70 Sax Classic Jazz CD7 (2016)



61. Mindi Abair — It Just Happens That Way 62. Gary Bartz — Funked Up (Remastered) 63. Bob Belden — Black Dahlia 64. Booker Ervin — Dancing in the Dark (Remastered) 65. Tina Brooks — Nutville (Remastered) 66. Booker Ervin — Shiny Stockings (Remastered) 67. Stanley Turrentine — Bonita (Remastered) 68. Pharoah Sanders — Colors 69. The Al Cohn — Improvisation for 2 Unaccompanied Saxophones 70. Julie Patton — At Night

It all started with Adolphe Sax, a Belgian instrument inventor. In 1842, he attached a clarinet mouthpiece to a brass creation and named it the saxophone. Because of its metal, conical body, the saxophone was capable of playing at volumes much higher than other woodwinds. Used in military bands in the 1800s, it took a while for the saxophone to be taken seriously by musicians. Now, it is a staple instrument in jazz and also has a role in music genres ranging from classical to pop.

Here is a brief history of the progression of jazz saxophone playing styles, structured around the stories of jazz figureheads.

Sidney Bechet (May 14th, 1897 - May 14th, 1959)

A contemporary of Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet was perhaps the first to develop a virtuosic approach to the saxophone. He played the soprano sax and, with his voice-like tone and bluesy

style of improvisation, he boosted the involvement of the saxophone in early jazz styles.

Frankie Trumbauer (May 30th, 1901 - June 11th, 1956)

Alongside trumpeter Bix Beiderbecke, Trumbauer presented a refined alternative to the "hot jazz" of the first few decades of the 1900s. He rose to fame in the 1920s for recording "Singin' the Blues" on the C-Melody saxophone (halfway between the tenor and alto) with Beiderbecke. His dry tone and calm, introspective style influenced many later saxophonists.

Coleman Hawkins (November 21st, 1904 - May 19th, 1969)

One of the first virtuosos on the tenor saxophone, Coleman Hawkins became renowned for his aggressive tone and melodic creativity. He was a star of the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra during the swing era in the 1920s and '30s. His application of advanced harmonic knowledge to improvisation helped pave the way for bebop.

Johnny Hodges (July 5th, 1906 - May 11th, 1970)

Hodges was an alto saxophonist best known for leading Duke Ellington's Orchestra for 38 years. He played the blues and ballads with unrivaled tenderness. Heavily influenced by Sidney Bechet, Hodges' tone wailed with a fast vibrato and a bright timbre.

Ben Webster (March 27th, 1909 - September 20th, 1973)

Tenor saxophonist Ben Webster borrowed a raspy, aggressive tone from Coleman Hawkins on blues numbers, and invoked Johnny Hodges' sentimentality on ballads. He became a star soloist in Duke Ellington's Orchestra and is considered one of the three most influential tenor players of the swing era, along with Hawkins and Lester Young. His version of Ellington's "Cotton Tail" is one of the most famous recordings in jazz.

Lester Young (August 27th, 1909 - March 15th, 1959)

With his smooth tone and laid-back approach to improvisation, Young presented an alternative to the gruff styles of Webster and Hawkins. His melodic style more reflected that of Frankie Trumbauer, and his "cool" expression lead to the cool jazz movement.

Charlie Parker (August 29th, 1920 - March 12th, 1955)

Alto saxophonist Charlie Parker is credited with developing the lightning-fast, high energy bebop style alongside trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie. Parker's incredible technique along with his grasp of rhythm and harmony made him the object of study of virtually every jazz musician at some point in their development.

Sonny Rollins (b. September 7, 1930)

Inspired by Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, and Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins developed a bold and quirky melodic style. Bebop and calypso have been featured prominently throughout his career, which is marked by continual self-questioning and conscious evolution. In the late 1950s, after firmly establishing himself as one of the top call tenor players, he abandoned his career for three years while searching for a new sound. During this period, he practiced on the Williamsburg Bridge. To this day, Rollins is evolving and seeking out styles of jazz that will best express his ebullient musical character.

John Coltrane (September 23rd, 1926 - July 17th, 1967)

Coltrane's influence is one of the most remarkable in jazz. He began his career modestly, attempting to emulate Charlie Parker. In the 1950s, he found wider exposure through his gigs with Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk. It wasn't until 1959, however, that it seemed that Coltrane was really on to something. His piece "Giant Steps," on the album of the same name, featured a harmonic structure he had invented that sounded like nothing before it. He entered a

period marked by a dismissal of linear melodies, fierce technique, and layers of harmony. In the mid 1960s, he abandoned rigid structures for intense, free improvisation.

Warne Marsh (October 26th, 1927 - December 17th, 1987)

Generally under the radar for most of his career, Warne Marsh played with an almost stoic approach. He valued complex linear melodies over riffs and licks, and his dry tone seemed reserved and pensive, unlike the effusive sounds of Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster. Although he never earned the recognition of some of his like-minded contemporaries such as Lee Konitz or Lennie Tristano (who was also his teacher), Marsh's influence can be heard in the modern players such as saxophonist Mark Turner and guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel.

Ornette Coleman (b. March 9th, 1930)

Beginning his career playing blues and R&B music, Coleman turned heads in the 1960s with his “harmolodic” approach — a technique with which he sought to equate harmony, melody, rhythm, and form. He didn’t adhere to conventional harmonic structures and his playing came to be called “free jazz," which was wildly controversial. Since his early days of angering jazz purists, Coleman is now considered the first avant-garde jazz musician. The avant-garde improvisation that he instigated has grown into a substantial and diverse genre.

Joe Henderson (April 24th, 1937 - June 30th, 2001)

Schooled by absorbing the music of all the master saxophonists who preceded him, Joe Henderson developed a style that was simultaneously steeped in yet independent of tradition. He gained attention for his early hard bop work, including an outstanding solo on Horace Silver’s “Song for My Father.” Over the course of his career, he recorded albums ranging from hard bop to experimental projects, and thereby embodied the expanding and evolving jazz culture.

Michael Brecker (March 29th, 1949 – January 13th, 2007)

Combining jazz and rock with supreme agility and finesse, Brecker rose to fame in the 1970s and '80s. He performed with pop acts Steely Dan, James Taylor, and Paul Simon as well as with jazz figures including Herbie Hancock, Roy Hargrove, Chick Corea, and dozens of others. His flawless technique raised the bar for jazz saxophonists to come, and he helped legitimize the role of rock and pop music in jazz styles.

Kenny Garrett (b. October 9th, 1960)

Garrett rose to fame while playing with Miles Davis' electric band in the 1980s, during which time he developed a novel approach to the alto saxophone. His bluesy and aggressive solos tend to juxtapose his long, wailing notes with clipped, abrasive melodic fragments.

Chris Potter (b. January 1st, 1971)

A child saxophone prodigy, Chris Potter took saxophone technique to a new level. He began his career with trumpeter Red Rodney, and soon became the first choice tenor player for a number of notable bandleaders including Dave Holland, Paul Motian, and Dave Douglas. Having mastered the styles of previous jazz icons, Potter specializes in virtuosic solos built on motives or tone sets. The ease with which he plays in all registers of the saxophone is practically unmatched.

Mark Turner (b. Novermber 10th, 1965)

Heavily influenced by both Coltrane and Warne Marsh, Mark Turner rose to prominence alongside guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel. His dry tone, angular phrases, and frequent use of the uppermost register of the saxophone make him stand out among contemporary saxophonists. Along with Chris Potter and Kenny Garrett, Turner is one of the most influential saxophonists in jazz today. ---jazz.about.com

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