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INSTRUMENT OF THE MONTH

Alto saxophone

The saxophone was created in 1840 by Belgian instrument maker Adolphe Sax. In spite of its brass body, it is considered a woodwind instrument and has a single reed mouthpiece like the clarinet. It is a transposing instrument in Eb and sounds a major 6th lower than notated.

Traditional big band jazz arrangements are based on a 5-part saxophone section with usually two alto saxophones on top. They are known for their versatility, dynamic range and agility in playing lead melodies. Renowned jazz musicians like Ornette Coleman and Charlie Parker made the alto sax one of the most popular solo instruments ever. The sonic capabilities of the alto sax have been gradually expanded with modern techniques such as growling, slap tonguing and flutter tonguing.

Although mainly found in jazz and brass bands, composers such as Ravel, Bizet, Bartók, Prokofiev, Gershwin, Britten and Berg used saxophones in the orchestral context. Famous works with alto saxophone are Ravel's version of "Pictures at an Exhibition", Alban Berg's violin concerto and his opera "Lulu".

The alto saxophone is included in our *Saxophones* Collection, and you can purchase it separately as a *Single Instrument*. As with all *Single Instruments*, you will benefit from upgrade discounts when completing the Collection later.

Best wishes from Vienna,

– Your Vienna Symphonic Library Team