



FROM THE DESK OF JOHN SAMPEN

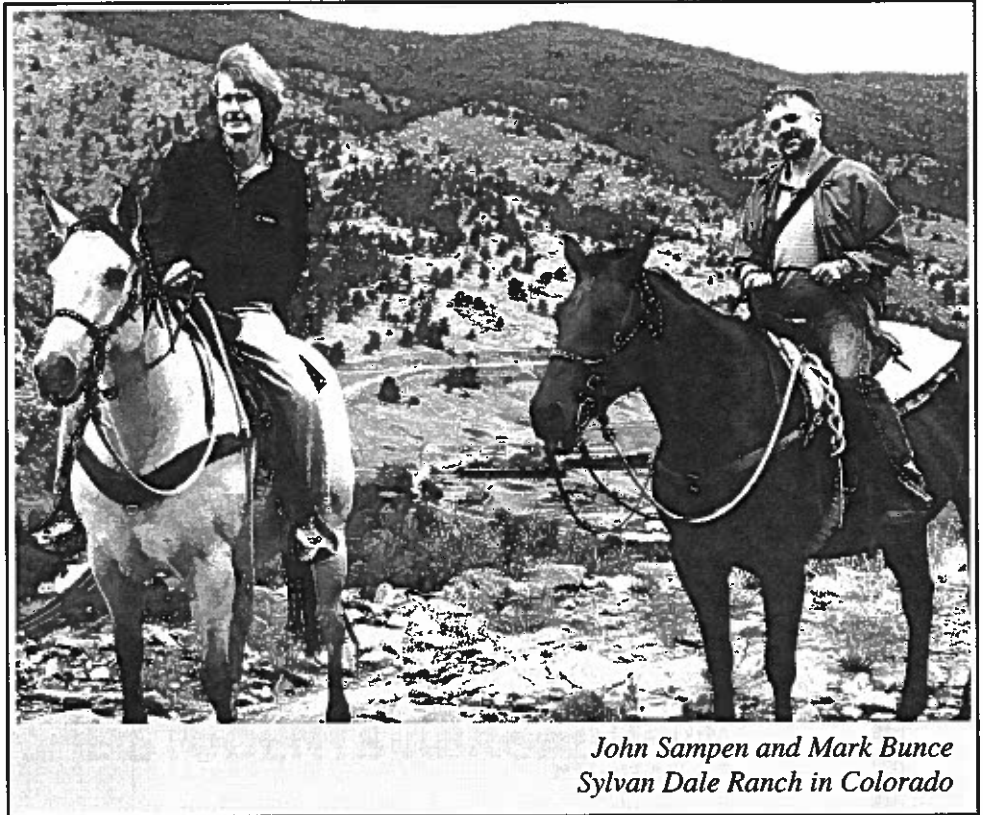
“It was a very good year” to be a musician and a saxophonist, especially in northwest Ohio. I am so proud of our continuing tradition at BGSU and am thankful for all the wonderful students who continue to inspire me as a teacher and player. There is special excitement this year as we prepare to accept the first class of advanced students for our college’s new Doctor of Musical Arts in Contemporary Music. The degree was recently approved by the Ohio Board of Regents and we are now ready to welcome doctoral candidates for one of the nation’s only contemporary music degrees.

As for travels, Marilyn and I spent a terrific six weeks teaching and performing in Florence, Italy. We are “almost” experts on Renaissance art and our Italian vocabulary has grown to about four words, including “grazie” and “buon giorno.” I also returned to Corfu, Greece, for a week-long saxophone workshop,

followed by some delightful sight-seeing in Athens. In the fall, Mark Bunce and I completed our 11th concert tour, this time visiting the wilds of Colorado and Wyoming where we performed four concerts and master classes, hiked in the Snowy Mountains, and rode horses on a dude ranch near Loveland.

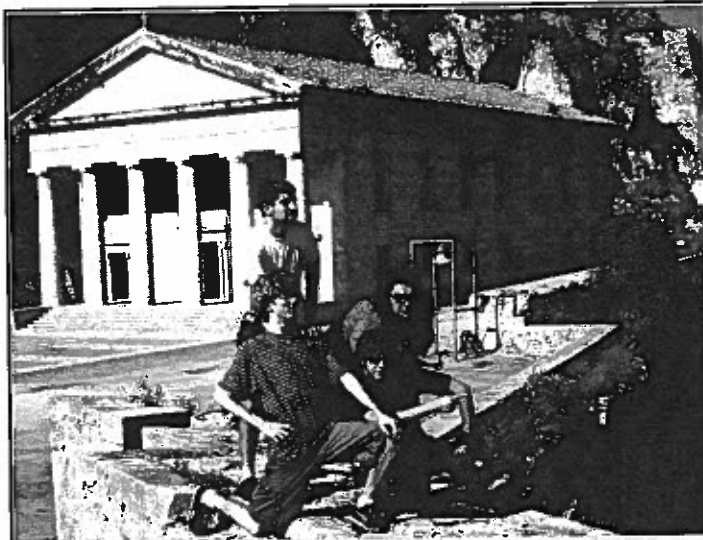
Other personal highlights for the year included professional activities in Virginia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Oregon, Washington and Ohio. Watch for my upcoming release of “Killing Time” by Donald Freund on the Arizona University Recordings label (CD title *Sky Scrapings*). On a sad note, my father passed away last July from complications with Parkinson disease. But life goes on and I am proud to announce that I’ll be a grandfather this summer—wow does that sound old! Our daughter Maria and son-in-law, Tim, are expecting a baby girl next May.

Best wishes.



*John Sampen and Mark Bunce
Sylvan Dale Ranch in Colorado*

CURRENT EVENTS



"The Greek Four" in Corfu Greece
Peter Ferrante, Chris Bartz, Zach Starkie, Carl Wiggins

Three SATB quartets are currently active, including the Chaology Quartet comprised of freshman/sophomores, the competition-based Rubix Quartet, and the Nahono Quartet that is planning a spring concert tour. In late spring we will combine these quartets with two bass saxes and perform the large ensemble piece *Lalula* by Swedish composer Miklos Maros who is flying to BG especially for the concert.



"The Italy Connection" in Bari, Italy
John Sampen, Marco Albonetti (alumni), Ryan Muncy,
Nathan Mandel, Jessica Simms and Jeff Heisler



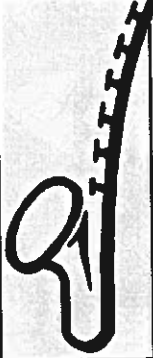
"Bowling" in Bowling Green
2005/2006 Saxophone Class

Our graduating class of 2005 was huge, creating a significant change in the saxophone studio and the necessary relocation of many musical friends. We are proud of these graduates, but will certainly miss Allison Balcetis, Michael Chamberlin, Kris Covlin, Sean Huang, Andrew Liebermann, Nathan Mandel, Kylene Marquart, Dusty Maroon, Erin Rogers, Zach Starkie and Yu Wen Wang. Fortunately we have enrolled terrific new students to help keep up pace.

Special guests (past and upcoming) included Jane Ira Blume, George Wolfe, Marco Albonetti and Frederick Hemke, and Jean-Marie Londeix.

Many of our saxophone studio traveled to the North American Saxophone Alliance biennial convention in Iowa for performances and competitions. Preparations are well under way for the spring Fischhoff and Coleman competitions and several students have already begun preparations for next fall's Adolphe Sax International Competition in Belgium.

And when we are not playing scales, we have time for a few parties, celebrations or even a little "bowling" in Bowling Green.



HONORS AND AWARDS

- Blue Square Qt
- National Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition Gold Medal (South Bend, Ind.)
 - 3rd Prize – MTNA National Chamber Competition (2004/05)
- Ryan Muncy
- Honorable Mention – Wm. Byrd Solo Competition (Flint, Mich.)
 - 2nd Place – Akron Tuesday Musical Association
 - 1st Place – Lima Symphony Competition
 - 1st Place – MTNA State Solo WW Competition
- Yu Wen Wang
- College Teaching Position at Tung-Hai University
- David Wegehaupt
- BGSU Concerto Finalist
 - Music Director of the BGSU College Radio Station
- Chris Bartz
- BGSU Concerto Finalist
- Jeff Heisler
- Winifred Stone Development Fund
- David Babich
- 2nd Place – Lima Symphony Competition
 - 3rd Place – Agnes Fowler Competition
 - Selected participant in the National Wind Ensemble (Carnegie Hall)
- Rubix Qt
- 1st Place – MTNA state competition (2005/06)



*Fischhoff Gold Medal Winners
The Blue Square Saxophone Quartet
Allison Balcetis, Chris Chmielewski,
Jeff Heisler, Nathan Mandel*

SAXOPHONE STUDENTS ABROAD

BGSU saxophonists were again internationally active. Here are a few of the special trips and activities from the summer/fall of 2005:

- ☛ Chris Bartz, Peter Ferrante, Zach Starkie and Wiggins traveled to Corfu, Greece, for a week-long saxophone workshop with Dr. Sampen. Along with students from Israel, Crete and Greece, they played recitals, dined on exotic food and drink, explored the beautiful island, and enjoyed sight-seeing in Athens and Corinth.
- ☛ As part of “Music and Art in Florence,” Jeff Heisler, Nathan Mandel, Ryan Muncy and Jessica Simms spent five incredible weeks in Italy where they performed concerts, studied analysis and music history, and attended on-site classes in Renaissance art history. A total of 10 BGSU students enrolled in this studies abroad program as taught by Dr. Marilyn Shrude, Dr. Mary Natvig and Dr. John Sampen. Highlights included a performance in the Cherubini Conservatory, all-night festivities in the Piazza Republicaine, early music chants and processions in the Duomo, and shopping for zucchini, olives and parmesan cheese in the city market.
- ☛ Ryan Muncy and Jeff Heisler performed a special duo recital in June at the Fondation des Etats-Unis in Paris.
- ☛ Aaron Backus traveled with Dr. Bruce Moss and the “Ohio Ambassadors of Music” on a summer concert tour in Europe. Aaron helped coach sectionals and played lead alto in the ensemble.
- ☛ Recent graduate Allison Balcetis is pursuing advanced studies at the Bordeaux Conservatory (France) with saxophonist Marie-Bernadette Charrier.

ALUMNI UPDATE

Jim Flowers (2003 MM) is the new adjunct professor of saxophone at Westminster and Thiel Colleges in Pennsylvania. **Allison Balcetis** (2005 BM) is pursuing her master of music degree at the Bordeaux Conservatory where she studies with Marie Bernadette Charrier. Check out **Michael Ibrahim's** (2003 MM) new compact disc titled *JS Bach: For Saxophone* on the OmninoVA label. **Erik Ronmark** (2001 MM) married Adrienne Jacobs last summer. Classmates **Dusty Maroon** (2005 BM) and **Kylene Marquart** (2005 BM) were married last summer and now teach at the Stryker Local Schools and Meadowvale Elementary respectively.



Saxophone Class of 1978
Front – David McClune, Aime Fine, Narda Heider, Maria Sampen,
John Sampen, Chris Ford
Back – Scott Cooper, Deborah Leigh, Russ Carpenter, Kathy McGrady,
Kevin Dunipace, Tracy Bowerman, Barry Hartz, Linda Hartley, Eric
Fairhurst, John Alpeter, Vickie (Renzenbrink), Roy Renzenbrink

Tom Woods (1981 BM) has relocated to the Cleveland area where he is head of Vistrio, a marketing service company for airlines, hotels and resorts. **Kenny Tsi** (2000 MM) performed the Creston Concerto with the Dong Wuy University Band in early March. **Jimmy Lee** (2001 MC) and his wife, Hsin-Yueh, have a new five-month-old baby. Jim is back in Taiwan where he teaches saxophone at the National Sun Yet-Sen University. **Chris Corde** (1994 BM) writes that he was married to saxophonist Leah Howe in 2002. Chris is currently director of the orchestra program at Gilbert Elementary, Middle and High School and he conducts a select youth orchestra in Columbia, SC. Besides being a saxophonist, you may remember that Chris also plays violin and he currently performs with the South Carolina Orchestra as well as freelance work throughout the state.

After many years of silence, we were delighted to hear from **Roy Renzenbrink** (1979 BM) whose career has included 17 years of music instruction in the Dallas area, followed by six years of administration work as assistant principal or principal and now is Director of Fine Arts for the McKinney School District that services 19,500 students! He is still married to BGSU alumnae Vickie who teaches general music. **Chris Vollstadt** (1993 BM) has also re-emerged—he is back in the Cleveland area where he works for Antares Management Solutions and freelances (weddings, parties, etc.) with Demmy Steinmetz. Chris was married to Eileen in 2000 and they were expecting a new baby last December. Look for Chris' new CD (*Bulletproof*) and his web site at <http://homepage.mac.com/chris.vollstadt/menu26.html>

Sue Alexander (1984 MM) has moved to a new job as band director at Summerville High School near Charleston, SC, one of the largest schools in the state. **Paul Shevock** (2004 MM) is teaching music at Oil City. He and his wife Wendy were expecting a new baby last December. **Matt Baumann** (hopefully BM 2006) is engaged to Ligaya with an August wedding planned in Cleveland.

David Lichtman (1999 BM) will take the law bar exam this summer. He presently works as law clerk for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees in Chicago. **James Stephens** (1999 BM) has accepted a new job as Director of Bands at Jamestown High School, a school of 1600 students in Jamestown, N. Y.. **Kevin Towner** (1996 BM) is the new saxophone instructor at Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio. and **Chih-Huan Wu** (2004 MM) was named the saxophone instructor at Cornell University. Wu is a 2nd year doctoral candidate at the Eastman School of Music.

Rachael Clark (2002 BM) has moved to a new teaching position as Director of Bands for Woodstock HS in Woodstock, Ill.. **Jeff Vickers** (1999-2000*) accepted a teaching position as Instructor of Woodwinds and Jazz at Alcorn State University in Mississippi. He will complete his doctorate from Indiana in spring 2006. **Rhonda Taylor** (2000 MM) completed her doctorate from the University of Arizona in May 2005. She has a new teaching title as "college assistant professor" at New Mexico State University. **Shyen Lee** (1998 MM) has just been named saxophone professor at Mahidol University in Thailand. **Preston Duncan** (1999 MM) reports his "army days are over" and he is now a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota. Good news from **Po-Yuan Ku** (2002 MM) who was a concerto winner and soloist (Tomasi) at the University of Alberta, where he will soon complete his DMA. **Yu-Wen Wang** (2005 MC) is the new saxophone instructor at Tung-Hai University in Taiwan. And more good news—**John Boyle** (1984 MM) is engaged to Annie; they are planning a late summer wedding

next year.

Bill Budai (1995 MM) and wife Marilee were expecting their first baby in March. Bill just finished his Ph.D. from Oklahoma and he continues teaching at Indiana University at Indianapolis. **Greg Ruffer** (1987 BM) has been named assistant professor and director of choral activities at Central Florida Community College in Ocala. Greg also conducts the Orlando Chorale and the Orlando Chamber Singers. **Jason Yost** (1993 BM) is pursuing a graduate degree in theological studies in his quest to



Saxophone Reunion at the 2002 NASA Saxophone Convention in Texas

*Front – Chris Scinto, Chuck Keane, Carey Valente, John Sampen, Rhonda Taylor, Marco Albonetti, Jimmy Lee, Wu
Back – Jim Flowers, Greg Cornelius, Erik Ronmark, Lee Morrison, Ku, Jeff Price, Chris Blossom, Michael Ibrahim*

become an ordained minister. Jason is currently Worship Arts Pastor at Stonebridge Church of God. **Bianca (Sharkus) Murphy** (1997 BM) is expecting baby number 2 in February. Bianca continues playing saxophone in the Medina Community Band where she is a frequent soloist. Besides teaching music in South Euclid and Lyndhurst, **Barry Hartz** (1982 BM) is a part-time cooking instructor at the Viking Store. He is also working on his National Board Certification. **Shannon Ford** (1979 MM) is the new saxophone instructor at Oakland University near Detroit. While on tour last September, John Sampen had a nice reunion with **John Alpeter** (1979 BM) in Boulder, Colo. Alpeter has a great job as the scheduling officer for the Atmel Company in Colorado Springs. And—his 17 year old son is a saxophonist!

Steven Leffue (2001 BM) recently completed his Master's degree from the University of Florida and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland. **Lee Morrison** (2003 MM) will be married next June. He continues his teaching at St. Johns Jesuit High School in Toledo. **Claudia Schaeztle** (1997 MC) has just recently returned from six months of touring with Celebrity Cruises, where she played tenor sax, flute and clarinet on the Baltic Sea, Mediterranean and the Caribbean. She is now in Montreal working as a freelance teacher and performer.

A SHORT LECTURE ON VIBRATO by John Sampen

(reprinted with permission from the *NASA Update Journal* – January/February 2006)

For the saxophonist, the concept of vibrato has become a personal trademark that provokes great debate and endless conversation. Certainly conventions are constantly changing, along with society's visions of beauty and taste. Perhaps we can agree, however, with Dr. Frederick Hemke who asserts that "vibrato on the saxophone cannot be thought of as an embellishment superimposed on the tone. When vibrato is to be used, it must be considered inseparable from the total sound." (Hemke p.7)

The actual history of vibrato is well beyond the scope of this short article but Jean Marie Londeix observes that "vibrato had been used sparingly by wind instrumentalists until the beginning of the twentieth century..." (Londeix p.64). By the mid 20th century, Marcel Mule had helped popularize his wide and distinctive vibrato, a "fashion" which is largely gone today; one may observe the current trend towards minimal or even *senza vibrato* as pioneered by some French saxophonists of the late 20th century. Londeix agrees that "since about 1970, there has been a noticeable diminution [sic in] the use of vibrato in serious music, as well as in jazz." (Londex p.64).

Concerning vibrato production, the noted American pedagogue Larry Teal describes four distinctive types:

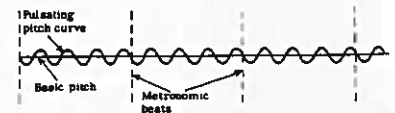
- a) Jaw – "the lips...become the recipient of changing pressures when the jaw moves"
- b) Lip – "moving the lips in something like a 'wa-wa-wa' motion"
- c) Throat – "tensing the throat muscles, and results in a 'quiver'"
- d) Diaphragm – "...predominantly an intensity vibrato...induced by a changing of the of air pressure" (Teal pp.55-56)

The throat vibrato is rarely favored by saxophonists. Diaphragmatic vibrato is often used for flute, oboe, bassoon and sometimes clarinet. Saxophonists seem to prefer some variety of jaw and/or lip vibrato (also labeled "pitch changing" or "frequency modulating" vibrato). Dr. Steven

Mauk writes that "saxophonists use a 'pitch-change' vibrato created by slight up-and-down motion of the jaw. It is called jaw vibrato..." (Mauk p.39). Dr. Hemke agrees that the vibrato best meeting "... the requirements of the saxophonist is the frequency modulating vibrato." (Hemke p.7).

Assuming that most saxophonists employ lip and/or jaw motion, it is important to consider the vibrato's pitch change in relation to the pitch center. Larry Teal diagrams the pitch as a horizontal line around which the vibrato makes equi-

Example 1 (Larry Teal 54)



distant loops.

However, it should be noted that most saxophonists of the 21st century play "at the top" of their pitch. In other words, when a *senza vibrato* note is produced, there is very little room to raise the sound *above* the pitch. Conversely, there is plenty of room *below* the pitch. At least in our current era of musical practice, it is accurate to suggest that "...the tone begins on pitch, moves slightly flat, and then returns." (Mauk p. 39). Dr. Hemke elaborates by saying that "if diagrammed, the saxophone frequency vibrato would take the shape of a uniform undulation. The undulation will dip from the actual pitch by .05-.15 of a semitone and then return to pitch." (Hemke p.8)

In learning the vibrato technique, one may consider the production of either curving undulations (Example 2) or small loops in the tonal pitch (Example 3). This author has found the looping technique conceptually more successful

Example 2 (Curving Undulations)



Example 3 (Looping Undulations)



in controlling and maintaining the tonal center.



One common vibrato problem involves tongue movement in conjunction with vibrato. There is no logical reason to involve the tongue in the vibrato process; indeed additional tongue movement may diminish the tone quality. One may conduct an analysis of tongue activity in the vibrato by comparing the verbal production of “WaaWaaWaa” vs. “YaYaYa”. With the “YaYaYa” production, the tongue movement may be highly active.

In addition, check for throat constriction and high/low tongue position. A high tongue may cause difficulty in the vibrato production. Also consider the embouchure pressure by playing the mouthpiece alone. Most teachers prefer blowing a concert “A” or concert Bb on the alto saxophone mouthpiece. A higher pitch center may constrict vibrato production. Finally, analyze the chin position (non-bunched) and the actual lip/jaw movement (up and down, not forward and back).

Below are three typical “problem” vibratos. The first (Example 4) involves ending the undulations on a downswing, thus creating the impression of a flat intonation. This usually occurs prior to a rest or breath. The second (Example 5) demonstrates a late-starting vibrato. While this technique may occasionally be desired for musical effect, its use with younger saxophonist more likely represents a bad habit and/or a lack of listening skills. The third instance (Example 6) dia-

Example 4 (Drooping End)



Example 5 (Late Start)



Example 6 (Unequal Undulations)



grams the obvious problem of unequal pitch undulations.

There are many authors who provide exercises for the development of vibrato control and speed (e.g., books by Larry Teal, Eugene Rousseau and Steven Mauk), so we have no great need here for such discussion. Most teachers recommend the use of metronome practice while

still realizing the ultimate goal of vibrato production that is not measured or coupled with the performance tempos or rhythms. Having said this, the speed and width of the vibrato will most certainly vary with the style and tempi of the musical selection.

Finally, it is absolutely permissible and often desirable to choose *senza vibrato* as a special color or musical effect as long as the performer considers all options and makes intelligent choices. There is a tendency for students to automatically play contemporary music without vibrato, often creating a tonal effect that is bland, cold and colorless. Remember that a tasteful vibrato can also add great loveliness and warmth to our beautiful instrument and to the exciting new literature of the 21st century.

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