capabilities of wind instruments and saxophones, composers who had suffered persecution in the same way Rascher had the start of his career and composers from the areas in Europe where he had previously lived, such as Sweden. There could possibly therefore be the argument that Rascher enjoyed the musical styles of these composers and that he cultivated genuine relationships with them because of his own personal background being not too dissimilar to many of the composers whom wrote for him. Furthermore, Rascher did not pursue some of the most Avant-Garde composers of the 1950s and 1960s, but instead pursued these such composers. This to me suggests that Rascher supported the work of these lesser known composers and found that their styles suited his musical ethos. Many of the works written by these composers have roots based in folk traditions of the countries of origin and are experimental without being Avant-Garde. This suggests that Rascher favoured experimentation with altissimo and extended techniques without the extremes that some composers of this era were going to. It also strikes me that Rascher enjoyed works that had neo-classical elements, particularly those written for him at the start of his career such as the Glazunov *Concerto*. Rascher's varied solo career and his pro-possibilities approach to saxophone playing ensured that many composers wrote for him in a variety of styles, creating adventurous and interesting works for the saxophone.

3.1.2 Pedagogy and Publications

Rascher's move to the USA provided him with opportunities to teach and run courses at some of the most prestigious musical training establishments in the whole of the USA. Such teaching was

held at the Eastman School of Music, Julliard School, Union College, Syracuse University, Yale University and the University of Southern Mississippi.⁴⁹ Not only was Rascher involved with University/College level students, but he also played a part in the saxophone tuition of almost every young saxophonist in the USA. Many young saxophonists learnt the saxophone through their local state band during elementary school using the Belwin beginner book. The Belwin book featured Rascher in the forward of the book with a fingering chart.⁵⁰ Thus, many young saxophonists knew about Rascher because of his connection with the Belwin Book. This suggests that Rascher's reputation preceded him and that his status as both a pedagogue and performer was established and that by featuring him in a publication it would increase the popularity of the publication. Rascher's reputation rapidly grew in the USA and this included appearances with University Bands and state ensembles. He was awarded with the Band Masters of America Award for his distinguished artist prowess. Such a variety of teaching opportunities made Rascher a sought-after pedagogue as well as performer.

Rascher published his seminal work, *Top-Tones*⁵¹, in 1941, shortly after his move to America. *Top-Tones* is a method book for learning and producing tones of the altissimo register and the first book of its kind to be published. As his understanding and knowledge of the altissimo register progressed Rascher published a 2nd and 3rd edition of *Top-Tones* which built on the information gathered throughout his career. This publication, which was released at the start of his time in America, suggests that he was promoting himself and his technique to both American saxophonists and saxophonists across the world. It was a good publicity move for Rascher, as well as being an important resource for saxophonists for many years to come, as it helped to raise his profile as a serious saxophonist.

Rascher's other publications include *158 Saxophone Exercises*⁵², a method book designed to improve dexterity, tone and facility on the saxophone. In 1968 it was published as a second edition, again with a forward on Rascher's findings from throughout his career. Rascher's focus

⁴⁹ Dorn Publishers, 'Sigurd Rascher'.

⁵⁰ Dorn Publishers, 'Sigurd Rascher'.

⁵¹ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*.

⁵² Sigurd M Rascher, *158 Saxophone Exercises*, 2nd edn (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1968).

on intelligent practice is apparent from all his publications and underpinned Rascher's ethos as a pedagogue.

...Intelligent Saxophone Student[s]... will suit [themselves] and select all kinds of variants [of rhythms and articulations], the more the better. ...The player will invent unending variations and combinations and thus pleasantly broaden his sense for rhythm and style. To be a musician is his goal, not an acrobat with fingers.⁵³

In 1994 Rascher published *Do you Listen? Exercises for Saxophone Players*⁵⁴ a work aimed at helping saxophonists improve their inner ear and musicality. *Do you Listen?* expands on the ideas of pitch visualisation mentioned in *Top-Tones* and seeks to expand the inner hearing of the saxophonist. Despite having been retired from active performances Rascher continued to write essays on many topics. Rascher had been writing about the topics of tone imagination⁵⁵, non-verbal thinking⁵⁶ and inner pollution⁵⁷ as early as the 1930s, with essays on such subjects being written by Rascher throughout his career. Rascher commented on the saxophone on the 1930s by saying;

As for the saxophone, it must be regarded as the last and highest step in a development toward a musical self-expression, since its tonal flexibility far surpasses that of any other wind instrument and its tone colour is almost entirely subject to the control of the player. Indeed, so great are its possibilities that Adolphe Sax, when constructing his new instruments in 1841, was almost a century ahead of his time. Only in recent years have musicians and composers begun to catch up with the saxophone's head start, and only now is the inquisitive mind exploring all of its possibilities.⁵⁸

For Rascher, improving technique and dexterity was only the first step in becoming a musician or indeed a saxophonist. To achieve the highest levels of musicianship was to unlock your potential for inner hearing, thought and recognition of the various elements beyond the physical technique of saxophone playing. This became one of Rascher's primary pedagogical pursuits, that is the

⁵³ Sigurd M Rascher, *Saxophone Exercises*, p. III.

⁵⁴ Sigurd M Rascher, *Do You Listen? : Exercises for Saxophone Players* (New York: Carl Fischer, 1994).

⁵⁵ Patrick, (2014), p. 14.

⁵⁶ Patrick, p. 19.

⁵⁷ Patrick, p. 20.

⁵⁸ Patrick, p. 46.

enhancing of a musician's mind and mentality and this is reflected in his own musicality and performance.

3.1.3 *The Rascher Saxophone Quartet*

Rascher founded The Rascher Saxophone Quartet in the USA in 1969 alongside his daughter, Carina Rascher. The Rascher quartet, still active today and now based in Germany, were responsible for over 250 works being added to the Saxophone Quartet repertoire. The Rascher Quartet established itself on the concert circuit and focused on the authentic sonorities of the saxophone, in line with Rascher's move for the authenticity of sound that Adolphe Sax had intended for the saxophone.

As the repertoire grew, so did the concert schedule. Since its earliest days the RSQ has made frequent appearances in major concert halls of Europe, Asia and the United States including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center New York, Kennedy Center Washington D.C., Opera Bastille Paris, Royal Festival Hall London, Philharmonie Cologne, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Musikverein Vienna, Tonhalle Zürich, Parco della Musica Rome, Dewan Filharmonik Petronas Kuala Lumpur and National Concert Hall Taipei, to name a few.⁵⁹

The Rascher Saxophone Quartet's contribution to repertoire through commissions and dedications, coupled with works written for and dedicated to Rascher as a soloist, ensured that a body of around 500 works were added to the repertoire of the saxophone and its ensembles. Many of the composers who wrote solo works for Rascher also wrote for his quartet, such as Werner Wolf Glaser, Erland Von Koch, John David Lamb, Carl Anton Wirth and John Worley. This further demonstrates Rascher's commitment, dedication and friendship to the composers whom wrote for him.

3.2. Rascher VS Mule

Marcel Mule was undoubtedly one of Rascher's most significant contemporaries. Mule's career as a saxophonist started when he won a place in the band of Garde Républicaine, the French

⁵⁹ Wildy Zumwalt, 'Rascher Quartet', *The Saxophonist*, 2020 <<https://www.thesaxophonist.org/rsq>>.

Military's most prestigious band, in 1923.⁶⁰ As discussed in chapter two, military music was important in France and the saxophone's inventor, Adolphe Sax, had been influential in the reorganisation of military bands in France. The addition of the saxophone provided opportunity for better projection whilst marching. Mule's role as a saxophonist within the Garde Républicaine was a vital foundation to his career as a saxophonist, because the saxophone was an accepted part of the military band. The Garde Républicaine was and still is a very prestigious ensemble in French musical culture.

In 1928 Mule formed a saxophone quartet with his colleagues from the Garde Républicaine, known as the *Quatuor de la Garde Républicaine*. The quartet initially played arrangements of other works but by the 1930s had successfully gained commissions from composers such as Alexander Glazunov and Gabriel Pierné.⁶¹ Mule left the Garde Républicaine and the quartet became known as the *Quatuor de Saxophones de Paris* before later being known simply as *Quatuor de Saxophones Marcel Mule*. Mule's quartet helped to legitimise the saxophone quartet as an ensemble because the quartet established a body of works written for saxophone quartets, which enabled this kind of ensemble to continue to concertize like other ensembles did at this time.

This is an area where Mule and Rascher differed, because Mule had begun a saxophone quartet near the start of his saxophone career and it was this and his performances with the Garde Républicaine which helped him gain status in the concert sphere, because many of his performances as a saxophonist were indeed with his quartet.⁶² Rascher however did not form his saxophone quartet till 1969, which was much later in his playing career. This meant the focus at the start of Rascher's career was more heavily solo oriented. Rascher was driven and keen to get composers to write works for the saxophone as a solo instrument right from the get-go of his

⁶⁰ Dorn Publishers, 'Marcel Mule Saxophonist and Teacher', *Saxophone Journal*, 2020 <<https://www.dornpub.com/saxophonejournal/marcelmule.html>>.

⁶¹ Harry R. Gee, *Saxophone Soloists and Their Music, 1844-1985: An Annotated Bibliography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 31.

⁶² Jean-Marie Londeix, 'Mule Left His Mark on the History of Sax', *North American Saxophone Alliance*, 2002, p. 3 <<https://www.saxophonealliance.org/assets/NASA-Update/200203-NASA-Update.pdf>>.

career. Mule's initial focuses leaned more towards his quartet and his solo career blossomed from this.

Mule's career as a soloist began in the 1920s and continued into the 1930s. Mule was the first saxophonist to perform a solo with the Padeloup Orchestra in Paris in 1935.⁶³ Mule was appointed professor of saxophone at the Paris Conservatoire in 1942 and was the second ever professor of saxophone at the conservatoire. His appointment came 72 years after Adolphe Sax's saxophone class was terminated in 1870.⁶⁴ Mule's teaching at the conservatoire led to a long lineage of saxophonists who learnt from the 'French School' of saxophone. Gee claims that by the end of his tenure at the Paris Conservatoire over 87 pupils of Mule's teaching had gained first prizes and were teaching across the western world.⁶⁵ Some of Mule's most notable alumni include Jean-Marie Londeix, Eugene Rousseau and Frederick Hemke. Other notable alumni include the third and fourth teachers of saxophone at the Paris Conservatoire respectively, Daniel Deffayet and Claude Delangle. Mule's performance and pedagogy at the Paris Conservatoire and the teaching performed by his alumni cultivated a 'French School' of saxophone playing which has cultured particular aesthetics when playing the saxophone, such as Mule's famous fast 'French' vibrato. Mule championed a vibrato that was fast and constant. For Mule, vibrato and musical expression were one and the same. Because of his link with the Paris Conservatoire a lot of the pieces dedicated to Mule are *Solos de Concours*, pieces written for the end of year exams at the Paris Conservatoire. Such pieces tend not to be as adventurous as the types of works that have been written for Rascher, but they do form an important body of work which is important to the development of the saxophone's repertoire in Europe, particularly in France.

From here Mule's solo career continued until it reached its pinnacle in 1958.⁶⁶ However, while Mule did have a solo career, he gave comparatively few concerts as a soloist when compared to the work done with his quartet.⁶⁷ While Mule had received one of the greatest honours of his

⁶³ Dorn Publishers, 'Marcel Mule'.

⁶⁴ Gee, (1986), p. 222.

⁶⁵ Gee, p. 222.

⁶⁶ Gee, p. 222. In 1958, Mule received one of the greatest honours of his career when he was invited to perform *Concertino da Camera* by Jacques Ibert and *Ballade* by Henri Tomasi with the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

⁶⁷ Londeix, 'Mule Left His Mark', p. 2.

career to play with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, it was something which Rascher had already achieved some 19 years prior in 1939 when he made his American Debut. Furthermore, Rascher had performed Ibert's *Concertino da Camera* in his American debut concerts. While it was an achievement for Mule to have performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra it was by no means on a level with Rascher's opportunity in 1939, which perhaps suggests that Rascher paved the way for saxophonists to begin having such opportunities. Furthermore, Mule's performances of the *Concertino da Camera* were far less 'risky' than Rascher's, because Mule almost exclusively opted to play altissimo sections down an octave so they remained in the standard range of the saxophone. This is the same for recordings of Mule playing *Concertino da Camera* such that found on 'La Patron' of the *Saxophone* album.⁶⁸ This suggests in some ways that Mule disregarded altissimo as an important technique for advanced saxophonists to learn.

In fact, it is argued by Jean-Marie Londeix that Mule was generally reluctant to branch out on his technique and discover the possibilities of the saxophone.⁶⁹

Marcel Mule was, throughout his life, very reluctant to acknowledge any technical evolution. Rather, he remained aloof from all aesthetic innovation. Completely absorbed by "the profession" and the academic life of the Paris Conservatory, he refused, except for the use of vibrato, most of the technical advances of his time: altissimo, various modes or styles of playing and the varieties of timbre or the use of micro tonality, etc. In Mule's own words, the music of Jacques Ibert was for him, in 1935, "full of wrong notes."⁷⁰

This in turn meant that many of the works written for or dedicated to Mule were simply just not as varied or adventurous in style and technique as the types of works that were being written for Rascher throughout his career. While a significant number of works written for Mule are staples of the saxophone's repertoire, such as *Tableux de Provence* by Paule Maurice, *Concerto* by Henry Tomasi, they are very often written by French composers and all have enjoyed a similar 'French Style'. Rascher's successful solo career ensured that he benefited from a variety of compositional styles and his pro-possibilities approach ensured that many adventurous and seminal works were

⁶⁸ Marcel Mule, *'Le Patron' of the Saxophone* (London: Clarinet Classics, 1996), p. track 12, 13 & 14.

⁶⁹ Londeix, 'Mule Left His Mark', p. 3.

⁷⁰ Londeix, 'Mule Left His Mark', p. 3.

written for and dedicated to Rascher, in a way they were not for Mule. This is not to say that Mule did not contribute positively to the saxophone because Mule's championing of the saxophone quartet helped to legitimise the ensemble and create a body of work for the relatively new combination of instruments. Rascher was, in terms of solo performing, more open to the possibilities of the saxophone and championed what the saxophone could do in the hands of someone who was trained. For Rascher and for his composers, the option of altissimo opened new avenues for compositions and enabled many challenging works to be written. Rascher also championed the idea that vibrato could be varied in speed and depth depending on the phrasing which opened a whole new means of musical expression. The fact that Mule so adamantly stuck to his fast vibrato and would not learn altissimo and would perform works with altissimo in an octave lower, such as the Ibert *Concertino da Camera*, is testament to his narrow approach. Rascher offered a much wider approach to the saxophone and in return he gained the trust and works of hundreds of composers from across the western world.

Chapter 4: Rascher and Altissimo

It is argued by writers such as Thomas Liley in *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone*⁷¹ and Stephen Cottrell in *The Saxophone*⁷², that Sigurd Rascher was the leading pioneer of the use and development of the altissimo register on the saxophone, with his pedagogical publication *Top Tones*⁷³ still being widely used today. Many pieces were commissioned or dedicated to Rascher over his career which contained altissimo passages or notes. This chapter will look to explain altissimo and explore Rascher's relationship with the technique.

4.1. Rascher and Altissimo – A History

In the 1930s when Rascher was delving into his exploration of the altissimo register the alto saxophone's standard range was Low Bb to high F. Now because of the addition of the high F# key in the 1950s, the alto saxophone has a standard range of Low Bb to High F# (written pitch).⁷⁴ An important factor to remember, when we are analysing passages, is that the note F# (which now as a modern saxophonist is considered part of our standard range) is best viewed in this context as the start of the altissimo register.

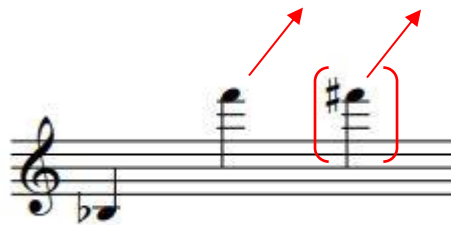


Figure 1: The range of the alto saxophone at written pitch. Altissimo is indicated by the red arrows extending upwards from the highest notes in the standard range. Bracketed in red is modern standard range.

⁷¹ Ingham, (1998), p. 42.

⁷² Cottrell, (2012), p. 252.

⁷³ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*.

⁷⁴ Ingham, p. 31.

The altissimo register of the saxophone is the range that extends above the standard range of the saxophone. So, for modern day saxophonists that is anything above high F# and for Rascher and saxophonists of his era that would have been anything above high F. The term altissimo comes from the Italian for *very high*.

Altissimo is considered to be an advanced technique. An example of this in the United Kingdom can be seen in the ABRSM and Trinity College London exams, where pieces containing altissimo do not feature in saxophone performance exams until the post-grade 8 Diplomas. Even then, the pieces with the most challenging altissimo passages are reserved for the highest-level diplomas, which are equivalent to the standard expected of a recital given by a post-graduate music degree/conservatoire student.⁷⁵

Notes in the altissimo register are produced by having the correct voicing and air stream to disrupt the fundamental of a note so that the partial, otherwise known as the note you are aiming for, is produced instead. This perfecting of this technique can take many years.

4.2. Altissimo – An Explanation

Muller suggests that despite the growing interest in the saxophone during the 1930s “it was only after Raschèr [sic] demonstrated the saxophone’s four-octave range to composers that the instrument’s high register capabilities were employed in classical saxophone literature.”⁷⁶ Rascher’s main efforts focused on the teaching and dissemination of his developed technique for producing altissimo notes. *Top-Tones for the saxophone* was first published by Carl Fischer in 1941.⁷⁷ In the preface to the first edition Rascher expressed how his work in *Top-Tones* was the first of its kind, and thus pioneering:

⁷⁵ ABRSM, ‘Music Performance Diplomas Syllabus (DipABRSM, LRSM and FRSM)’ (The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2004), p. 20 <<https://gb.abrsm.org/media/62444/diploma-performance-syllabus-2019-web.pdf>>; Trinity College London, ‘Music Performance Diplomas Syllabus Qualification Specifications from August 2019’ (Trinity College London, 2018), pp. 4 and 7.

⁷⁶ Adam Douglas Muller, ‘High Register Excerpts Of Selected Alto Saxophone Concerti: A Critical Anthology’ (unpublished Doctor of Music, Florida State University, 2012), p. ix.

⁷⁷ Patrick, (2014), p. 335.

Until recently the range of the saxophone has been considered to be two and half octaves, from low B-flat to F above the staff. There have been some attempts to extend the range, but up to the present time these have been more or less experimental. No comprehensive method of training the embouchure to master the high register has previously been published. This work is, therefore, as far as we know, the first of its kind⁷⁸

Prior to the publication of the first edition of *Top-Tones* Rascher released a pamphlet called *Harmonics on the Saxophone* in 1937.⁷⁹ It was the earliest publication of Rascher's to explain the technique of altissimo which he had experimented with and developed over the previous seven years. It also served to experiment with the way altissimo could be taught to people via print. It discusses the need for good embouchure control and expresses that if you do not have a technically sound embouchure then attempting altissimo will not yield successful results. It then gives a short description of the overtones and how to achieve them and finishes with a fingering chart accompanied by photos. The first edition of *Top-Tones* sought to pad out the information given in the *Harmonics on the Saxophone* pamphlet by furthering the explanation of the production of the technique and accompanying this with practical exercises which would be useful in honing the skill.

However, as discussed, Rascher was not the first person to realise the saxophone had such a range. Adolphe Sax himself was aware of the saxophone's range above high F, as demonstrated in *The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone*.⁸⁰ But it was not until Rascher exploited the saxophone's potential range that it became a commonly accepted technique for advanced saxophonists to master. A key question therefore concerns the extent to which Rascher was an influence over the technique's development and popularisation.

4.3. Rascher and Altissimo - Publications

Other method books to altissimo came after the publication of *Top-Tones*. Eugene Rousseau's method book, *Saxophone High Tones: A systematic approach to the extension of the range of all*

⁷⁸ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ Sigurd Rascher, 'Harmonics on the Saxophone' (Clifford Essex & Son, 1937).

⁸⁰ Ingham, (1998), p. 15.

*the Saxophones: Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Baritone*⁸¹ was published in 1978 and Donald Sinta's book, *Voicing: An approach to the saxophone's third register*⁸² in 1992. Both publications follow a similar approach to the method by Rascher but came after the publication of *Top-Tones*.

The preface to *Top-Tones* states:

Rascher, whose expressive power over a gamut of colours includes that of the flute, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon has shown that the seeming upper limit of the saxophone's range is due to a lack of ability on the performer's part, and is the fault of neither the instrument nor its inventor.⁸³

Rascher also states:

The production of tones higher than top F is based on the principle of 'harmonics,' so called because the first six tones in any overtone gamut form a major chord. Although it has often been assumed that 'false fingerings' are used to produce these high tones, the method outlined here has been arrived at by experiment and experience, and has not, in any sense, been achieved by mere accident. The fingerings indicated on page 19 have been tried on at least twenty different makes of E-flat saxophones, and are not restricted to any one make. The chief aim has been to find fingerings, not too complicated, adjoining each other in a reasonable way and producing perfect intonation. They have been used for over ten years and are still satisfactory. Many compositions played by the author on the concert platform require a range extending beyond top F, in some cases only a few tones, in others more than an octave. The fingerings given are the ones actually employed. A number of students in Europe have been very successful with these high tones, but mastery of them requires some years, even for an apt pupil.⁸⁴

Rascher also assumes that before starting to attempt altissimo that a saxophonist has control over basics of saxophone playing, including command of tone of every note in the range, articulations and vibrato.⁸⁵

⁸¹ *Saxophone High Tones: A Systematic Approach to the Extension of the Range of All the Saxophones : Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Baritone*, 2nd edn (Saint Louis: Lauren Keiser Music Publishing, 2002).

⁸² Donald Sinta, *Voicing: An Approach to the Saxophone's Third Register, Revised Edition*, 2nd edn (Maryland: Blaris Publications, 2008).

⁸³ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 3.

⁸⁴ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 4.

⁸⁵ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 4.

While Rascher's set of fingerings worked well on the many makes of saxophone available to him at this time we must bear in mind that saxophone design has moved on somewhat since the production of instruments such as that which Rascher played on. The addition of the high F# key to modern day saxophones changes the acoustic qualities of the instrument, due to the addition of the extra hole in the bore to allow for this key. Thus, many modern-day saxophones simply do not respond in the same way to Rascher's given set of fingerings from 1941. While in the preface to the third addition Rascher does mention that there are many alternate fingerings you can use on the Alto for altissimo, he argues:

"Feasibility and fingerings, however, are no longer the basic questions in this field. The central issue today, as it was 40 years ago, is the methodical approach given in this volume."⁸⁶

The central issue Rascher refers to is that to produce altissimo, and to master it, is both a physical learning of the correct embouchure, air stream, fingerings and voicings and also the learning of the mind and the inner ear. Both Sinta's *Voicing* and Rousseau's *Saxophone High Tones* refer to the central idea that mastering altissimo requires an awareness of mind, as well as the mastery of the physical technique in similar ways to the way Rascher first presents the technique of altissimo. Furthermore, Rascher's *Top-Tones* was reprinted in 1961 and 1977 as a second and third edition respectively, which could suggest that there was a market for the technique to be learned. Rascher contributed to altissimo becoming a standard part of saxophone technique not only through his book but also by popularising pieces that demanded it. This led to the proliferation of works which demanded the technique being written by composers, which further drove altissimo to become an established technique for learning by advanced saxophonists. The subsequent altissimo method books could be seen as a reflection of the fact that people wanted to play pieces like the Glazunov and Larsson, and so wanted to learn the technique. By the time Rousseau and Sinta published their method books the technique had become a standard requirement within advanced saxophone playing and more method books were released in response to the popularisation of the technique. It was Rascher, however, whom laid the foundations for this to happen, as he continued to champion altissimo during his active career.

⁸⁶ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 5.

4.4. Rascher's Top-Tones Method

Top-Tones starts with a few pages on basic saxophone technique, a much more comprehensive explanation than that provided in his original pamphlet. Rascher makes it clear in *Top-Tones* that one must have a strong basic technique, including control over long tones and embouchure, dynamics and uniformity of tone across the range. Only once a saxophonist has these aspects of their playing solidified can they achieve the results when learning altissimo. Rascher then moves on to the idea of tone imagination, where Rascher describe how we must actively imagine the tones we want to produce, so that we can hear in our imagination the tone we want to play next. He goes through a series of exercises where one practices imagining intervals of fourths and fifths. Rascher explains this process with this initial exercise:



Figure 2: Tone imagination exercise from Sigurd Rascher's *Top-Tones*.⁸⁷

At the start we think and play D. Then, while we continue to play D, we think the A in advance. And we ought to think this A so vividly that we have the experience of realistically hearing a fifth. This accomplished – and not before – we change our fingering to play A. Now tone imagination and acoustical sound must match. We are ready for the next step: to think E while we continue to play A. The completion of this cycle may take a few minutes. And because our power to concentrate is sadly neglected, it might be a long time before we master this seemingly simple exercise.⁸⁸

Once this step is mastered Rascher goes on to explain the concept of the overtones, which is how altissimo can be achieved because the saxophone is capable of producing notes in the overtone series much in the same way a brass instrument can. After this Rascher goes on to explain and provide a series of overtone exercises to help a saxophonist develop the ability to produce the

⁸⁷ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 8.

⁸⁸ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 8.

overtone series on given notes on the saxophone. Throughout this Rascher stressed the importance of tone imagination, because without imagining the tone you need to produce you will be unable to produce it with accuracy of pitch and good tone. These tone exercises become progressively harder, first starting with getting the basic overtones on each of the fundamentals on the saxophone (expressed as the note to be fingered), before moving onto combining the fundamental tones to create a series of harmonics which expand into the altissimo register. By progressively working through in this way Rascher ensures that the saxophonist has taken the time to perfect the achievement of each harmonic on the given fundamentals, before the saxophonist starts to add in the higher harmonics. This cultivates a solid foundation for the achievement of altissimo, because once this skill has been achieved by the saxophonist it is much easier to control the altissimo notes when the fingerings are introduced to improve stability and intonation and also helps a saxophonist to improve the intonation themselves.



Figure 3: The initial overtone exercises from *Top-Tones*. The lowest note (indicated with the connecting line) is the note to be fingered, known as the fundamental.⁸⁹



Figure 4: An example of one of the more advanced overtone exercises from *Top-Tones*. The fundamentals are combined to create a chromatic range of harmonics and this exercise also includes playing overtones in the altissimo register.⁹⁰

After this step is completed Rascher introduces the fingerings for the altissimo notes, which help to aid intonation, are easier to adjoin in altissimo passages than moving between the harmonic series and are not too complicated for the player. Rascher then moves on to exercises where you can implement these fingerings, remembering tone imagination and the voicing needed to

⁸⁹ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 12.

⁹⁰ Sigurd Rascher, *Top-Tones for the Saxophone*, p. 17.

produce altissimo register notes from the overtone exercises. By the end of the book the saxophonist should be able to play scales in natural overtones into the altissimo register and should be competent at producing altissimo notes. Throughout the method Rascher stresses the importance of slow, methodical practice and the fact that all this learning will take time, for many, years.

Chapter 5: Case Study 1 – Recital 1

When choosing case studies for my research on Rascher I was immediately drawn to Alexander Glazunov's *Concerto in Eb for Alto Saxophone and String Orchestra, Opus 109*, which was written for Sigurd Rascher. Even among saxophonists today it is probably one of the best known and most widely played saxophone concertos. In an article written by Rascher about the Glazunov *Concerto* he claimed:

Among the numerous concerti for saxophone and orchestra, that by Alexandre Glazounov [sic], occupies a special position. Not only is it one of the earliest, but is also one of those played most often. There is hardly a serious saxophonist who has not played it.⁹¹

As a member of the classical saxophone community I would find it hard to argue with this statement and would most likely be hard pushed to find someone who agrees otherwise. One might ask then, why is this the case?

This chapter will touch on some of the reasons why the Glazunov *Concerto* is such a popular choice among saxophonists. To gauge this I have assessed at the Glazunov saxophone concerto from three different perspectives. The first is looking at the background of the piece. The second is an analysis of the *Concerto*, including looking at different editions. The final step is looking at the way I prepared the piece for performance and the outcomes of this.

5.1. The Glazunov Concerto – A Background

Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936) was a Russian composer. Glazunov started piano lessons at nine years old and began to compose at eleven years old. He soon became the pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov for just under two years, who claimed that Glazunov's progression happened on an hour by hour basis.⁹² Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazunov remained good friends for life. Glazunov met composers such as Liszt on through tours of western Europe. Glazunov, together with Rimsky-Korsakov, became involved with completing the works of Borodin after his death in

⁹¹ Sigurd M Rascher, 'Alexandre Glazounov Concerto', 7.

⁹² Borris Schwarz, 'Glazunov, Aleksandr Konstantinovich', *Grove Music Online* (Oxford Music Online, 2001) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000011266>>.

1887.⁹³ Glazunov became a professor of the St Petersburg conservatory in 1899, he shared a 30-year connection with the conservatory, where he soon became director from 1905 to 1930.⁹⁴ Glazunov worked to raise the standard of education and defend the autonomy of the conservatory.

During this era, World War One and the subsequent civil war years caused much disruption and deprivation to all Russians, including Glazunov, who remained committed to music and continued to give concerts in factories, clubs and Red Army posts.⁹⁵ Finally, as a result of health deterioration, Glazunov settled in Paris in 1932, a city which during this period was an epicentre of arts, where many Russians resided. Glazunov died there in the Spring of 1936.⁹⁶

The political disruption caused by the wars had an effect on the sorts of artistic material that was supported by the USSR.

The Soviet authorities dictated the composition of art for artists who were inside the then USSR, as well as for those who emigrated. Glazunov, who for the last eight years lived in France, kept the Soviet government in a difficult position. Because [Glazunov] distances himself from any political stance, the authorities were sure that the composer would return to his homeland.⁹⁷

It is clear that Glazunov faced pressure to remain a nationalist composer under the regime in the USSR, but being in France gave him more compositional freedom, in the shape of 'western' influences. Glazunov's compositional output was largely nationalistic, which was 'perfectly suited for the category of the "Fathers" with the likes of Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, and Glinka.'⁹⁸ However, Glazunov never did return from France due to ill health which led to the Soviet Union stating 'that the last period of [Glazunov's] life was very unproductive because of his illnesses due to the fact that he was under the influence of Western Bourgeois culture. This influence was evidenced by the creation of compositions for bourgeois instruments such as the saxophone.'⁹⁹

⁹³ Schwarz, (2001).

⁹⁴ Schwarz.

⁹⁵ Schwarz.

⁹⁶ André Sobchenko, 'Letters From Glazunov "The Saxophone Concerto Years"', 1997, 5 (p. 66).

⁹⁷ Sobchenko, p. 66.

⁹⁸ Sobchenko, p. 66.

⁹⁹ Sobchenko, p. 66.

Glazunov, however, still produced works right up until the *Concerto in E-flat for Alto Saxophone*, which was one of his last major works. His separation from USSR when he moved to Paris meant that Glazunov was not accepted as one of the great Russian composers. It was thirty-six years after his death, in 1972, when 'the Soviet authorities decided to officially acknowledge him as a Great Russian composer of the Soviet Period.'¹⁰⁰

In March of 1932 Glazunov wrote in a postcard to Shteinberg, a colleague from the St Petersburg conservatory, that he had had an idea to write a saxophone quartet for the saxophone soloists in the band of the National Guard, "Quatuor de la Musique de la Garde Republicaine". Glazunov felt that the sound of the saxophone was 'distinctive'.¹⁰¹ In a continuation of correspondences it becomes clear that Glazunov cared greatly for the performers of the quartet and valued their opinions and suggestions for his composition. For example, he had said in a correspondence from 2nd June 1932 'I am afraid that this composition will fatigue performers due to its length. I talked to one of the them, and he assured me.'¹⁰² In one from 9th December 1932 he said 'I still worry about how matters will stand with "breathing," because the number of rests are few and I wish to achieve full consonance.'¹⁰³ In a way, Glazunov was pushing the boundaries of saxophone composition by pushing the limits of what was considered achievable in terms of performance through the quartet.

It was through a performance of this saxophone quartet by the National Guard on the 14th of December 1933 in a concert by the Societe Musicale Russe in the Conservatoire [R]usse De Paris that Glazunov's *Concerto* came about. Sigurd Rascher had attended this concert as he was in Paris at the time. In his article *Alexandre Glazounov* [sic] Rascher said that he had remembered the homogeneous sound of the saxophones.

'Here was a real ovation, in its persistent liveliness obviously aimed not only at the performers, but more so yet at the composer: a tall, lightly stooping gentleman with white hair, who stood quietly in the auditorium. With a

¹⁰⁰ Sobchenko, (1997), p. 69.

¹⁰¹ Sobchenko, p. 67.

¹⁰² Sobchenko, p. 67.

¹⁰³ Sobchenko, p. 67.

benevolent smile he thanked for the applause. In his life Glazounov [sic] has seen many ovations; this one, however, was different: his friends honoured him.’¹⁰⁴

At this point, there is conflicting points of view over the next series of events. From Glazunov’s point of view, he had started writing the concerto ‘under the influences of attacks rather than requests from the Danish [sic] saxophonist Sigurd Rascher.’¹⁰⁵ Rascher’s account of the situation is rather different.

After the concert given on December 14th Rascher remembers that he was ‘overflowing with enthusiasm’ so went to the artists room. He states that he had difficulty ‘expressing [himself] in common language, so [he] held [Glazunov’s] hand and asked simply, “May I play for you”.’¹⁰⁶ Rascher then arranged to play for Glazunov. The next morning Rascher then attended Glazunov’s apartment in Bologna sur Seine. He began to play ‘soft and loud, low and high, runs and cascades.’¹⁰⁷

“‘Merveilleux! Wherefrom are you? What is your name?’ [Glazunov had replied] And now he asked specific questions, which I answered not with words but with my instrument. When I carefully hinted at a concerto, he said, “Oui, for such a musician I will write one.”’¹⁰⁸

It was from here that the *Concerto in E-flat* was written. Despite not knowing which version of events is most accurate, we do know that Rascher actively sought to make relationships with composers from all around the world. As discussed in the previous chapter, significant new works for the instrument were written because of Rascher’s lifelong commitment to both the instrument and to cultivating authentic friendships with composers.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Sigurd M Rascher, ‘Alexandre Glazounov’, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Sobchenko, (1997), p. 68.

¹⁰⁶ Sigurd M Rascher, ‘Alexandre Glazounov’, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Sigurd M Rascher, ‘Alexandre Glazounov’, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Sigurd M Rascher, ‘Alexandre Glazounov’, pp. 1–2.

¹⁰⁹ Dorn Publishers, ‘Sigurd Rascher’.

5.2. Analysis of the Glazunov Concerto

5.2.1 Editions

The original printed score was published by Alphonse Leduc in 1936, the last work that Glazunov could supervise the publishing of before his death on 21st March 1936.¹¹⁰ A piano reduction was also printed in 1936.¹¹¹ In 2010 Bärenreiter compiled and published an Urtext edition of the *Concerto* which was printed and released with a second version of the solo saxophone part. This second copy of the solo saxophone part was prepared by Carina Rascher, daughter to Sigurd Rascher and a previous member of the Rascher Saxophone Quartet. The Carina Rascher edited solo part contains the information as found in the autograph copy of the score presented to Sigurd Rascher by Glazunov.

The idea of an urtext edition is to critically analyse every available source to come up with one critical, informed and ‘authoritative’ version. However, there is rarely a single authoritative source and therefore it is almost impossible to label something as the single authoritative version. Christopher Hogwood argues that:

As many writers had pointed out, a strictly ur-text edition is a semantic impossibility, except in the case of works for which there is only a single autograph source that requires no transcription, commentary or explanation; in all other situations, opinion and personal judgement must make an early entry.¹¹²

Thus, the urtext version of the *Concerto in E-Flat Major* we are presented with has already been subject to personal judgement, and therefore is not truly urtext. Hogwood also suggests that our obsession with the Urtext has meant we focus less on the evidence presented within the original parts, those given to the first performers.¹¹³ Such is the case with the Urtext edition of the

¹¹⁰ Alexander Glazunov, *Concerto in E-Flat Major for Alto Saxophone and String Orchestra, Op.109*, Urtext (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2010), p. XIII.

¹¹¹ Sobchenko, p. 69. This unusually had the name of an A. Pétiot as a co-author on the title page. It is believed that Glazunov prepared the piano reduction himself, however it has since been found out that ‘Petiot served as Glazunov’s intermediary so that the composer could receive royalties for his work in France, having otherwise no right to them as a Russian composer.’ This issue was due to the Soviet Government stopping the payment of royalties for French works published in the Soviet Union, which in return prompted French authorities to do the same, by refusing royalties for Russian composers.

¹¹² Christopher Hogwood, ‘Urtext, Que Me Veux-Tu?’, *Early Music*, 41.1 (2013), 123–27 (p. 123).

¹¹³ Hogwood, p. 126.

Concerto in E-Flat Major, where the Carina Rascher Version contains the information as found in the autograph copy of the score presented to Sigurd Rascher.

There are many differences between the Alphonse Leduc edition and the solo part prepared by Carina Rascher that Bärenreiter released alongside the urtext. The differences between the Bärenreiter Urtext and the Alphonse Leduc edition are very minor. For this reason, I have chosen to specifically analyse the Alphonse Leduc edition and the solo part prepared Carina Rascher, as this gives us a closer insight into the way Sigurd Rascher would have played the concerto based on the autograph copy presented to him and the markings he made in it himself.

5.2.2 Analysis

On initial glances the biggest differences between the Alphonse Leduc edition and the Carina Rascher edition is the articulation and phrase markings. There are occasions when the Carina Rascher edition has much longer slurring and phrase marking then than the Alphonse Leduc edition.

Figure one below shows the differences between slur markings from the Alphonse Leduc edition to the Carina Rascher edition. On the whole the Carina Rascher edition uses longer slurred groups, therefore there is less articulating of notes in the phrase. This could perhaps demonstrate Rascher's desire to elongate phrases, which in turn could give direction to a phrase. However, the converse can be true, as articulations can also give both necessary space and emphasis to a phrase. In the case of the slur elongations in figure five they tend to slur over the beginning, peak and resolution of the melodic line. This is highlighted in the red boxes below.

The image displays a musical score for Alexander Glazunov's Concerto in Eb Major for Alto Saxophone, comparing two editions: the Alphonse Leduc edition (top staff) and the Carina Rascher edition (bottom staff). The score is divided into four measures (1, 2, 3, 4) and includes dynamic markings (p, f, cresc., mp, mf) and slurring. Red boxes highlight elongated slurring in the Carina Rascher edition.

Measure 1 (Bars 11-14): Both editions start with a piano (p) dynamic. The Carina Rascher edition features a crescendo (cresc.) and a forte (f) dynamic in the second half of the measure.

Measure 2 (Bars 15-18): The Carina Rascher edition features a crescendo (cresc.) and a forte (f) dynamic in the second half of the measure.

Measure 3 (Bars 19-22): The Carina Rascher edition features a piano (p) dynamic in the second half of the measure.

Measure 4 (Bars 23-26): The Carina Rascher edition features a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic in the second half of the measure.

Figure 5: Bars 11-36 of the Alexander Glazunov Concerto, top staff shows the Alphonse Leduc edition and the bottom staff shows the Carina Rascher edition. Red boxes show the elongated slurring in the Carina Rascher edition.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Alexander Glazunov and A Petiot, *Concerto in Eb Major for Alto Saxophone* (Alphonse Leduc, 1936); Glazunov, (2010).

This suggests that the slurs are highlighting the larger phrase structures and thus emphasising the larger scale melodic lines. There is further evidence of this type of slur elongation in the Carina Rascher Version.

The figure displays a musical score for bars 40-52 of the Glazunov Concerto. It is presented in two systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system represents the Alphonse Leduc edition, and the bottom staff represents the Carina Rascher edition. The music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *p*, and *f*, as well as articulation marks like accents. Red boxes are drawn around specific passages in the Carina Rascher edition, indicating 'slur elongations' where the slurs are lengthened to encompass more notes than in the Leduc edition. A box labeled '5' is positioned above the first system, and a box labeled '6' is positioned above the second system.

Figure 6: Bars 40-52 of the Glazunov Concerto. The top staff is the Alphonse Leduc edition and the bottom staff is the Carina Rascher edition. The red boxes show the slur elongations in the Carina Rascher Edition.¹¹⁵

Figure six shows the same slur elongation, where the slurs are lengthened to match the larger overall melodic line in the Carina Rascher edition. In this instance the melodic line is either falling,

¹¹⁵ Glazunov and Petiot, (1936); Glazunov (2010).

or rising. The slurs in the Carina Rascher version help to direct the phrase shape all the way to the bottom or the top of the phrase in this example.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the Glazunov Concerto, specifically bars 104 through 115. Each system consists of two staves: the top staff represents the Alphonse Leduc edition, and the bottom staff represents the Carina Rascher edition. The first system (bars 104-107) is marked 'Con moto' with a tempo of 76. The second system (bars 108-111) is marked 'a tempo'. The third system (bars 112-115) is also marked 'a tempo'. In the Alphonse Leduc edition, tempo changes are indicated by blue boxes labeled 'accel.' and 'allarg.'. In the Carina Rascher edition, slur elongations are highlighted by red boxes. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs, triplets, crescendo (cresc.), decrescendo (dim.), and dynamic markings (f, p). The bottom staff of each system shows a more continuous slur across the entire phrase compared to the top staff.

Figure 7: Bars 104-115 of the Glazunov Concerto. The top stave shows the Alphonse Leduc edition and the bottom shows the Carina Rascher edition. The red boxes show the slur elongations in the Carina Rascher edition. Blue boxes show tempo changes in the Alphonse Leduc edition.¹¹⁶

Figure seven also shows slur elongation in the Carina Rascher edition and tempo changes in the Alphonse Leduc edition which are not present in the Carina Rascher edition. The slur elongation connects the whole melody together over a number of bars and highlights the larger melodic structure. The tempo changes in the Alphonse Leduc edition however highlights the structure in a different way, by emphasising the rapid harmonic changes of the line by accelerating through the phrase and then slowing down at the point the melodic line reaches its climax and harmonic

¹¹⁶ Glazunov and Petiot, (1936); Glazunov, (2010).

resolution, which is further emphasised by the fact that Glazunov added a rhythmic lengthening of the climatic note. The slur elongation is present at other points throughout the Carina Rascher edition and can also change the points at which the performer will breathe when playing the piece. This elongation of slurs is perhaps indicative of Rascher's desire for long phrases and for a lack of gaps within a phrase. In one of Rascher's writings titled *Concerning Breathing* he stated:

The musical experience of listener must not be interrupted by a harsh ending of the tone, but rather unconsciously be lifted by it. The experience for the listener must live longer than the tone that is acoustically sounding, so that no hole arises in the musical line.¹¹⁷

For Rascher the musical sound should be smooth, with no holes. This is evidenced by the Carina Rascher edition because there is much less articulation and longer slurs which in turn smooth the musical line out and change the perception of these lines for the listener.

23 Animando poco

The figure displays a musical score for the Glazunov Concerto, specifically bars 169-181. The score is presented in two staves. The top staff shows the Alphonse Leduc edition, and the bottom staff shows the Carina Rascher Version. The top staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It starts at bar 169 with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic, followed by a crescendo to forte (f), and then a decrescendo (dim.). The bottom staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 12/8 time signature. It starts at bar 174 with a 'calando' (slowing down) marking, followed by an 'accel.' (accelerando) marking. The bottom staff has a tempo marking of 'Allegro' with a quarter note equal to 120 beats. It starts at bar 179 with a forte (f) dynamic, followed by a decrescendo (dim.), and then a 'p energico' (piano energico) dynamic. Red boxes highlight the addition of notes in the Carina Rascher edition. Blue boxes show the way the Carina Rascher edition has more articulation.

Figure 8: Bars 169- 181 of the Glazunov Concerto. The top stave shows the Alphonse Leduc edition and the bottom stave shows the Carina Rascher Version. The red boxes highlight the addition of notes in the Carina Rascher edition. The blue boxes show the way the Carina Rascher edition has more articulation.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Patrick, p. 13. From *Concerning Breathing*. Typescript dated October 29th 1936, revised September 9th 1937.

¹¹⁸ Glazunov and Petiot, (1936); Glazunov, (2010).

Figure eight shows for the first time how the Carina Rascher version has introduced further articulation and in the case of bars 176-178 additional notes. The way that the slurs have been removed and the additional notes have been added in the Carina Rascher edition keep the phrase in keeping with the staccato octave leaps seen in the bars before. Perhaps this effect was more favoured by Rascher at this point. The additional articulation at bars 180-181 as seen in the blue box are unusually placed, given the Carina Rascher edition's history of elongating slurring. I feel that in this section however the extra articulation has been added to keep the *energico* feel of the new section. This section of the work from 169 comes after the cadenza section and is the first time the piece has an energetic and animated style melody. Prior to this the melodic line was more lyrical and thus suited long phrases. In this new section from bar 169 however the melody changes and the harmony becomes more ambiguous with the chromaticism in the staccato leaping octaves. By the time the melody at 179 comes in there is an energetic jig like melody, which lends itself nicely to the articulations that the Carina Rascher edition gives because it gives greater emphasis to the down beat of the bar.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the Glazunov Concerto. The top system, labeled '55', covers bars 323-329. It features a tempo change to 'Più mosso' with a metronome marking of 138. The music is in 4/4 time and marked with a forte 'f' dynamic. A red box highlights a specific note in the Carina Rascher edition. The bottom system, labeled '327', covers bars 327-329. It includes markings for 'pesante poco', 'p' (piano), and '8va ad lib.'. A blue box highlights a note in the Carina Rascher edition, and a red box highlights another note. The score includes various articulations and dynamics such as 'f', 'p', 'sf', and 'ad lib.'.

Figure 9: Bars 323-329 of the Glazunov Concerto. The top stave shows the Alphonse Leduc edition and the bottom shows the Carina Rascher edition. The Red box highlights the altissimo in the Carina Rascher edition. The blue box highlights the lengthening of notes in the Carina Rascher edition.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Glazunov and Petiot, (1936); Glazunov, (2010).

At the end of the concerto in bars 324-325 and 328-129 there is some altissimo notes, which as Figure nine shows are only optional in the Alphonse Leduc edition. This optional *8va* in the Alphonse Leduc edition means that if the altissimo option is chosen then the final note of the piece reaches the highest climax. However, this is only optional. The Carina Rascher edition does not offer an alternative for the altissimo G in bars 324-325, thus suggesting that the player is required to have a grasp of the technique. Furthermore, the Carina Rascher edition elongates the final note, altissimo C, for an additional two and half beats. This adds even more emphasis to the fact that the piece has reached both the end and its highest climax. This seems to me as a likely addition to the ending for Sigurd Rascher because he was a pioneer of the technique and the Glazunov concerto was one of the first pieces to include the saxophone's extended range, even on such a brief exposure of the technique. It was also suggested that Adolphe Sax's students would have put then final notes of pieces they were learning when he taught at the Paris Conservatoire up the octave into the altissimo register for a 'show', with this still being commonly used by composers today to invoke the experience of 'flashiness' for the listener.¹²⁰ Furthermore, these altissimo notes stay within the lower altissimo range and are marked forte so are easier and more realistic to achieve (See Chapter 6 for more on this).

5.2.3 Performance Decisions

When preparing the Glazunov *Concerto* I had to consider the different versions of the score. I came to decisions on my recital performance based on experimentation and practice of the various sections in both the Alphonse Leduc edition and the Carina Rascher edition.

Firstly, I experimented with the different articulations and the slur and phrase elongations. I found that the Carina Rascher edition worked well in terms of creating a smooth sense of phrase and I found it cultivated a more over-arching sense of the melodic phrases when compared to the Alphonse Leduc edition. This was especially highlighted for me when working on the excerpt from Fig 6 because the slur on the descending and ascending melodic lines helped to create a

¹²⁰ Ingham, (1998), p. 15.

sense of arrival within the phrase and I particularly enjoyed this aspect of change. I also found that when practising the excerpt in Fig 8 I enjoyed the continuity that the change of articulation and addition of notes that the Carina Rascher edition adds. However, the Alphonse Leduc edition is true to what Glazunov wrote and so I chose to play the Carina Rascher edition at this point with the knowledge that it was varied from the Alphonse Leduc edition and that the change seems natural because of the change in character at this point.

Secondly, I chose to perform the section at Fig 7 with a combination of both the Alphonse Leduc edition and the Carina Rascher edition. This was because I found that the overarching melodic line suited the elongation of the slur to create a sense of forward motion to the phrase. However, when I experimented, I found that this was even more highlighted when I performed the section with both the tempo changes from the Alphonse Leduc edition and the elongated slur from the Carina Rascher version. This created a sense of forward line and the acceleration before slowing down again for the climax of each phrase added to the sense of line and arrival in the phrase. For me this combination of both editions worked best at this point.

Finally, I chose to perform the end, as seen in Fig 9, from the Carina Rascher version because I felt this cultivated a better sense of climax at the end. Also, with this piece exhibiting optional *altissimo* in the Alphonse Leduc edition it does make the work more accessible to saxophonists whom haven't learn the technique of *altissimo*. In my view though, this piece was written for Sigurd Rascher who was a pioneer of the technique and he encouraged composers to implement the technique into their writing. By playing the Carina Rascher version I was both honouring Rascher's desire for the inclusion of the technique into the work and the fact that Glazunov wrote it as an option in the first place, in addition to the fact that the ending felt stronger and more final as a result of the changes found in the Carina Rascher edition.

5.3. Outcomes and Contribution to the Repertoire of the Saxophone

The choice to perform the elongated slurs and phrases as in the Carina Rascher edition was at times successful and I felt it helped with the communication of the work. There were times however where the acoustic of St Pauls Hall, where my recital was held, hindered this

communication. St Pauls Hall has a very resonant acoustic and I felt that sometimes the elongated slurs meant that the clarity and definition of the notes was at times lost within the resonance. In the future I would need to do more experimentation between the editions in St Pauls Hall to gauge which combination of articulations would have worked, as I now believe that a combination of approaches would be best if I were to repeat my recital in St Pauls Hall.

In my recital I felt there were elements which worked well, such as performing the ending (Fig 9) from the Carina Rascher edition. I felt this really created a sense of finality to the piece and the altissimo was, on the whole, successful. I also felt that my combination of elongated slur and tempo changes at Fig 7 was successful, but I do feel that the tempo changes could be even more exaggerated to further highlight the forward motion of the phrase, especially as this section is marked *Con moto*.

In terms of contribution to the repertoire the Glazunov *Concerto* represents an important step towards the development of the saxophone's repertoire. Not only is it one of the most widely played concertos in the saxophone's repertoire but it also is one of the most accessible for performers. This is because the altissimo is optional in the Alphonse Leduc and Urtext editions and this means that it can be performed by saxophonists who have not yet learnt or mastered the altissimo range. Because the work is not fiendishly difficult it lends itself to performance by more amateur or semi-professional orchestras and saxophonists which in turn has helped this work gain status in the saxophone sphere. In addition, Rascher performed this work throughout his entire career on some of the world's biggest stages, including for his final solo performance on the eve before his 70th birthday. This goes to show what a special work it was for Rascher, as it is for many saxophonists across the world today.

Chapter 6: Case Study 2 - Recital 2

6.1 Lars-Erik Larsson Concerto

The Lars-Erik Larsson *Konsert för saxofon och stråkorkester (Concerto)*, written in 1934, was unique. Not only was it a challenging piece of repertoire for the saxophone, containing extended passages of high range music, it also was the first ever concerto to be broadcast live on the BBC. Zumwalt claims:

“The first instrumental concerto ever to be televised, it was November 27th 1937 with the BBC Orchestra in London, television that early, 1937, and the soloist was Sigurd Rascher...This work was performed for the first time on television, before any other instrument”¹²¹

For a work to be the first instrumental concerto to have ever been televised live by the BBC is quite an interesting feat. The reason for this work being chosen is unclear, but the fact that a work that featured the saxophone was chosen at all is important. At this point instruments such as the piano and violin had works written by the most canonised composers in history. Yet for the first live broadcast on the BBC a saxophone concerto by a less well-known composer was chosen. This to me suggests that the saxophone was being accepted by some of the biggest musical institutions in the world as a serious vehicle for music making, a status which took many years for the saxophone to gain.

Larsson was Swedish composer who studied at the Stockholm Conservatory between 1925 and 1929 and further with Alban Berg in Vienna and Leipzig between 1929 and 1930.¹²² His style swung between the neo-classical style, which was popular in Sweden at the time, and Scandinavian and Nordic romanticism because Larsson was influenced by the Danish composer Carl Nielsen and the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius.¹²³ Larsson’s Saxophone Concerto was one

¹²¹ Wildy Zumwalt, *Interview w/ Wildy Zumwalt, Featured Soloist in Buffalo Philharmonic @ King Concert Hall*, 2009.

¹²² Göran Bergendal, ‘Larsson, Lars-Erik’, *Grove Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford Music Online, 2001) <<https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000016042?rskey=xuao2x>>.

¹²³ Hans Åstrand and others, ‘Sweden’, *Grove Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford Music Online, 2001) <<https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027199?rskey=FG23xi>>.

of many works written between 1934 and 1936 that followed the neo-classical tradition and met with success, owing to Larsson's 'gentle lyrical disposition'.¹²⁴

The excerpt of the Dutch Television Performance recording available in the public domain,¹²⁵ which depicts Rascher performing the cadenza from the end of the final movement of the *Concerto* suggests how Rascher approached such works containing altissimo passages. In this excerpt Rascher has a very high developed sense of phrase, using the dynamics to give forward direction to each phrase which in turn drives the cadenza to its climax with the altissimo. Rascher crescendos through this which creates a further height to the phrase, both in terms of pitch and dynamic. He attempts the altissimo successfully and it provides evidence of Rascher's ability within the altissimo register.

For my case study I have chosen to play and analyse the use of the altissimo register in the second movement of the *Concerto*.

6.1.1 Analysis of Altissimo Use

These two examples differ in their use of the altissimo range. Figure ten uses the altissimo within the melodic line in a sustained manner and Figure three uses the altissimo for more of a climax at the end of a phrase. These distinct differences in the way the altissimo is used by the composer have an impact on the way a performer chooses to play such passages, and the importance of how or when it is acceptable to modify the phrase.

Larsson was, as mentioned, known for his gentle lyrical writing and the evidence of such is no clearer than in the second movement of this concerto. The first passage of altissimo, as seen in Figure one, follows the second iteration of the theme. Up until this point the writing uses the standard tessitura for the instrument, as the melody reaches a high E, one semitone below the highest note of the standard range in this era.

¹²⁴ Bergendal, (2001).

¹²⁵ 'Sigurd Rascher - Dutch Television Performance 1960's - Larsson Excerpt', *Excerpt of the Lars Erik Larsson Konsert for Saxofon* (Amsterdam: Dutch Television, 1960s) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-qttb2NgQ4>>.

part of the melody which is in the altissimo register fits homogeneously into the rest of the theme because it is entered by step and doesn't jump about or go too high into the altissimo register. This passage is seamlessly entered through the step wise movement and thus there is a blurring of the lines between the standard range and altissimo. Thus, I would suggest that this type of writing in the altissimo register, where there are conjunct melodies which stay in the lower altissimo register, are more successful than melodies which stray too high into the altissimo register, or melodies that leap about between registers. This is just one employment of the altissimo register in this movement.



Figure 11: Bars 80-89 from the 2nd movement of the Lars-Erik Larsson Concerto. Figure shows the second altissimo passage in the movement, highlighted in red.¹²⁷

The other use of the altissimo register in this movement is the passage as shown in figure ten. This passage is the climax of the whole movement and the phrase marked in red passes in a step wise manner through the lower altissimo register, into the upper altissimo register to Altissimo E. The reason this presentation of altissimo is different is because despite moving in a conjunct manner the phrase passes into the upper altissimo register and upon reaching the Altissimo E in Bar 84 beat 1 is then sustained there for two beats. This makes it exceptionally tricky to play, not only in terms of skill needed to perform it confidently and correctly, but also in terms of practicality and stamina. It is a phrase that would be achievable at an acceptable performance level by only the highest level of professional saxophonist, which makes it less accessible to many performers. This meant I had to make particular decisions when preparing the movement for performance.

¹²⁷ Larsson, (1952).

6.1.2 Performance Decisions

There were some options I considered when preparing this work for performance. The first was around which fingerings to use for the passage in Fig. 10. I used a process of experimentation in my practice sessions to assess which fingering I should use to bridge into the altissimo register as the passage rises. As I play on a modern saxophone, I had the availability of the F# key, which meant that I could practice using both this key and the Front F# fingering. In the end I opted to use the F# key to enter the altissimo section in this phrase. The decision to use this key was based largely on the stability of the pitch and tone, as well as on how it worked in context and combination with the rest of the fingerings chosen for the passage in Fig.10. Whilst it would have been even easier to move ergonomically from the front F# fingering to the altissimo G# I could not guarantee pitch stability and thus found the use of the front F# fingering a compromise to the overall phrase.

There were some options to consider when approaching Fig. 11 too. The first was to play this passage as written, the second was to place the phrase down the octave. I chose to play this section down the octave, because to me this was the safest way of ensuring I created the performative feel I wanted to achieve with the climax of the piece, which was a feeling of intensity. With it only reaching the high E at the top of the standard range of the saxophone, rather than the altissimo E at the upper end of the altissimo register, it meant that I could still achieve this level of intensity without the risks involved with going for an upper altissimo register note. In the Dutch Television excerpt Rascher creates intensity by using a forward momentum to the end of the phrase. In order for me to keep this forward momentum I used the lower octave to ensure that the phrase did not split, and the line would not be broken. Furthermore, it meant that I had better control over the tuning, as upper altissimo note are notoriously difficult to get in tune, with every single saxophone requiring a different set of fingerings to achieve note and pitch stability. Initially I had tried to use the fingerings depicted in Rascher's *Top Tones* book, but they were not effective for me and my modern saxophone, and thus I had to go through a process of finding which combinations work best for me – a process that every saxophonist who wants to perform in the altissimo register must go through to achieve stability, consistency and desired

sound qualities. However, I chose to perform it down the octave in the end, because I could not consistently achieve this passage in practice.

6.2 Jacques Ibert *Concertino da Camera*

Jacques Ibert was a French composer who studied harmony, counterpoint and composition at Paris Conservatoire with Emile Pessard, André Gédalge and Paul Vidal respectively between 1910 and 1913.¹²⁸ Ibert's music encompasses many styles and genres and works written by him are often lively, highly evocative and Ibert employed harmony that closely resembled that of the classical tradition.¹²⁹ *Concertino da Camera* is a prime example of a work by Ibert that is both lively and jovial whilst also being highly evocative.

Much like the Larsson *Concerto*, Ibert's *Concertino da Camera* has two approaches to altissimo, these being for use as a climax at the end of a phrase or section and use as an integral part of a phrase or melody.

¹²⁸ Alexandra Laederich, 'Ibert, Jacques (François Antoine Marie)', *Grove Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford Music Online, 2001) <<https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000013675?rskey=sj5UAb>>.

¹²⁹ Laederich.

6.2.1 Analysis of Altissimo Use



Figure 12: Ibert's *Concertino da Camera*, movement 1, rehearsal marks 4-5. Altissimo highlighted with red box.¹³⁰



Figure 13: Ibert's *Concertino da Camera*, movement 1, rehearsal Marks 21-22. Altissimo highlighted with red box.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Jacques Ibert, *Concertino Da Camera Pour Saxophone Alto et Onze Instruments* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc Editions Musicales, 1935).

¹³¹ Ibert.

In figures twelve and thirteen altissimo is used to finish off the ascending scale at climax of the section. As with the first example of altissimo in the Larsson, this phrase enters the altissimo in a conjunct stepwise manner and contains the F# as a bridge between the end of standard range and the start of the altissimo range. This makes the passage a lot easier in terms of the actual ergonomics of getting into the altissimo register because the voicing needed for a top F# is similar to that needed for the rest of the altissimo notes, particularly so if you were playing an older model of saxophone that has no top F# key. The scale finishes on an altissimo A, which means that this short venture into the altissimo stays within the lower altissimo register.



Figure 14: Ibert's Concertino da Camera, movement 1, rehearsal mark 10, altissimo highlighted with red box.¹³²



Figure 15: Ibert's Concertino da Camera, movement 2, rehearsal mark 40, altissimo highlighted with red box.¹³³

¹³² Ibert, (1935).

¹³³ Ibert.

In figures fourteen and fifteen the altissimo also presents at the climax of a phrase, but these differ from figures twelve and thirteen because they extend into the upper altissimo register. Both figures fourteen and fifteen extend up to an altissimo F, which is considered to be the highest reasonably achievable note in the altissimo register and while it is possible to extend even higher beyond this, most composers do not request this as it is beyond reasonably practical even for the most advanced saxophonists. The approach to both figures fourteen and fifteen is by a relatively conjunct movement, which makes ascending to the next note easier because there are no large jumps in pitch and thus there are no complicated changes in voicing. These two altissimo phrases still present a challenge to the performer as they require absolute precision to achieve stability of tone and pitch because they are in the upper altissimo register, which is harder to control. This is because the margin for tonal changes is so massive as even the most minute changes in the tongue and voicing can have large effects on pitch. The higher in pitch the altissimo, the closer together the partials of the overtone series are and so it becomes harder to a) differentiate the partials and b) control and stabilise pitch and tone. So, despite the phrase being well written, in that it is conjunct and therefore theoretically easier to achieve, it presents as highly challenging and requires a great deal of skill to perform. Rascher honed his altissimo skills for the entire of his career and recognised the need for continual work and training of the technique to ensure accuracy in the register.

The other style of altissimo employed in this work is altissimo which forms part of the melodic line in a sustained manner. This can be seen in figure sixteen. This section starts off with stepwise movements and then contains movements of 3rds between altissimo notes. This altissimo phrase moves through the lower and upper altissimo register and reaches the climax of the altissimo E at the arch of the phrase. This phrase is marked *ad lib* in the score. While Rascher would have attempted this, Marcel Mule, who also prolifically performed *Concertino da Camera*, would not have.

That M. Mule had strong reservations against the saxophone's high register, I knew already in the early 30s before Ibert has composed his *Concertino*. That he voiced them again when Ibert showed him his new work, he tells us on page 59 [of *Marcel Mule, His Life and the Saxophone* by Eugene Rousseau] and asserts

“He [Ibert] told me it was fine with him, that he would not insist upon the high tones.¹³⁴

24

4 *pp dolciss.* 3

3 3 3

25

ad lib 8va

mf

(8) *pp*

Figure 16: Ibert's *Concertino da Camera*, movement 2, rehearsal marks 24&25. The altissimo section is highlighted with a red box.¹³⁵

When giving more thoughts on Ibert's *Concertino da Camera* in a writing from 1983 Rascher wrote:

To play the five measures after [25] one octave lower than Ibert originally intended could be compared to the construction of a building with strong foundations and walls, so that it might be crowned by a cupola [a round dome forming or adorning a roof or ceiling]; but then instead of setting the cupola on the walls, it is placed on the level ground inside the walls!¹³⁶

Rascher's argument is that by playing this section down the octave, it does not properly highlight the arch of the phrase, the top of the cupola as it were. However, this altissimo section is frightfully hard, not only because it goes so high, but because it needs to be completely sublime and dolcissimo. To play so high with accuracy as well as emotion is near impossible and many

¹³⁴ Patrick, (2014), p. 264.

¹³⁵ Ibert, (1935).

¹³⁶ Patrick, p. 252.

well-known saxophonists have more or less successfully attempted this phrase as written. An example of this can be found in two of Claude Delangle's recordings. While Claude's use of altissimo represents a forward move in the French saxophone tradition towards the use of extended techniques such as altissimo, Delangle's attempt of the altissimo in Fig. 8 falls short of the mark for me personally. In a live performance with the City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong, Delangle's use the altissimo in figure sixteen starts off well, however, in an attempt to produce each tone cleanly in the second bar of rehearsal mark 25, Delangle detaches each altissimo note, creating an audible gap between each which completely stops the legato phrasing and sustained sublime feel that the performance of this section had cultivated up until this point.¹³⁷ The phrase is written with a phrase marking over the top, indicating that it should be completely legato and that each note should last for its full value to ensure that the sustained feel is kept. In another example of Delangle playing figure sixteen from his CD *Under the Sign of the Sun* his execution of this section is sharp as it approaches the climax of the altissimo E. While this example is more legato and sustained, the subsequent results is less control over the aspect of tuning.¹³⁸ This therefore led me to take particular actions when preparing this section of the work for performance which I will discuss below.

6.2.2 Performance Decisions

There are two choices for performing Fig.12 and 13, because of the F# you can choose whether to play this with the Front F# fingering as would have been necessary in Rascher's era, or you can play it with the F# key as with a modern saxophone. Because the scale is moving in semiquavers, I chose to use the Front F# fingering for this phrase as it was more ergonomic for me to move from this fingering to the next through the front F# method. This choice was appropriate for the section because of the speed and also because I could crescendo through into the altissimo, which in turn helps with the production of the altissimo.

¹³⁷ Jean Thorel, *Ibert Concertino Da Camera - Claude Delangle & City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong, 2014), pt. 6minutes 38seconds <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtFI05CztKs>>.

¹³⁸ Claude Delangle, *Concertino Da Camera: Il Larghetto, Poi Animato Molto, Under the Sign of the Sun* (Åkersberga: BIS, 2007), pt. 1minute 57seconds.

For the Fig. 14 and 15 I experimented both with playing the sections as written and playing them down the octave. When faced with the challenge of consistently achieving the altissimo, in terms of tone and pitch stability, it became quite clear that I could not yet guarantee the precise production of the altissimo in this section. In the end, however, I chose to go for it in the performance, to some degree of success, as I discuss further in the outcomes section.

When preparing Fig. 16 for performance I took into account the dialogues given by Rascher and Mule on the topic of the altissimo in this work and section. Firstly, I believe that Mule had a slightly narrow approach to the technique of altissimo, and that there are occasions where if you can perform it, it shouldn't be omitted. Also, I took on board Rascher's quote about not performing the Fig. 16 altissimo being akin to building a house and putting its roof at ground level. However, the reverse is true. If you build a house with strong foundation only for the roof to fall in on itself, is it worth the risk of raising the roof in the first place? When I assessed recordings of this section of the Ibert, in particular Delangle's, what struck me was that even the most advanced saxophonists would struggle to achieve both the sustained and dolcissimo phrase and have it be in tune too and that in attempting such a phrase one or the other will get left behind. So, in the end I favoured playing the whole phrase down the octave, so that the integrity of the phrase remains intact in terms of tone, pitch and melodic line.

6.3. My Experience of Working through the Top-Tones Method

Throughout my altissimo practice over the course of this masters I have been implementing the studies from Rascher's *Top-Tones*. I practised the overtone exercises daily, trying to concentrate on the tone imagination and getting the voicings correct for each harmonic. This practice really helped me to imagine the notes I will be playing next, both when attempting altissimo and when I was playing in the standard range. It improved my intonation both in the altissimo range and the standard range because I could imagine and physically prepare for each note. This is the kind of practice that in hindsight I wish I had started earlier in my playing. It was so helpful in terms of my general musicality because the concept of tone imagination extends into other areas, such as dynamic imagination and vibrato imagination. By using the tone imagination concept and altering

it to other areas I was able to build my general musicianship, and this benefited my whole learning process throughout the course of my masters.

As I continued to work through the *Top-Tones* book I began to find that I needed to spend more time and focus on the actual physicality required to produce the higher overtones. This meant I needed to focus on the concept of voicing and the idea of tongue position, which while is implicit in the *Top-Tones* book it is not explicitly brought to the forefront. Having worked through *Top-Tones* I then began to use other books, such as Donald Sinta's *Voicing* which helped to explain the principles of voicing in a more explicit manner.¹³⁹ However, for a book that was the first of its kind it works very well for explaining the underlying concepts of altissimo such as harmonics and tone imagination. With this being said I did not go on to use the fingerings given in the *Top-Tones* book in my recitals in the end. I experimented with a variety of options, but I found that there were other combinations which worked better for my own saxophone and produced more stability and better intonation. This is not to say that the fingerings offered in *Top-Tones* are null and void, because they absolutely will work for some saxophonists. My aim in my recital was to find combinations of fingerings that would provide stability and good intonation, whilst also being appropriate to the context of the musical phrases in question and would create a pleasing performance. For me these were not found in the fingerings offered by Rascher in *Top-Tones*, but the experience of working through the book and gaining a better knowledge of the principles underlying altissimo was undoubtably important in my progression throughout the course of my masters degree.

6.4. Outcomes and Contribution to the Repertoire of the Saxophone

Altissimo takes many years to master and even then, must be continually worked on to ensure that such mastering of a skill is not lost. I know that personally, with regard to my own altissimo journey, I still have a very long way to go. Understanding the physical and the mental aspects of learning the skill can help us to understand why altissimo is both one of the best things a saxophonist can do to hone his skills, as well as why it can seem so inaccessible to the amateur

¹³⁹ Sinta, (2008).

or progressing saxophonists. It was Rascher's view that altissimo requires dedication to both the physical and mental side to learning the technique, and that while you can physically learn the fingerings for altissimo notes they are nothing without the mental understanding of the production of the tones, without the inner ear 'pre hearing' the tones. It can also be said that the technique is so fiendish that even those who claimed to have it mastered can still falter on its reproduction in performance.

In my second recital performance there were elements that I felt could have been improved on. For example, my choice to attempt the altissimo from Fig. 14 and 15, with hindsight I should have performed this down the octave as I had thought about doing when preparing the work. This is because my own altissimo is not at the stage where I can confidently produce the tones consistently and in tune. Going forwards I would continue to work on skills to improve my altissimo, including working on exercises to improve my voicing and my inner ear. Such as the exercises demonstrated in *Top-Tones*. In the future when these skills have solidified in my technique further, I can begin to experiment again with these sections and the outcome will hopefully be different.

My decision to keep Fig. 11 and Fig. 16 down the octave was a sensible choice. Given the propensity for altissimo to go wrong, even for the most skilled performer, I feel comfortable in my decision to play certain passages an octave lower. While altissimo is an exciting technique, which when polished and performed well can be really exciting to hear and can add real panache to climatic points within pieces, there are no prizes for attempting it only for it to go wrong. Its use in these two seminal works displays forms of experimentation with the boundaries of possibilities as they were at the time. Often altissimo that remains in the lower register, whether it is climatic or integrated into melodic passages, has a much higher success rate in performance and therefore is a sensible option for composers to use when writing works that contain altissimo. However, higher register altissimo used for both climatic and integrated melodic purposes have a much lower success rate, even for the most advanced players. Such delves into the upper altissimo register as seen in Figs 11, 14, 15 and 16 represent the experimentation of the boundaries of what is realistically possible. Perhaps it is reasonable to suggest that it is up to

each saxophonist as an individual to assess their capabilities when it comes to the production of altissimo to ensure a performance that is polished, whether the choice to play the altissimo is picked or not.

In terms of contribution to repertoire, both the Larsson and the Ibert represent a large progression in what saxophonists perceive to be possible. As a modern saxophonist, seeing altissimo in a piece does not feel like a glass ceiling that I have to break in order for a piece to be accessible, because in today's terms altissimo is considered to be a natural progression for an advancing saxophonist. But if you view these works in context of Rascher's era as a saxophonist, works like the Larsson and Ibert would be considered out of reach for almost all saxophonists at the time because altissimo as a technique had not evolved to become standard practice. Even today, passages in the Ibert such as Fig. 16 seem crazy in terms of actual performability, but modern saxophonists are pushing the boundaries even further and the possibilities of altissimo are evolving.

Furthermore, *Top-Tones* helped me to realise that the possibilities of altissimo are still so vast that they need to be explored. Rascher created an opportunity for composers and performers alike to experiment with altissimo, by publishing *Top-Tones* as a vehicle for experimentation and learning. From the mere beginnings where it was implemented only in the end of works, such as the Glazunov *Concerto*, to its many varied uses in moderns saxophone repertoire today, the use of Altissimo is ever expanding in saxophone repertoire, as too are the ways and methods of explaining and teaching it. Rascher was a pioneer who unlocked a whole new category of potential for saxophonists to explore. His contribution to the development of saxophone repertoire is undeniably a testament to his hard work and dedication to the commissioning, concertizing, pedagogy and dissemination of altissimo as a technique for advanced saxophonists.

It can therefore be argued that the foundation for the evolution of altissimo started with Rascher, who diligently put a whole career's effort into the development and dissemination of the technique, including encouraging composers to write for the saxophone and use the altissimo register. By championing the technique on the performance circuit Rascher made it possible for

the technique to become both popular and regularly employed in compositions for the saxophone ever since.

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