



Lester Young



Marcel Mule

SAXOPHONE BASICS

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BREATHING

- Breath in with both chest and stomach area (diaphragm).
- Breath out by keeping stomach (diaphragm) out
- Take in LOTS of air ☺

EMBOUCHURE

- Lower lip curved over lower teeth with a little red lip showing
- Lower lip acts as a cushion between lower teeth and reed
- Lower lip taught against lower teeth (but NOT smiling or biting!)
- Flat/pointed chin but not too tight
- Corners slightly lifted, slightly firm (but NOT smiling or biting!)
- Top teeth rest on top of mouthpiece without biting
- Blow focused air stream (see voicing)

LOWER LIP PLACEMENT ON REED AND EMBOUCHURE FIRMNESS

- Buzz alto mouthpiece alone-should get about a concert A2, if higher you are biting too much and if lower, you need a firmer embouchure.
- Lower lip should rest about where reed meets mouthpiece (slip a piece of paper between reed and mouthpiece to find this spot.

FINGER/HAND POSITION

- Drop arms and hands to side and relax fingers
- Raise arm at elbow, leaving wrist & hand in same position as resting in down position
- Fingers should be slightly curved when holding saxophone

VOICING/OVERTONES

- Voicing is developing the feel of the focused air and position of tongue and throat so you “predict” what a particular note will feel like BEFORE it comes out. Properly voicing a note will help you get the most resonant tone on every note without the timbre changing as you change registers AND it will help you to learn to play your saxophone in tune, especially the upper register
- Play F on top line of staff with octave key. Then finger low B flat while hearing the F you just played and try to play this F with the low B flat fingering with no octave key.
- The tongue position will shift slightly when changing notes and registers.
- Strive to keep throat from moving much when changing registers (practice in front of a mirror)
- Read Sigurd Rascher’s *Top Tones* and Eugene Rousseau’s *Saxophone High Tones*

TOE CONCEPTION

*Listen to professional live and recorded artists

*ARTISTS: Marcel Mule, Claude Delangle, Jean-Yves Fourmeau, Sigurd Rascher, Jean-Marie Londeix, Cliff Leaman, PRISM Saxophone Quartet, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Cannonball Adderley, Johnny Hodges, Dexter Gordon, Gerry Mulligan

ARTICULATION

- Whisper “DEET” or “TEET”
- Don’t move chin when articulating
- Blow steady air stream...ALWAYS ☺ Articulation depends completely on steady air stream
- Three Steps: (1) Tip of Tongue on tip of Reed (2) Blow Air (3) Release Tongue
- Articulation is the act of REMOVING the tongue from the reed...NOT “attacking” the reed with the tongue

INTONATION, REEDS, INSTRUMENTS, MOUTHPIECES

- A good quality mouthpiece and instrument will help intonation immeasurably
 - Mouthpiece: Classical: Vandoran AL3, Selmer S-80 C*; Jazz Vandoran V-16, Meyer 5
 - Instrument: Selmer, Yamaha
 - Reed: Classical-Gonzalez, Vandoran, Zonda; Jazz-Vandoran V-16, La Voz
- Pull mouthpiece in and out on neck cork to tune
- Practice tuning with a sound (use your ears!), not just a visual meter (Try *The Tuning CD!!* It works great!!)

PRACTICING

*Divide time between warm-up (try *The Tuning CD!!*), technique (scales) solos and sightreading

*Use a metronome ALWAYS

*Count, count, count rhythms before playing music