Transcription and Arrangement of Works by Lovreglio and Schoenberg for Saxophone: A Collection of Two Lecture Recitals

Scott Phillips
Scott D. Phillips defended this treatise on April 11, 2016.

The members of the supervisory committee were:

Patrick Meighan
Professor Directing Treatise

Clifton Callender
University Representative

Jeffrey Keesecker
Committee Member

Jonathan Holden
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the treatise has been approved in accordance with university requirements.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my parents, Bob and Ruth, and my brothers, Tom and Rob, for their constant love and support.

I would like to thank my fiancée, Sara, for her love, encouragement, support, and inspiration.

I would like to thank Professor Patrick Meighan for his five years of guidance and tolerance of my schedule. I would not be the musician or person I am today without you.

I would like to thank Dr. Jonathan Bergeron for setting me on the path that I am now on. Your mentorship and friendship have been essential to my personal and musical development.

I would like to thank the Schoenberg Estate and Family and Universal Edition for their help in realizing this version of Verklärte Nacht for saxophone ensemble.

Thank you to my Doctoral Committee, Professor Jeffrey Keesecker, Dr. Jonathan Holden, and Dr. Clifton Callender for their valuable insights into my recitals and this document.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Musical Examples .................................................................v
Abstract ...........................................................................................vi
Introduction ....................................................................................1
Chapter One: Opera Fantasy for Saxophone: An Original Arrangement and an Original Transcription of Works by Donato Lovreglio ........................................2
Chapter Two: Genesis, Preparation, and Arrangement of Arnold Schoenberg’s *Verklärte Nacht*, Op. 4 ..................................................................................15
Conclusion ....................................................................................27
Appendix A: Copyright Permission Letter from Belmont Music Publishers ........................................28
Bibliography ..................................................................................29
Biographical Sketch ........................................................................32
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 1.1 – Lovreglio – *Capriccio Fantastico sull’opera Rigoletto di Verdi*: Original Flute Score, “Bella Figlia dell’amore” Opening Statement ................................................................. 6

Example 1.2 – Transposed B-Flat Soprano Saxophone Part, “Bella Figlia dell’amore” Opening Statement ......................................................................................................................... 7

Example 1.3 – Original Flute Score, “Bella Figlia dell’amore” Variation, Broken Octaves .......... 7

Example 1.4 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, Broken Octaves 1\textsuperscript{st} Appearance ......................... 7

Example 1.5 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, Broken Octaves 2\textsuperscript{nd} Appearance ............... 8

Example 1.6 – Original Flute Score, “Caro Nome” Opening Statement ...................................................... 8

Example 1.7 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, “Caro Nome” Opening Statement ....................... 9

Example 1.8 – Original Flute Score, “Tutte le feste al tiempo” Più Mosso ................................................. 9

Example 1.9 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, “Tutte le feste al tiempo” Più Mosso ............... 9

Example 1.10 – Original Flute Score, Coda ..................................................................................................... 10

Example 1.11 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, Coda ................................................................. 11
ABSTRACT

It has become common practice among saxophonists to transcribe or arrange music that was originally composed for other instruments. The definition of a transcription is to change the instrument for which the work is written; no octave placements, notes, articulations, dynamic markings, etc. are altered. The definition of an arrangement is the transfer of a work between instruments with some changes in octave placements, articulations, dynamic markings, etc. with possible re-composition of sections to better suit the new instrumentation.

This paper will focus on two arrangements: Capriccio Fantastico sull'opera Rigoletto di Verdi, composed by Italian performer/composer Donato Lovreglio for flute and piano, arranged for soprano saxophone and piano; and Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4, composed by Arnold Schoenberg for string sextet, arranged for 11-part saxophone ensemble; and one transcription, Fantasia da Concerto su motivi di "La Traviata" de G. Verdi, also composed by Donato Lovreglio for clarinet and orchestra, transcribed for alto saxophone and orchestra or piano. For the arrangements, an examination of the adaptations to better suit the new instrumentation will be made. Transferring idiomatic techniques between instruments can often prove difficult and there are certain techniques on saxophone that will most effectively emulate the original intent of the composer. Additionally, providing the context of the techniques within these works will lead to a better recreation of these techniques and more convincing performances.

One of the reasons these works were selected was because of the necessity to utilize and incorporate the altissimo register in order to remain true to the composer’s original intent. The arrangements and transcriptions generally approach the altissimo register using consonant intervals that can be audiated more easily for students than some of the saxophone's post-tonal
standard repertoire. This particular technique is vital for the modern saxophonist and deserves special mention and attention.
INTRODUCTION

Within the tradition of Western art music, it is quite common for works that were originally composed for a specific instrument or group of instruments, to be transcribed or arranged for a different instrument or group of instruments. In fact, Johann Sebastian Bach frequently took music that he composed himself and arranged it for other instruments.\(^1\) This tradition has continued across the centuries with many composers and instrumentalists finding new ways to present the music that moves them.

Transcribing or arranging music for saxophone can present many challenges. There are certain idiomatic techniques for other instruments that do not always translate well. Preparing arrangements and transcriptions requires cognizance of these challenges. However, the onus does not fall completely on the transcriber or arranger; the performer(s) must be equipped to create solutions to these challenges in order to present the work effectively and honestly.

A distinction must be made and that is the difference between transcribing and arranging musical works. A transcription of a musical work involves changing the instrument on which the work is performed. No notes, registers, or octave placements are altered, and no adaptations with regard to articulation, dynamics, etc. are made. An arrangement is an adaptation of a musical work from one instrument to another, where some compromises are made to better fit the new instrument on which the work is to be performed.\(^2\) The works featured in this paper consist of two arrangements and one transcription.

---

\(^1\) Frank S. Macomber, “Bach’s Re-use of His Own Music: A Study in Transcription,” (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1967), iv-x.

CHAPTER ONE

OPERA FANTASY FOR SAXOPHONE: AN ORIGINAL ARRANGEMENT AND AN ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPTION OF WORKS BY DONATO LOVREGLIO

Definition and Overview of Opera Fantasy

It is well documented that opera was among the greatest forms of entertainment in the early 19th Century. A new opera created considerable excitement in a city’s population. In today’s terms, it combined the effect of a blockbuster movie premiere with an album release from the biggest pop star. The plots were discussed in taverns and salons amongst the people. The musical themes resonated in everyone’s ears through arrangements and improvisations, turning arias into everything from dance tunes to voluntaries at churches. In short, people could not get enough opera, and constantly desired more.

Fantasy as a musical genre sometimes has been called nicht-form. The origin of the term can be traced from a literal meaning of the word, where things are derived from the imagination. Objects that are generated from the imagination are often an amalgam of ideas. Sometimes the ideas are related, while other times not. Musical fantasy can be viewed in a similar way, often being an amalgam of ideas that are developed in sections that give way to the next. Fantasy began as an improvisational genre, which fits into this theory of the amalgam of ideas, when one 

---


idea spontaneously emerges and then passes shortly after its genesis. As mentioned earlier, this is not an attempt to generalize the entire genre into a single formula; however, this is one of the more common compositional approaches for fantasy.

Defining a musical fantasy as an amalgam of ideas that are developed creates a starting point to define the opera fantasy. The composers of opera fantasy used the most popular themes and improvised or composed variations upon these themes to create their work. Suttoni defines a number of developmental techniques that occur in opera fantasies:

1. Simple extension by passagework and figuration.
2. Motivic development where some short recognizable portion of the theme is repeated, transposed, used in harmonic sequences, or used in contrapuntal combination with other motives or themes [to name a few].
3. Thematic transformation where the theme undergoes radical changes in phrase structure, rhythm, or harmony, while retaining some recognizable elements [e.g., retrograde, inversion, etc.].
4. Ornamental variation where the melodic line is embellished with various types of figuration (scales, arpeggios, etc.), typically in quicker time values.
5. Character variation where the basic nature or “character” of the theme is altered or transformed by changes in rhythm, harmony, tempo, etc., that are more than a matter of simply spinning the theme out with figuration.
6. Treatment variation, which is my term for a type of variation found in opera fantasies where the theme proper does not change significantly but the setting of it … does by alterations made in texture, tessitura, the sonority of the accompaniment and the like. 

Opera fantasy reached its heyday in the early part of the nineteenth century due to a few major factors. The first factor was because the listening public was enamored with opera and its themes. In fact, it was not uncommon to hear someone singing a tune from an opera that had yet to be premiered. For example, Verdi did not show “La Donna è Mobile” to his tenor, Mirate, and the orchestra until hours before the premiere, and asked all involved “not to sing, whistle or

---
6 Suttoni, 18-23.
7 Ibid., 9-10.
8 Phillip O. Paglialonga, “Rediscovering the Opera Fantasy,” Keynotes Magazine (August 2006).
think of the melody outside the theater.” A second factor was the rise of the virtuoso performer-composer who set out to dazzle audiences with their skills. This was the time of Paganini, Liszt, and Chopin, and sometimes performers would compose or improvise their own fantasies for, or even during, performances. A final factor worth mentioning was a lack of repertoire that existed for wind instruments during this time; having opera fantasies written was a matter of practicality, as well as a way to delight and dazzle audiences.

Opera fantasy slowly fell out of fashion when capitals of opera began migrating away from Paris and Italy towards Germany. Themes started to become more elaborate, chromatic, and difficult to ornament. The lack of distinction between recitative and aria made it more difficult to decipher when the arias began, creating further difficulties for composers of these fantasies. Toward the middle of the 19th Century, there was a growing interest in more emotionally substantial works, e.g., Mendelssohn and Schumann’s piano works, making opera fantasy seem trite, relegating these pieces to the status of novelties.

Program Notes

My initial lecture recital featured one arrangement and one transcription of fantasies written by Donato Lovreglio on operas by Giuseppe Verdi. Donato Lovreglio was an Italian composer-performer on flute. Very little extant research has been performed on the man and his life. He was born in Bari, Italy in 1841 and eventually moved to Naples, where he passed away in 1907. Over the course of his life, Lovreglio composed mostly for woodwinds and what

---


10 Suttoni, 54-59.

11 Paglialonga.

12 Suttoni, 16-18, 342.

13 Ibid, 342.
remains of his compositional catalog are opera fantasias for flute, oboe, and clarinet on the operas of Verdi, Bellini, and Donizetti.  

The first work on my lecture recital was Lovreglio’s *Capriccio Fantasico sull’opera Rigoletto di Verdi*, originally written for flute and piano, arranged for soprano saxophone and piano. Verdi’s *Rigoletto* tells the story of a cursed man, Rigoletto, and his attempt for revenge on the lascivious man, the Duke of Mantua who Rigoletto serves. The Duke seduces Rigoletto’s daughter, Gilda, causing Rigoletto to seek revenge. Rigoletto’s *vendetta* is eventually thwarted and results in the death of his daughter.

The fantasy contains four major themes from the opera. The piece opens with an extended piano introduction and accompanied cadenza. The first theme from the opera is the quartet, “*Bella Figlia dell’amore,*” from Act III that features Rigoletto, Gilda, the Duke and Maddelena. In this the saxophone has two parts, Gilda and the Duke, while the piano represents Maddelena and Rigoletto. The quartet proper is in two sections; the fantasy leaves the first section relatively intact, and then uses the second section as the variation, ornamenting Gilda’s “sobbing.” In the opera this quartet is in the key of D-Flat Major; however, the fantasy places it in the fantasy’s home key of A Major. The piano then introduces Gilda’s aria from Act I, “*Caro Nome,*” which is sung after she meets the Duke. The fantasy contains the simple melody that Gilda sings when the aria begins. The variation begins while the melody remains amidst a flurry of notes in a lower register. In both the opera and the fantasy this aria is in the key of E Major.

The third theme used in this fantasy is the duet from Act II between Rigoletto and Gilda, “*Tutte
le feste al tiempo.” This duet has no variations, and remains in the original key of E minor. This is linked to the following section by a short cadenza. The final aria from the opera is the declaration of the fickle nature of women by the Duke from Act III, “La donna è mobile.” The famous melody is stated in the piano with the saxophone playing an obbligato passage underneath. In the opera this aria is in B Major, while in the fantasy it has been transposed to A Major. The piece concludes with a constant flurry of notes into a grand A Major finale, in contrast to the tragic ending of the opera.\textsuperscript{17}

In terms of the arrangement of this work for soprano saxophone, the opening statement in “Bella Figla dell’amore” was transposed down one octave:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.png}
\end{center}

Example 1.1 – Lovreglio – Capriccio Fantastico sull’opera Rigoletto di Verdi – Original Flute Score, “Bella Figlia dell’amore” Opening Statement

\textsuperscript{17} Giuseppe Verdi, Rigoletto, (New York: Dover Publications, 1992).
Example 1.2 – Tranposed B-Flat Soprano Saxophone Part, “Bella Figlia dell’amore”
Opening Statement

This was done to better mimic the range of the tenor voice from the opera. However, the second statement appears in the original octave for two reasons: to mimic the soprano’s entrance and to help create a greater sense of forward momentum into the variation. In the variation, the broken octaves were first replaced with ascending seconds or thirds in 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes to become more idiomatic for the saxophonist. This solution arose after experimenting and improvising on the source material.

Example 1.3 – Original Flute Score, “Bella Figlia dell’amore” Variation, Broken Octaves

Example 1.4 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, Broken Octaves 1\textsuperscript{st} Appearance
The second appearance of the broken octaves holds the higher octave in 16\textsuperscript{th} notes in order to maintain the contour and create excitement into the end of the variation.

Example 1.5 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, Broken Octaves 2\textsuperscript{nd} Appearance

In “Caro Nome,” the second operatic theme, the opening statement was always transposed down an octave to create registral contrast with the variation. In “Tutte le feste al tempo” the section following the Più mosso was transposed down an octave as well. All material in the final theme, “La Donna è Mobile,” was maintained at pitch. The entire coda was transposed down an octave with the exception of the final nine measures for the purpose of making the final note in the saxophone the highest one in the section.

Example 1.6 – Original Flute Score, “Caro Nome” Opening Statement
Example 1.7 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, “Caro Nome” Opening Statement

Example 1.8 – Original Flute Score, “Tutte le Feste al Tiempo” Più Mosso

Example 1.9 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, “Tutte le Feste al Tiempo” Più Mosso
Example 1.10 – Original Flute Score, Coda
Example 1.11 – Transposed Soprano Saxophone Part, Coda

The second work on my lecture recital was Lovreglio’s *Fantasia da Concerto su motivi de “La Traviata” di G. Verdi*. This work was originally for clarinet and orchestra, was reduced for clarinet and piano, and now has been transcribed for alto saxophone. Verdi’s *La Traviata* was adapted from Alexandre Dumas’s play *La dame aux camélias*, and tells the tale of the forbidden love between the courtesan Violetta Valéry and Alfredo Germont, the son of a nobleman. 18

Lovreglio’s fantasy uses four themes from the opera, all of which can be heard in Act I. After an opening interlude and cadenza, the first melody that appears is Violetta’s double aria “Ah forsi’ é

---

lui/Di quell’amor.” This is her internal debate towards the end of Act I where she is not sure whether Alfredo is the one she loves. The technique used for this variation is the ornamentation of the melody through arpeggiation. The aria alternates between F Minor and F Major; the fantasy maintains this original key and is followed by a cadenza. The second melody that appears is the famous, “Libiamo ne’ lieti calici,” which is traded between the soloist and accompaniment. This is then varied with passagework in counterpoint with the melody. The aria’s initial statement is played in the original key of B-Flat Major; however, the variation is transposed to E-Flat Major to better suit the range of the clarinet. Upon the ending of this variation there is a direct transition to “Amami Alfredo,” which is then varied with simple passagework. This theme initially appears in the Act I Prelude in E Major and is sung by Violetta in Act II in F Major, but in the fantasy it is played in E-Flat Major. The section ends with a cadenza and segues into the aria “Sempre libera,” Violetta’s declaration to be always free. Fragments of the melody are traded between the accompaniment and soloist, before the full statement of a verse appears. The variation maintains the character of the aria; however, the musical material is completely original while maintaining the original key of A-Flat Major. The fantasy ends with a virtuosic coda based on the previous variation’s material with a joyous character, contrasting the opera’s conclusion.19

As this fantasy is a transcription, no alterations to the solo part were made from clarinet to saxophone.

**Pedagogical Applications of Opera Fantasy for Saxophonists**

Since saxophonists are rarely utilized in an opera orchestra, these pieces are a great vehicle to introduce students to the operatic repertoire. Some operatic themes have permeated our culture to the extent that a student may recognize a theme in a fantasy without being aware of its origin. This may attract a student to a particular opera. They may watch or listen to the opera

---

to learn more about it, leading to greater familiarization with the work.\textsuperscript{20} If the student enjoys their experience with the opera, they might investigate more operas by the particular composer and composers with a similar compositional style. They will then achieve greater familiarization with the operatic canon because of this experience.

It is important to watch at least one staging of the opera on which a fantasy is based. This will give the student context of the opera’s action, an idea of the pacing of the work, and a singer’s interpretation and/or ornamentation of the music being performed. Without this context, it is very difficult to convincingly perform the themes and variations.

There are few opera fantasies for saxophone in comparison to other instruments. There are approximately 25 original opera fantasies by 19\textsuperscript{th} Century French composer Louis Mayeur for saxophone; however, only three of these are currently published.\textsuperscript{21} Transcriptions can present additional sets of difficulties for the instrument, most notably the inclusion of the altissimo register (above written F6). The fantasies presented at my lecture recital utilize this register intensively. They are successful at integrating altissimo into a student’s technique because they require seamless and effortless transitions in and out of the register.

These works are also useful for developing intonation in the altissimo register. Since a majority of the saxophone’s repertoire was written after 1930, when tonal music had arguably gone out of fashion, it can be more difficult to audiate the intervals that transition in and out of the altissimo, which can lead to inconsistent intonation. Since these pieces are tonal, the intervals are more consonant and familiar, making it easier to recognize and rectify intonation issues.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Paglialonga.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
An additional pedagogical application is the performance of tonal music, and the associated performance and phrasing practices. Since a large majority of the saxophone repertoire is post-tonal, there is great merit in learning how to phrase a melody in an authentic operatic style. Studying the opera fantasy will develop an ability to play the themes and their accompanying variations with appropriate style and conviction.

Students will also benefit from the process of making arrangements and transcriptions. Every aspect of the notated music should be considered while creating an arrangement. Students make numerous musical judgements in regards to octave placement, articulation, dynamics, phrase markings, and breathing. They have the option to recompose certain passages to assure a more effective performance. Students should be encouraged to think critically about making these considerations at all stages of preparation, including after the performance.

Opera fantasies are often absent in recital programming in favor of more standard or contemporary repertoire; however, it can be a nice treat for the listener to reflect on the musical past with a smile and enjoy a beautiful melody followed by virtuosic pyrotechnics at the end of a recital. If a performer’s goal is to send the audience home with a familiar tune in their ears, there is no better way to end a recital than with an opera fantasy.
Arnold Schoenberg’s masterwork Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4 has existed in many versions since its conception in 1899. Originally written as a string sextet for 2 violins, 2 violas, and 2 violoncelli, the orchestration was later expanded for string orchestra in 1917 and revised in 1943. The work was inspired by a poem of the same name, written by Richard Dehmel. A translation of the poem is as follows:

Two people are walking through the bare, cold grove; the moon runs accompanies them, they gaze at it. The moon courses above the high oaks, not a cloud obscures the light of heaven, into which the black treetops reach. A woman’s voice speaks:

I am carrying a child, and not of yours; I walk in sin beside you. I have deeply transgressed against myself. I no longer believed in good happiness, yet had a great yearning for a purposeful life, for the happiness and responsibility of motherhood; so I dared and, shuddering, let my body be embraced by a strange man and from it have become pregnant. Now life has taken its revenge: now that I have met you.

She walks with an awkward step. She looks upward; the moon accompanies them. Her dark glance is inundated with light. A man’s voice speaks:

Let the child you have conceived be no burden on your soul; O see how brightly the universe gleams! There is a radiance on everything; you drift with me on a cold sea, but a special warmth flickers from you to me, from me to you. This will transfigure the other’s child, you will bear it for me, from me; you have brought radiance on me, you have made me a child myself.

He clasps her around her strong hips. Their breath mingles in the breeze. Two people walk through the high, clear night.

---


23 Translation by Lionel Salter.
Schoenberg was attracted to Dehmel’s poetry during this period of his life and also set several poems into songs.

**Brief Analysis**

Much debate has been generated over the specific form of *Verklärte Nacht*. However, Egon Wellesz proposed in 1921 that the piece is a five-part rondo, which echoes the five stanzas of Dehmel’s poem. He states:

The structure of *Verklärte Nacht*, in accordance with the poem, is made up of five sections, in which the first, third, and fifth are of more [narrative] nature and so portray the deep feelings of the people wandering about in the cold moonlit night. The second contains the passionate plaint of the woman, the fourth the sustained answer of the man, which shows much depth and warmth of understanding.24

Carl Dahlhaus agrees with this analysis with the caveat that the motivic and thematic development can obscure the form upon first listening. The development and frequency in appearance of the motives becomes more frequent as the work progresses.25 The five sections of the rondo are as follows: A (mm. 1-99), B (mm. 100-200), A’ (mm. 201-228), C (mm. 229-369), A’’ (mm. 370-418). The work is rooted in the tonal center of D and gradually settles into less chromatic territory as it progresses from section C onward.

Schoenberg wrote liner notes for the Hollywood String Quartet recording to correspond with Dehmel’s poem:

Promenading in a park (Ex. 1) [For musical examples see Figure 1] in a clear, cold moonlight night (Ex. 2 and 3), the wife confesses a tragedy to the man in a dramatic outburst (Ex. 4). She had married a man whom she did not love. She was unhappy and lonely in this marriage (Ex. 5), but forced herself to remain faithful (Ex. 6), and finally obeying the maternal instinct, she is now with child from a man she does not love. She even had considered herself praiseworthy for fulfilling her duty toward the demands of nature (Ex. 7). A climactic ascension, elaborating the motif (Ex. 8), expresses her self-accusation of her great sin. In desperation she now walks beside the man with whom she

---


has fallen in love (Ex. 9), fearing his sentence will destroy her. But the voice of a man speaks, a man whose generosity is as sublime as his love (Ex. 10).

The preceding first half of the composition ends in E flat minor (10a) of which as a transition only B flat (10b) remains, in order to connect with the extreme contrast in D major (10c). Harmonics adorned by muted runs (Ex. 11a and b), express the beauty of the moonlight and introduce above, a glittering accompaniment (Ex. 12), a secondary theme (Ex. 13), which soon changes into a duet between violin and ‘cello (Ex. 14). This section reflects the mood of a man whose love, in harmony with the splendor and radiance of nature, is capable of ignoring the tragic situation.

Having reached a climax, this duet is connected by a transition with a new theme (Ex. 15). Its melody, expressing the “warmth that flows from one of us into the other,” the warmth of love, is followed by repetitions and elaborations of preceding themes. It leads finally to another new theme (Ex. 16), which corresponds to the man’s dignified resolution: this warmth “will transfigure the child,” so as to become “my own.” An ascension leads to the climax, a repetition of the second part of the man’s theme (Ex. 10c).

A long coda section concludes the work. Its material consists of themes of the preceding parts, all of them modified anew, so as to glorify the miracles of nature that have changed this night of tragedy into a transfigured night.26

---

**Figure 1 – Numbered Musical Examples from Liner Notes**


Genesis and Preparation of the Arrangement

A history of the saxophone ensemble has been well documented in Andrew J. Allen’s 2013 dissertation and article in Vol. 36-37 of *The Saxophone Symposium*. One of the first original works for saxophone was a sextet by Jean-Georges Kastner in 1844, two years prior to the 1846 saxophone patent. Gustav Bumcke, the German pedagogical pioneer and composer, established a saxophone ensemble ranging from soprano to bass at his teaching post in Berlin in the early 20th Century. Sigurd Raschèr, one of the leading saxophone figureheads, carried the ensemble tradition with him when he emigrated to the United States, using it as a centerpiece of his workshops. The Raschèr Saxophone Ensemble was later realized as a professional group in Germany. Another professional group, the Saxophone Sinfonia was founded in 1982 by David Bilger. Currently there are no professional saxophone ensembles in the United States, though there are now saxophone ensembles at almost every college and university with a saxophone program. Students of Raschèr have modeled their respective university ensemble’s instrumentation after that of the Raschèr Saxophone Ensemble: 2 sopranos, 4 altos, 2 tenors, 2 baritones, and 1 bass. French saxophonist and pedagogue Jean-Marie Londeix found an alternate instrumentation for his saxophone ensemble: 1 sopranino, 2 sopranos, 3 altos, 3 tenors, 2 baritones, and 1 bass.

This arrangement came from a desire to emulate the success and magnitude of the Eastman Saxophone Project’s transcription and 2013 performance of Igor Stravinsky’s *Le Sacre*.

---


Members of FSU’s Saxophone Chamber Orchestra felt that a work for string orchestra would be an ideal vehicle to realize this vision. The saxophone family was designed as a consort of instruments, much like the development of the string family. Which piece for string orchestra alone is as compelling as *Le Sacre*? The ensemble’s answer came on April 11, 2014, at which time they decided upon Schoenberg’s *Verklärte Nacht* due to the expressive beauty of this particular opus. Principal work on the transcription began in June 2014 and was completed in September 2014. The first performance of the transcription was given exactly 365 days after the “transcription decision” was made, on April 11, 2015.

In preparation of the arrangement of *Verklärte Nacht*, certain considerations were made. In the orchestral version there are 7 unique parts to cover. Generally the Violin I part is covered by the two Soprano Saxophones, the Violin II part is covered by Alto Saxophones I and II, the Viola I part is covered by Alto Saxophones III and IV, the Viola II part is covered by the two Tenor Saxophones, the ‘cello I part is covered by Baritone Saxophone I, the ‘cello II part is covered by Baritone Saxophone II, and the Double Bass part is covered by the Bass Saxophone. This instrumentation was chosen as it is the most desired instrumentation for the arranger. Frequent exceptions are made to these pairings, depending on range and desired texture.

**Challenges of Adapting Idiomatic String Techniques to the Saxophone**

The foremost difference between strings and saxophone is the way the sound is produced on the instruments. A saxophone requires an airstream that forces a reed to vibrate against the mouthpiece. The air is then funneled through a certain length of metal tube depending on the note that is being produced. When the airstream stops, the sound stops. A string instrument necessitates either the plucking or bowing of a certain length of string, where the resulting

---

vibration is amplified in a wooden box and projected out through holes in the instrument. The sound often can continue for a short time after the player intends the sound to stop due to the string’s kinetic energy, creating resonance. This resonance is difficult to emulate on other instruments. On saxophone, emulating this requires special attention to how the airstream is utilized to release the note. There should be a fast decay in the airstream to create a diminuendo that resembles a string release. This creates an “artificial resonance” in the saxophone that can emulate a string release.

One of the greatest challenges presented to saxophone players performing music written for string instruments is how the necessity of breathing affects the production of a phrase. String instruments do not require air to produce sound, whereas saxophonists do. String players also are able to play long phrases and with no concern about breathing impacting their sound production. Saxophonists have come up with multiple solutions to rectify this. The first solution is using rubato; slowing down enough to take a breath, and then returning to the original tempo in an organic way. This can sometimes disturb the composer’s intentions. Another solution is to omit a note in order to breathe during a passage, creating the obvious problem of a missing note. Even when carefully selected, this can compromise a phrase, tempo, or musical intent. The third solution is to circular-breathe. Circular-breathing occurs when a quantity of air is consciously stored in the cheeks; the air is then pushed out while inhaling through the nose, after which normal playing is resumed. This is most often the best solution, especially when there is a long slur indicated in the music. These three solutions are necessary because circular-breathing becomes more difficult during passages with repeated articulations and in the altissimo register. Verklärte Nacht contains many long phrases that cannot be made on one breath, so using all these solutions when it best suits the music is necessary.
Pizzicato, or plucking the string, is particularly difficult to emulate on the saxophone. There is a saxophone technique called “slap-tonguing” where the saxophone makes the reed slap against the mouthpiece to create a sound that can be described as a “tonk,” or “donk.” This sound comes most closely to resembling a “Bartok pizzicato” where the string is snapped against the fingerboard. There can be variations in intensity of this technique to create a sound that is more like a true pizzicato. A saxophonist also is able to control the length of the note after the slap-tongue, through the airstream. A saxophonist can create an effect very close to a true pizzicato with a gentle slap-tongue and an artificially resonant release. If more than one saxophonist is required to create a pizzicato simultaneously, the most desirable solution is to have one saxophonist slap-tongue the note and have the second articulate the note normally with an artificially resonant release. The two-player approach is used in the transcription in mm. 138-139 and mm. 147-148 in the two tenor saxophone parts. There are other passages in the transcription where pizzicato is played as a staccato note with a quick decay. The slap-tongue sound would be too harsh for the character of the piece at that moment in time, so the slap-tongue was omitted. The best example of this in the transcription is in the Tenor Saxophone II part from mm. 251-258. As always, the demands and character of the music come first.

Another idiomatic string technique that saxophonists must emulate is the usage of mutes. The saxophone mute is an optional piece of equipment that some players use to improve intonation and create easier response in the lower register of the instrument without changing the timbre. The string mute creates a sound with slightly fewer upper overtones. The easiest way for a saxophonist to try to emulate the sound of a string mute is to slightly alter the timbre, or color, of their sound. This is done by changing the vowel shape of the embouchure and oral cavity. The vowel shape creates the tonal color palette for the instrument, with “ee” being the brightest
timbre with the most upper overtones, and “oh” or “ouh” (like the word flu) being the darkest with more prominent lower overtones. To emulate the sound of a string mute, the saxophonist should use the more open “oh” and “ouh” vowel shapes and possibly make the sound more airy. There is no perfect way to emulate this sound, but these should be considered among the stronger options.

There are times when a composer specifically requests a string instrument play on a certain string. One application of this is when they are asked to play higher on the fingerboard to soften the sound, as in the second movement of Dvořák’s 9th symphony. There are other times where composers have used this effect to create great intensity, as in Ravel’s “Tzigane.”

Another possible application of this would be to specifically use an open string; this sound is slightly harsher but full of overtones. The best way that a saxophonist can emulate these specific sounds would be to utilize the vowel shapes of the oral cavity to correspond to the composer's intended timbre. There is no specific notational practice to achieve this desired effect currently and must be discussed in the rehearsal process.

A technique that Schoenberg uses very frequently in Verklärte Nacht is the bowed tremolo. Recreating this on saxophone required different solutions to best serve the music. The first solution is flutter-tonguing, which is the most rapid articulation effect possible on saxophone. This is used in the transcription in mm. 132-134 and mm. 143-144. This is the harshest option available for the tremolo and serves the music best here. The second option was to have every section member rearticulate their note as fast as possible. This creates a rapid, uncoordinated articulation that is very similar to that of a section bowed tremolo. This tremolo technique is found in the transcription in m. 136, m. 145, m. 156, and m. 160. There were also

---

times where the tremolo was omitted from the transcription. The tremolo would have created an excessively thick texture for the passage, as is the case in mm. 29-40. This is one string technique that requires creativity, flexibility, and trial-and-error to emulate.

Rapid, and wide spaced tremolo is another string technique that can create issues for saxophonists. The notes of the tremolo are crucial to determine how the saxophonist can execute these. There are special trill/tremolo fingerings that can facilitate some of these with great ease; the Tc, Ta, C4, and C5 keys are the general “go-to” fingerings to facilitate these tremolos. In some cases these trill/tremolo fingerings are able to cover the break of the saxophone (between written C#5 and D5). However, if the starting pitch involves a fingering that requires the right hand to be utilized (specifically keys 4, 5, 6, 7 or Eb) the aforementioned tremolo keys will not work. In this case, the regular fingerings must be alternated between rapidly.

Multiple stops are a technique that poses another interesting challenge for the transcriber. Multiphonics are available on saxophone; however, they are generally not available in the specific notes that are written by the composer. The options of notes within multiphonics are very limited and the timbre is not generally suitable to this transcription. Another option is to sing one of the pitches while playing the other pitch; however, this can negatively alter pitch being played, and is also not a suitable timbre to this transcription. For double stops, the two notes have been separated between two players. This does not create the desired effect of having the instruments play both notes at once; however, it ensures that both pitches are being played in tune with a suitable sound. When two players are not available, or for triple or quadruple stops, the solution used here is to have grace notes placed on the beat, and gently played up to the top note. This has proved effective when sensitively executed.

---

Harmonics pose a great challenge to emulate for saxophonists. The first step is determining the correct pitch of the harmonic, if not notated in the score. The transcriber then must determine which instrument would best reproduce the sound of that harmonic. Generally, the harmonics will be best achieved on saxophone in the altissimo register at a soft dynamic. Specifically to this transcription, the harmonics at the end of the piece (mm. 414-415) are one octave higher than what is currently practical on saxophone so those pitches were transposed down one octave. This still places both soprano saxophones and the first two alto saxophone parts in the altissimo register. The harmonics in the ‘cello in mm. 251-253, were placed in the Alto Saxophone I part because the range and timbre fit best.

Playing at the softest dynamics of a string orchestra would challenge any saxophone ensemble. Christian Lauba has written a number of concert etudes focusing on different aspects of saxophone playing and some of these etudes focus on playing *sotto voce* at high speeds. This works best when the timbre is diffuse and airy. This practice, which is utilized in some of Lauba’s etudes, comes into usage during the transcription of *Verklärte Nacht*, especially at the end of the work from mm. 407-413 and at m. 416.

The *arpeggiando* figures throughout the course of the work are very idiomatic to a string instrument. The string instrument just has to cross the strings with the bow, while setting their fingers on the fingerboard at the appropriate position. The best solution on saxophone is to write as is and place the passage in the hands of the performer.

The sound of a string section is difficult to emulate since one player is frequently assigned the part of an entire section throughout the transcription of *Verklärte Nacht*. Thus, it becomes necessary to create an octave doubling that does not exist in the string orchestra version. It adds thickness to these passages, as the doublings added are one octave lower than the
Violin I or Violin II parts. This can create synchronization and intonation issues; however, this possibility exists any time a part is doubled. In mm. 328-341, the Alto I doubles the Soprano I part to help emulate the sound of a string section. The same technique is repeated from mm. 370-377 and with the Soprano II and Alto I part from mm. 407-413. No other octave doublings were added in the course of the transcription.

Another challenge is the Bass Saxophone being unable to play the complete range of the Double Bass. The lowest note of the bass saxophone is a major 6\textsuperscript{th} higher than the Double Bass with a Low C extension. Thus, octave displacements had to be made to accommodate the Double Bass part for the bass saxophone.

The greatest challenge in preparing the transcription of Verklärte Nacht is the control of the altissimo register necessary to effectively perform the work. The only instrument in the transcription that does not utilize the altissimo register is the Bass Saxophone. Every other part frequently has notes above the “practical” range of the saxophone. These notes also frequently need to be played very softly, often at \textit{p} or \textit{pp} dynamic levels in Verklärte Nacht. This requires the players to control carefully their airstream to play these notes at the correct dynamic level. There are many passages that cross in and out of the altissimo register, so there is certain level of fluency necessary to cross these registers seamlessly.

Preparing the transcription of Verklärte Nacht for saxophone ensemble has been a most artistically fulfilling experience, albeit with many challenges. At their core, strings and saxophones are fundamentally different instrument families; however, they both are able to produce sounds that can closely emulate the human voice. The techniques that string players use can present considerable challenges to saxophonists. There is a certain level of patience,
creativity, and a necessary element of experimentation required to make the techniques transfer from strings to saxophones.
CONCLUSION

Transcriptions and arrangements are important to the study of any saxophone player because of the relative youth of their instrument. Since the instrument does not have any original works by master composers, e.g., Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann, it becomes a necessity to create these adaptations in order to perform the music of these composers and their contemporaries. Failing to study works by these composers can create deficiencies in understanding the evolution of Western art music and its traditions. Saxophonists are already at a disadvantage from this standpoint because they are not traditional members of the orchestra.

The process of creating an arrangement or transcription is a valuable musical exercise for any student. It demands the complete analysis of every note of a work. This process also allows for critical decision-making skills about what makes a work idiomatic and effective, in addition to considering what alterations should be made to render a more effective arrangement or transcription. Students will be allowed to make decisions on what challenges they will undertake, and reexamine their decisions as they prepare their transcription or arrangements for performance. Creating these transcriptions and arrangements will assist in the development of a well-rounded musician who is able to thrive in any musical situation.
APPENDIX A

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION LETTER FROM BELMONT MUSIC PUBLISHERS

Scotty Phillips
Hello, My name is Scotty Phillips and I am currently a Doctoral Candidate at ...

Belmont via yahoo.com
12:46 PM (1 hour ago) ⭐

Dear Scotty,

You may have permission to reproduce the notes and examples you have mentioned. Please use the credit line.

Used by permission of Belmont Music Publishers.
Best regards,
Anne Wirth

1:25 PM (31 minutes ago) ����

e-mail address:
office@schoenbergmusic.com

The Belmont web site is located at:
http://www.schoenbergmusic.com


Johnson, Rebecca S. “Interpreting Lovreglio’s *Fantasia La Traviata*: Performance and Score Analysis.” MM. Project, California State University, Long Beach, 2012.


Ross, Alex. Listen to This. New York: Picador, 2010.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Described as a “splendid performer … [with] wonderful life and spirit,” and “at once sensitive, nuanced, brash and daring; all depending on the demands of the music,” saxophonist Scotty Phillips has been acclaimed and heard in performance across the United States, Canada, France, and Poland. He has performed at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall (NY), Schermerhorn Symphony Center (TN), Center for New Music (CA), Wychwood Barns (ON), Opening Nights (FL), SaxOpen (France), Ratusz Staromiejski w Szczecinie (Poland), Nowosolski Dom Kultury (Poland), and Wałeckie Centrum Kultury (Poland). He has also appeared as a soloist with the Florida State University Wind Orchestra, and as a guest artist at the University of South Florida, University of Arkansas – Fort Smith, and Oklahoma State University. He has performed with the Tallahassee Symphony, Flagstaff Symphony, National Music Festival Orchestra, and Taneycomo Festival Orchestra. As the tenor saxophonist of Singularity Saxophone Quartet, his credits include: 1st prize in the Florida State University Sight, Sound, and Motion competition; a finalist in the Coleman Chamber Ensemble Competition; and a quarterfinalist in the Fischoff Chamber Music Competition. Singularity has also appeared as the saxophone quartet in residence for the Florida State University Festival of New Music, and guest artists at Northern Arizona University. Mr. Phillips is also an accomplished musician in the popular and jazz styles. He has performed with The Temptations, jazz legends Randy Brecker, Dave Liebman, Conrad Herwig and composer/arranger Jim McNeely. He was a member of the United States delegation sent to Grenoble, France for the 2005 International Meetings of Young Musicians, being 1 of 6 American musicians selected for the trip. Phillips also has performed in numerous musicals such as Catch Me If You Can, Urinetown, Little Shop of Horrors, Aida, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Hairspray. Mr.
Phillips’ arrangements have been heard in many states, at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall and at events by Opening Nights; Singularity, the Taneycomo Festival Saxophone Quartet, Taneycomo Festival Saxophone Orchestra, and Florida State University Saxophone Chamber Orchestra have all performed his arrangements. His arrangements are self-published and available for purchase. He has performed at conferences of the North American Saxophone Alliance, College Music Society, American Bandmasters Association, College Band Directors National Association, Toronto International Electroacoustic Symposium, United States Navy Band International Saxophone Symposium, among other festivals and symposia. He has taught master classes at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (GA) and Zespół Szkół Muzycznych im. F. Nowowiejskiego w Szczecinie (Poland). Mr. Phillips holds the following degrees: Master of Music in Woodwind Performance from Florida State University, in addition to two degrees from Northern Arizona University: Bachelor of Music Education in Instrumental Music, and a Bachelor of Music in Instrumental Performance. His primary teachers are Patrick Meighan, Jonathan Bergeron, Anita Handelsman, and Tony Vacca.