The Symphonious Saxophone: A History of the Large Saxophone Ensemble with a Quantitative Analysis of Its Original Literature

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THE SYMPHONIOUS SAXOPHONE:
A HISTORY OF THE LARGE SAXOPHONE ENSEMBLE WITH A QUANTITATIVE
ANALYSIS OF ITS ORIGINAL LITERATURE

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DEDICATION

To Elise, with all of my love and gratitude.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God, who has given me life, music, and all good things. To my parents, Darryl and Helen, and my grandparents Opal Allen and the late Aaron Allen and Eddie and Linda Ragland, for their constant love and belief in me, throughout my life. To Dr. Clifford Leaman, my mentor, who has been a constant support and wise guide throughout my period under his tutelage. To Prof. John Nichol, for helping to transform me from a student to a professional, who first introduced me to the great tradition of the saxophone ensemble. To Prof. Philip Barham, my teacher and friend, for encouraging and cheering me on for all of these many years and for giving me the intellectual and musical tools to be where I am today. To the members of my document committee, Dr. Reginald Bain, Prof. Joseph Eller, and Dr. Andrew Gowan, for their time, patience, and help. To all of my family, friends, and mentors, who have loved, aided, and encouraged me. To all of you I give my deepest and most sincere thanks.
ABSTRACT

The history of the saxophone ensemble is little understood, even by many of those who lead and participate in the modern iterations of such groups. The aim of this study is to remedy this lack of information and to provide saxophonists with the tools to further explore an important part of the instrument’s repertoire. This document will offer a comprehensive history of the genre, from its beginnings in the 1840’s, to the near present and will present numerical data on the original works for larger ensembles of saxophones, touching on both instrumentation and the concentration of the production of such literature throughout the saxophone ensemble’s history. It is hoped that this study will offer valuable information to the saxophone community on this important, but often overlooked, aspect of the instrument and its literature.
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INTRODUCTION

Larger ensembles of saxophones have existed as nearly as long as the instrument itself. Georges Kastner’s *Complete and Systematic Method for Saxophone* of 1844, written under the supervision of Adolphe Sax, contains the first chamber piece of any sort for the instrument, the *Sextour*. Sax also used large ensembles as a pedagogical tool at the Paris Conservatory in his years as a teacher there. Further, through his efforts as the director of the Chez Adolphe Sax publishing firm, the inventor distributed the earliest known works for his instruments, including several quintets, sextets, septets, and octets for saxophones.

Following the dissolution of both Sax’s class at the conservatory and his publishing business, the saxophone ensemble lay dormant until the beginning of the twentieth century. With the rise of newer forms of mass media and popular culture, the saxophone ensemble again came to prominence (this time in North America) with the popularity of the Six Brown Brothers saxophone ensemble. Another high-visibility group, the “Saxophone Corps” of John Philip Sousa’s

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3 Plugge, 1.
4 Ibid. 107.
famous professional band, operated from 1919 to 1931.\textsuperscript{5} Thanks to these two organizations, and the advocacy of American musical instrument manufacturers, a great boom occurred in the formation of saxophone ensembles that would lead to a larger, much-heralded “saxophone craze” throughout the 1920s and early 1930s.\textsuperscript{6}

A great number of saxophone ensembles were formed throughout the course of the 1920s, each containing anywhere from five to more than one hundred players.\textsuperscript{7} Groups were sponsored by virtually every imaginable organization, including social clubs, fraternal organizations, schools, colleges, and many different businesses.\textsuperscript{8} The large ensemble began to find a place in American saxophone pedagogy at this time, as well. Many schools of music--those serving both amateurs and prospective professionals--began including saxophone ensembles in their courses of study at this time.\textsuperscript{9} By 1931, saxophone sextets had even been added as a chamber ensemble category to the National Solo and Ensemble Contests for high-school-aged musicians, part of the National Band Contest of the 1920s and 30s.\textsuperscript{10}

Despite its period of neglect in Europe in the late nineteenth century, saxophone ensembles began their resurgence on the continent by the early

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\setcounter{enumi}{5}
\item Plugge, 91-92.
\item Fred L. Hemke, “The Early History of the Saxophone” (DMA diss., The University of Wisconsin, 1975), 449.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
1930s, pioneered by the German saxophonist and composer Gustav Bumcke. A student of Adolphe Sax's son, he renewed the idea of the inventor's large-ensemble concept for a modern European audience. Another, younger, German saxophonist, Sigurd Rascher, performed in Bumcke's ensemble and would later bring a love for that particular performance genre to North America.11 Unfortunately, by the mid-1930s, a worldwide economic depression and an approaching World War would quell some of the excitement surrounding saxophone ensembles.

However, many groups continued to operate throughout the troubles of the midcentury. Perhaps most notably, American classical saxophone pioneer Larry Teal included a large saxophone ensemble in his teaching at Detroit's Wayne State University throughout the 1940s.12 A few years later, Rascher would begin encouraging the formation of saxophone orchestras, both as teaching tools and as professional ensembles.13 This led to many of his protégés forming groups at the schools and colleges at which they taught. Examples of this include the SUNY Fredonia Saxophone Ensemble, begun in 1969,14 and the Sax-Chamber Orchestra of the University of Southern Mississippi, formed in 1984.15

13 Lawrence Gwozdz, Liner Notes for America Remembers (Compact Disc Recording, Romeo Records 7215, 2001), 3.
15 Lawrence Gwozdz, email to the author, March 22nd, 2013.
The saxophone ensemble found its greatest exposure in recent times as a result of the advocacy of the French saxophonist and pedagogue Jean-Marie Londeix. The formation of the International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux in 1977 led to the introduction of the genre to many musicians throughout the world. Since then, the number of saxophone ensembles in existence has grown exponentially. Many colleges and universities now include these groups in their courses of study, and several professional and semi-professional ensembles exist. It has become an international movement, with professional groups performing in Europe, Asia, and North America.

This study will provide a comprehensive history of the saxophone ensemble from its origins during the time of Adolphe Sax to its present popularity. Items to be addressed include important personages in the development of the saxophone ensemble, notable composers who have contributed to the literature of the genre, and wider historical trends involving the saxophone and outside forces that have shaped the development of these groups. In addition, the study will include a quantitative analysis of the original literature of the saxophone ensemble. This analysis will seek to establish the most common sizes and instrumentations of saxophone ensembles, and will seek to offer

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18 Ballard, 1.
20 David Bilger, Liner Notes for The Saxophone Sinfonia (LP Recording, Golden Crest Records 4221, 1982).
recommendations to aid in the formation of ensembles that can perform the widest percentage of original literature possible.

To date, no comprehensive study of the large saxophone ensemble has been published. This represents a glaring omission in saxophone scholarship, especially in light of the fact that so many large ensembles have been formed in the course of the last forty years.\textsuperscript{21} Several problems exist that could be resolved by such a study. For instance, no standard instrumentation has been established for the saxophone ensemble.\textsuperscript{22} Similarly, in spite of a wealth of original literature, many ensembles (even well-known professional groups) perform transcriptions almost exclusively.\textsuperscript{23}

This study is limited to ensembles of saxophones including five or more performers, with the occasional extra musician (a few percussionists, etc.). This is what is meant by the term “large saxophone ensemble,” for lack of a better phrase. Saxophone quartets have already received quite a bit of serious scholarly attention,\textsuperscript{24} and will not fall under the purview of this document. In addition, this study will not focus on saxophone ensembles derived from the jazz tradition (e.g. “Super Sax”), as these can be traced back to a separate lineage of jazz band saxophone sections and arose separately from the tradition discussed herein. Primarily, this document is concerned with those ensembles outside of a modern-era jazz milieu.

\textsuperscript{21} Ballard, 1.
\textsuperscript{24} See Plugge.
CHAPTER 1
A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Despite the recent popularity of large saxophone ensembles, relatively little serious study has been undertaken on the subject. Where the concept has been mentioned, it has usually been included as an afterthought or an addendum to some other topic. The only dissertation dealing directly with large ensembles (Daniel Ballard’s) gives relatively little attention to their history and original literature. This study, instead, focuses on the crafting of transcriptions for the genre. The author does offer a small amount of background material, including a nod to the growing popularity of saxophone groups.

A few sources discuss concepts related to the origins of the saxophone ensemble. Perhaps one of the first dissertations to examine the genre at any length is Fred Hemke’s study of the early history of the saxophone. He briefly mentions Kastner’s Sextour, in addition to a few allusions to Sax’s use of large ensembles in his teaching at the Paris Conservatory. More detailed information

comes from two more recent studies by Scott Plugge\textsuperscript{27} and Timothy Ruedeman,\textsuperscript{28} both focusing on the history of the saxophone quartet.

In their historical discussions of the smaller saxophone ensemble, both Plugge and Ruedeman mention several key points in relation to groups of five or more of the instrument. Plugge’s work is the most useful in terms of establishing a more complete view of the early years of the ensemble. Along with a list of quartets published by Sax’s company, he includes several larger chamber works published in the same era. Ruedeman’s work offers little new information, but does provide some important details. He offers more facts on the earliest works for larger groups of saxophones, again, alongside more detailed information regarding the first published saxophone quartets.

Plugge and Ruedeman also give information regarding the pioneering saxophonist and large-ensemble leader Gustav Bumcke. Plugge offers important background information on the man and his relation, primarily, to the saxophone quartet, but makes mention of his interest in larger ensembles. While Ruedeman’s discussion of Bumcke is brief, his work offers two valuable pieces of information on this topic. He includes both the year of formation and the instrumentation of the pioneer’s ensemble.

Several authors have written about the saxophone ensemble during its popularity in the 1920s and early 1930s during the so-called “saxophone craze.” Hemke mentions several saxophone bands that were active in North America in

\textsuperscript{27} Scott David Plugge, “History of the Saxophone Ensemble: A Study of Development of the Saxophone Quartet Into a Concert Genre” (DM diss., Northwestern University, 2003).

the 1920s. Plugge also writes of many larger ensembles operating throughout the early twentieth century, including the saxophone choir of Sousa's band, the Six Brown Brothers, and many other, lesser-known ensembles working on the Vaudeville, Chautauqua, and Lyceum circuits. For the history of this era, contemporary accounts have also proven valuable, including articles by Edward Barroll,\textsuperscript{29} \textsuperscript{30} Harry Lewis,\textsuperscript{31} and an unidentified author\textsuperscript{32} that detail many important ensembles of the time.

Several other special-subject studies offer valuable information regarding saxophone ensembles that is ignored by much of the existing literature. In his study of the saxophone soloists in John Philip Sousa's professional bands,\textsuperscript{33} Michael Hester discusses Sousa's various saxophone ensembles at length, detailing the origins of the groups, their years of operation, and their size and instrumentation. This document provides a great deal of information to explain how the saxophone ensemble, as a genre, became so popular, so quickly. Several other documents discuss particular aspects of the saxophone ensemble that have not been covered by the studies previously mentioned.

One little-explored aspect of the saxophone ensemble is its utilization in early-twentieth-century pedagogy. In both his dissertation\textsuperscript{34} and a journal

\textsuperscript{29} Edward C. Barroll, "The Saxophonist: The Growth of Saxophone Bands," \textit{Jacob's Band Monthly} 9, no. 5 (May 1924): 51.
\textsuperscript{30} Edward C. Barroll, "The Saxophonist" \textit{Jacob's Band Monthly} 9, no. 10 (November 1924): 50-51.
\textsuperscript{31} Harry W. Lewis, "The Saxophone Player" \textit{Jacob's Band Monthly} 2, no. 7 (July 1917): 22-24.
\textsuperscript{32} "A Saxophone Band That Succeeded From the Start." \textit{Metronome} 77, No. 12 (June, 1925): 51.
\textsuperscript{34} Joseph M. Murphy, "Early Saxophone Instruction in American Educational Institutions" (DM diss., Northwestern University, 1994).
article discussing early saxophone instruction in schools of music in the United States, Joseph Murphy makes mention of many large ensembles that were being operated by pedagogues for training purposes. These groups existed in both schools intended for the training of amateurs and professional preparatory institutions in the early part of the twentieth century. Another account, provided by an author under the pseudonym “E. Meritus,” chronicles the widespread proliferation of saxophone ensembles in public schools following the First World War.

Another fascinating aspect of the saxophone ensemble that has been little-researched is its inclusion in the famed National Solo and Ensemble Contest, which was included as part of the National Band Contest from the 1920s to the mid-1930s. Brian Meyers briefly mentions the inclusion of saxophone sextets in his wider studies of the contest. More information was discovered through finding a published repertoire list for one year’s event in the Music Educators’ Journal. Further evidence regarding saxophone ensemble participation in these events was gained from contemporary advertisements.

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illustrating winning students who performed on a particular brand of saxophone.\textsuperscript{40}

Sources suggest that saxophone groups continued to be a viable ensemble at mid-century. Larry Teal is mentioned as organizing a saxophone ensemble with his students at Wayne State University in the 1940s.\textsuperscript{43} However, soon after this, it appears that interest in large ensembles was lost for some twenty years.

Fortunately, according to Thomas Liley,\textsuperscript{44} by the late 1960s, a new leader had emerged in the creation of saxophone groups in the United States. Sigurd Rascher led an ensemble of eighteen members at the first World Saxophone Congress in 1969, which would begin a long tradition of ensembles playing at that event. Many performers and teachers previously unfamiliar with large groups of saxophones would take the presence of these ensembles as inspiration, and, in addition, Rascher’s influence was also extraordinarily important to the formation of ensembles by his students.

Here, the liner notes to long-playing records and compact disc recordings of ensembles become an extremely important source. From them we can tell

\textsuperscript{40} The C. G. Conn Corporation. “First Division Winners.” Advertisement. \textit{Music Educators’ Journal} 21, No. 2 (October, 1934): 6.
\textsuperscript{43} Mary Teal, \textit{Larry Teal: There Will Never Be Another You} (Joliet, Illinois: The North American Saxophone Alliance, 2008).
that both Rascher\textsuperscript{45} and his student Laurence Wyman\textsuperscript{46} had each formed and recorded with their own ensembles by the early 1970s, Rascher’s being a professional group and Wyman’s a student group at SUNY Fredonia, where he was a professor. Other groups formed by Rascher students are also in evidence through liner notes. These include David Bilger’s Saxophone Sinfonia,\textsuperscript{47} formed in 1982 and the South German Saxophone Chamber Orchestra, begun by Linda Bangs-Urban in 1990.\textsuperscript{48} All of these resources also give valuable information about the repertoire and instrumentation of these groups.

Other documents pertaining to ensembles formed by Rascher protégés abound. The Saxophone Sinfonia was particularly well documented in the 1980s, yielding lengthy features by the Associated Press\textsuperscript{49} and John Rockwell, writing for the New York Times.\textsuperscript{50} Still more information about a latter-day Rascher-inspired ensemble is provided by Lawrence Gwozdz\textsuperscript{51} and Paul Wagoner.\textsuperscript{52} Both sources provide detailed information regarding the University of Southern Mississippi’s Sax-Chamber Orchestra.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Sigurd Rascher, Liner Notes for \textit{The Rascher Saxophone Ensemble} (Long-Playing Record, Coronet Records 3022, 197x).
\item Laurence Wyman. Liner Notes for \textit{The Fredonia Saxophone Ensemble} (Long-Playing Record, Mark Educational Recordings 37575, 197x).
\item David Bilger, Liner Notes for \textit{The Saxophone Sinfonia} (Long-Playing Record, Golden Crest Records 4221, 1982).
\item Linda Bangs-Urban, Liner Notes for \textit{Süddeutsches Saxophon-Kammerorchester} (Compact Disc Recording, Orgon Records 25761, 1995).
\item Lawrence Gwozdz, Liner Notes for \textit{America Remembers} (Compact Disc Recording, Romeo Records 7215, 2001).
\end{enumerate}
Another extremely important advocate for the large saxophone ensemble began his work in that field in the late 1970s. James Umble’s biography\(^\text{53}\) details the formation of Jean-Marie Londeix’s International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux in 1977, after Londeix heard a recording of a massed group performing at the London World Saxophone Congress in 1976. The book details the instrumentation of the ensemble, personnel, works written for the group, and much more valuable information. It stands as, perhaps, the single greatest information-source on the subject of a particular saxophone ensemble.

Other information pertaining to the International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux and other contemporary European ensembles can be found in dissertations by John Bleul\(^\text{54}\) and Aaron Durst.\(^\text{55}\) Both works are discussions of the contributions of individual composers to the saxophone’s repertoire. Durst’s writing focuses on Robert Lemay, a Canadian composer who wrote multiple saxophone ensembles, some dedicated to Londeix’s group. Bleul’s paper speaks of Lucie Robert, a French composer who penned works for other ensembles, including the Paris Saxophone Quintet and the Lyon Saxophone Ensemble.

By the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first, several sources mention the existence of ensembles far beyond the confines of

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\(^{54}\) John Stephen Bleul, “A Descriptive Catalog of the Solo and Chamber Saxophone Music of Lucie Robert” (DMA diss., The University of Georgia at Athens, 1998).

\(^{55}\) Aaron M. Durst, “A Descriptive Catalog of the Saxophone Compositions of Robert Lemay” (DMA diss., The University of Georgia at Athens, 2008).
North America and France. According to Clare Mackney, large groups of saxophones can be found in Great Britain. The popularity of ensembles in Japan is mentioned by Michael Cohen. Richard Ingham lists many more, including groups in Spain, Italy, Austria, and Holland.

The existing literature on the large saxophone ensemble provides much information. However, it does so in a very fractured, incomplete way. The historical study within this document will seek to draw connections between all of these seemingly disparate facts to yield a cogent story about the origins, growth, and current status of the genre. The goal will be to produce a document that is useful to the continued growth of an ever-more-popular ensemble.

CHAPTER 2  
A HISTORY OF THE SAXOPHONE ENSEMBLE

The formation of saxophone ensembles logically flows from the original creative intent of the instrument’s inventor. Adolphe Sax’s conception had been of a consort of saxophones of all different types and sizes,\textsuperscript{59} dating to as early as 1838 or 1839, when the first prototype was created.\textsuperscript{60} For virtually all of the myriad types of instruments that he invented (saxhorns and saxotrombas, as well as saxophones), the creator organized his designs along the principle of a choir, with soprano, alto, tenor, and bass instruments, with many added lower, higher, and intervening voices.\textsuperscript{61} It is hardly a stretch to imagine why ensembles of saxophones have been so appealing to many musicians, including Sax himself.

The first historical evidence of a larger ensemble of saxophones is quite auspicious: it was the first published work for any chamber group of saxophones, included as part of an incredibly important early work of saxophone pedagogy. Jean-Georges Kastner’s \textit{Complete and Systematic Method for Saxophone}, the first known pedagogical material for Sax’s new instrument, was published in 1844. This was at the request of the French Ministry of War for the training of

\textsuperscript{59} Hemke, 175.  
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 10.  
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 208.
saxophonists, which were newly added to the regimental bands of the army, two full years before the patent date of the saxophone in 1846.

Included in this resource were two pieces of original music written for the instrument by Kastner. One of these was the Sextuor for an ensemble of saxophones. It was penned for the unusual (to the modern saxophonist) instrumentation of two sopranos in C, one alto in F, two basses in C, and one contrabass in F. However, the composer added a note that indicated that the piece could also be performed by two sopranos in B-flat, one alto in E-flat, two basses in B-flat, and one contrabass in E-flat.

Interestingly, and perplexingly, Kastner’s Sextuor was completely unplayable at the time of its publication. By 1844, C sopranos, F altos, and F contrabasses (and their B-flat and E-flat cousins, for that matter) remained unproduced, theoretical creations. Only bass saxophones in C had been manufactured, and it remains unclear if Sax ever actually produced many of the other types of saxophones in C and F, as the ubiquity of the B-flat and E-flat instruments soon took hold. Then, it is uncertain when, if ever, the work was performed in its original instrumentation. Thanks to Sigurd Rascher, a modern edition for saxophones in B-flat and E-flat has existed since the mid-1970s.

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62 Hemke, 258.
63 Ibid., 10.
64 Ballard, 1-2.
65 Plugge, 15-16.
67 Ruedeman, 42.
making this work available for performance to a wider audience of saxophonists.\textsuperscript{68}

By 1850, Adolphe Sax had begun to commission composers to write for his new instruments in an effort to increase his company's sales.\textsuperscript{69} By 1858, the inventor had established the Chez Adolphe Sax publishing house to provide an outlet for all of the works that resulted from these commissions.\textsuperscript{70} These efforts led to the first works for saxophones, both in solo and ensemble settings. A handful of works commissioned by Sax were written for larger groups of saxophones, and represent an early precedent for the existence of such ensembles. Sax's work as a publisher ended with the dissolution of the publishing house in 1878.\textsuperscript{71}

Along with the Kastner Sextuor, only a handful of original works were written for ensembles of saxophones ranging in size from quintets to octets between 1844 and the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{72} The total number of chamber works for saxophones (including quartets) produced in this time period is only in the low twenties.\textsuperscript{73} Besides the quartet, the most popular early ensembles appear to have been the quintet and sextet. Three works were written for both configurations. Only one known septet and one known octet were composed in this time period.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{68} Sigurd Rascher, Liner Notes for \textit{The Rascher Saxophone Ensemble, Volume 2} (Long-Playing Record, Coronet Records 3031, 1975).
\textsuperscript{69} Hemke, 217.
\textsuperscript{70} Plugge, 1.
\textsuperscript{71} Cottrell, 34.
\textsuperscript{72} Plugge, 8-10.
\textsuperscript{73} Ruedeman, 21.
\textsuperscript{74} Plugge, 8-10.
After the Kastner, the next piece for an ensemble larger than the quartet was not completed until approximately 1861. In this year, a relative boom of compositions resulted in four works by Jerome Savari and one by Emile Jonas. Savari’s output is interesting both for its size and the configuration of his ensembles. He composed one work each for quintet, sextet, septet, and octet, while Jonas’s work *Priere (Sextuor)* could be performed as either a quartet or a sextet. Only two other known works were composed in this time frame. Armand Limmander de Nieuwenhove composed his *Quintette* circa 1864, while Jean Hure’s *Premiere Sextuor* was produced sometime in the early 1920s. The paucity of saxophone ensembles from the 1860s through the early twentieth century may seem odd, but it has much to do with Sax’s own fortunes.

The instrumentation of each of these early works is quite unlike the configurations of modern saxophone ensembles, and deserves exploration. Aside from the Kastner *Sextuor*’s quizzical make-up, all of the works are performable just using various assemblages of modern sopranos, altos, tenors, and baritones. Savari’s *Quintetto* is for two sopranos, alto, tenor, and baritone, while his *Sextuor* utilizes two sopranos, two altos, tenor, and baritone. The composer’s *Septuor* and *Octuor* are just extensions of this same idea, the former work adding a second tenor, and the latter work further adding an extra baritone saxophone.

Emile Jonas’s *Priere*, as previously mentioned, was intended to be performed as either a quartet (in SATB format) or as a sextet with two sopranos,

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75 Plugge, 8-10
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
one alto, two tenors, and one baritone. The Armand Limmander de Nieuwenhove *Quintette* follows Savari’s example and utilizes an instrumentation of two sopranos and one each of the alto, tenor, and baritone voices. Finally, Jean Hure’s *Premiere Sextuor* is scored for one soprano, two altos, two tenors, and one baritone. It is interesting to note that, even in the earliest days of the saxophone ensemble’s existence, no standard instrumentation existed. This is a concept that will be explored further in the third chapter.

Historical evidence points to Adolphe Sax’s own utilization of ensembles of saxophones in his teaching at the Paris Conservatory. From 1846 to sometime before 1850, the saxophone had been taught to military band students at the Gymanese de Musique Militaire; but this institution was closed in 1856, and its duties folded into those of the renowned Paris Conservatory. By the late 1850s, a military saxophone class had been formed at the latter institution, with Sax as its teacher.

The students entering Sax’s class required solos, quartets, and larger ensembles for their musical development. Several of the teacher’s composer colleagues produced these necessary pieces of music (and they were later published by Chez Adolphe Sax). Much like today, an institution of higher learning served as an excellent place to form large ensembles. Through a consistent body of student performers, Sax had both the opportunity and resources to do so.

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78 Plugge, 8-10.
79 Ibid., 7.
80 Cottrell, 34.
81 Plugge, 38.
The first final examination of students in Sax’s class at the Conservatory occurred in 1858. Following solo jury performances by the pupils, they performed in an octet conducted by Sax’s friend, the composer Jean-Baptiste Singelee.\textsuperscript{82} Another documented instance of Sax’s organization of a larger ensemble at the Conservatory occurred in 1863, when the inventor arranged an unknown work of Beethoven’s for seven saxophones that was performed by his students.\textsuperscript{83}

Unfortunately, even at this time, it appears as if the saxophone ensemble was a relatively little-known phenomenon. In 1864, Fetis, a Paris music critic, wrote that groups consisting of only saxophones could make up musically pleasing ensembles, apparently unaware of Sax’s efforts to form those very groups.\textsuperscript{84} The genre was doomed to decades of even greater obscurity, however, when following the defeat of the French at Sedan in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, Sax’s class at the Conservatory was terminated. This effectively eliminated a chief arena for the production and performance of all types of saxophone literature, including larger ensembles.\textsuperscript{85}

The idea of the saxophone ensemble, however, has survived in one form or another to the present day. One of the sources that aided this was the instrumentation text \textit{Nouveau traite d'instrumentation} by Gevaert, published in 1885, which includes a saxophone sextet arrangement of a Bach chorale.\textsuperscript{86} This work was quite well known in composition circles, surviving at least until the early

\textsuperscript{82} Hemke, 250.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 349.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 298.
\textsuperscript{85} Cottrell, 34.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 270.
1930s. The Dutch-German composer and writer Jaap Kool mentions the arrangement in his book on the saxophone, published in 1931.\textsuperscript{87}

In the years after Sax’s decline, the wind band provided a home for the saxophone. Even after the dissolution of the Paris Conservatory’s class for the instrument in 1870, military and municipal bands throughout France offered opportunities for performers.\textsuperscript{88} It is through this association with bands that the saxophone found its initial great prominence in the United States. Although the saxophone was first performed in the country by 1853,\textsuperscript{89} the instrument did not find its way into regular use until after 1872. In this year the French Republican Guard band (with its six saxophones) presented eye-opening performances at Patrick Gilmore’s International Peace Jubilee, which led Gilmore and many others to incorporate the instrument into their ensembles.\textsuperscript{90}

By 1873, Gilmore had hired Edward A. Lefebre, the great Franco-Dutch saxophonist, as one of his star soloists. He also added an entire section of saxophones to his band.\textsuperscript{91} Following Gilmore’s death in 1892, Lefebre joined the newly formed ensemble of the young, former Marine Band conductor, John Philip Sousa, initiating a long lineage of famed saxophone soloists in that group.\textsuperscript{92} This would further serve to popularize the saxophone in the United States, leading to its prominence in both concert and popular musical styles in the twentieth century.

\textsuperscript{87} Jaap Kool, trans. by Lawrence Gwozdz, \textit{The Saxophone} (Baldock, Hertfordshire, UK: Egon, 1987), 252.
\textsuperscript{88} Hemke, 363.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 384-385.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 395-396.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 407.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 414.
At the turn of the twentieth century, larger saxophone ensembles experienced a surprising and incredible leap in popularity, due in large part to the association of the saxophone with ragtime early in the century, and, later in the 1920s, with jazz.\textsuperscript{93} Throughout the United States, both professional and amateur groups were formed, eventually creating what is referred to by many as the “saxophone craze.”\textsuperscript{94} By the 1910s, “saxophone bands” became extremely widespread throughout the United States, and became a well-known and well-loved genre for many contemporary audiences.\textsuperscript{95} One of the first such groups was the Musical Spillers.

The Musical Spillers, a touring troupe of accomplished African-American men and women, usually performed as a saxophone sextet, although many of the members were multi-instrumentalists.\textsuperscript{96} The ensemble was formed sometime before 1908 and toured widely, performing throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, South America, Europe, and Africa.\textsuperscript{97} The group played both light classical transcriptions and compositions in an authentic ragtime style.

A figure as august as Scott Joplin give the group his seal of approval by dedicating his \textit{Pine Apple Rag} to William Spiller, the founder and leader of the ensemble. Despite this and the Musical Spillers’ high reputation for musicianship,
they were denied a recording contract due to their skin color.\textsuperscript{98} Another group would be the first to preserve the sound of the saxophone ensemble on record.

The Six Brown Brothers were, arguably, the most widely heard and influential of all of the early-twentieth century saxophone ensembles.\textsuperscript{99} Tom Brown formed the group, originally the "Five Brown Brothers," sometime between 1904 and 1908 while he and the other early members were employed by the Ringling Brothers Circus.\textsuperscript{100} In 1908, the group struck out on their own, free of the circus, and they made their first recording (still as a quintet) for Columbia records in 1911.\textsuperscript{101} 102 Reorganizing as a sextet in 1912, the group was the only saxophone ensemble to record between the years 1911 and 1917, becoming one of the most popular pop acts of the time.\textsuperscript{103} Their appearance in Broadway shows, beginning with \textit{Chin Chin} from 1912 to 1917, further cemented their position as icons of the 1910s.\textsuperscript{104}

Brown Brothers' hits such as "The Bullfrog and the Coon" and their version of "American Patrol" were eagerly received by audiences, and the sheet-music publication of these compositions led to the formation of other saxophone ensembles throughout the country.\textsuperscript{105} They even licensed their name for promotional use by other saxophone groups, including the Symphonic Sextette

\textsuperscript{98} Cottrell, 144.
\textsuperscript{99} Plugge, 107.
\textsuperscript{100} Cottrell, 144.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 145.
\textsuperscript{102} Plugge, 107.
\textsuperscript{103} Cottrell, 145-147.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 146-147.
\textsuperscript{105} Plugge, 107.
and the Six Harvards. Their instrumentation would influence many groups during the 1920s, beginning with their two alto, tenor, baritone, and bass quintet. When they expanded to a sextet the group utilized a configuration of two altos, tenor, two baritones, and bass, but, from 1916 on, the Brown Brothers performed with two altos, two tenors, baritone, and bass.

Later in the 1910s, the Brown Brothers tried to expand into a sixty-member saxophone group. While this never came to pass, there was a thirty-person ensemble associated with the sextet by 1921. The career of the Six Brown Brothers was unusually long, with the group still able to secure performances during prime-time radio broadcasts and mentions in the New York Times throughout the late 1920s. However, with the crash of the stock market in 1929 came a rapid decrease in interest by the wider public for many forms of musical entertainment. The Six Brown Brothers disbanded sometime in 1933 or 1934.

Another incredibly popular and prominent saxophone ensemble of this period was perhaps formed in response to the Six Brown Brothers and the wider rise of “syncopated” music. In the 1919-1920 concert season, John Philip Sousa began to utilize a sextet of his saxophonists as an encore to the popular solos of his principal saxophonist H. Benne Henton. Throughout its many different

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106 Cottrell, 147.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid., 149.
110 Cottrell, 145.
111 Hester, 51.
permutations, the ensemble attached to the Sousa band was referred to in programs and press materials as the “Saxophone Corps.”112

From the beginning, the instrumentation of this group consisted of two altos, two tenors, one baritone, and one bass, mirroring the configuration of the band’s saxophone section at the time.113 Instead of the marches, orchestral transcriptions, and other fare that Sousa had become known for throughout his career, the Corps offered audiences music inspired by the contemporary “syncopated” styles, drawing upon the saxophone’s increasing association with early jazz.114 In addition, the saxophone ensemble incorporated comedic elements into their routine, reminiscent of the “clowning” associated with the Six Brown Brothers.115

Beginning in 1923, Sousa’s saxophone section expanded to include eight members.116 However, the Saxophone Corps stayed at its six-member instrumentation until 1925, perhaps due to the number of arrangements already written for and rehearsed by the sextet. In 1925 the Corps expanded to an eight-member ensemble, utilizing all of the members of the saxophone section. The band utilized three altos, three tenors, one baritone, and one bass.117 The saxophone octet used a slightly different configuration, performing with four altos, two tenors, one baritone, and one bass.118

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112 Hester, 95.
113 Ibid., 79.
114 Ibid., 55.
115 Ibid., 93.
116 Plugge, 84.
117 Ibid., 82.
118 Hester, 79.
The expansion of the Saxophone Corps only served to make it a more popular attraction to audiences throughout the country. It remained one of the most universally enjoyed aspects of the Sousa band’s concerts from the mid-1920s until 1931.¹¹⁹ For unknown reasons, the Corps ceased to be mentioned in printed programs in 1926, but concert reviews point to its inclusion as a surprise encore in nearly every Sousa concert during this era.¹²⁰ Due to financial considerations, Sousa reduced his band’s saxophone section from eight to six members in 1929, but still utilized an octet for the Corps, drawing upon members of other sections that doubled on the saxophone.¹²¹ The end of the Saxophone Corps came only in 1931, with the dissolution of the Sousa band, following its leader’s death.¹²²

Other famous saxophone ensembles existed throughout the 1920s. One of the most recognizable names associated with this movement is that of Rudy Wiedoeft. At the height of his popularity in the mid-1920s, the famed soloist led the Rudy Wiedoeft Saxophone Sextet.¹²³ This group made at least three recordings.¹²⁴

Aside from these “A-list” saxophone ensembles, there were countless groups working throughout the country in the 1920s.¹²⁵ The existence of the Vaudeville circuits of this time-period provided many opportunities for

¹¹⁹ Hester, 90.
¹²⁰ Plugge, 86-87.
¹²¹ Hester, 79.
¹²² Ibid., 79.
¹²³ Plugge, 123-129.
¹²⁴ Ibid., 129.
¹²⁵ Hemke, 449.
professional groups.\textsuperscript{126} Vaudeville, modeled after English music-hall shows of the late-nineteenth century, consisted of an assemblage of all sorts of acts, including music, dance, comedy, acrobatics, magic, and many other attractions, often with a racy undertone.\textsuperscript{127} A relatively novel instrument like the saxophone, with its evocative curves and new sound, was perfect for these variety shows.

In addition, many saxophone groups performed professionally on the more family-friendly and middlebrow-oriented Chautauqua and Lyceum circuits.\textsuperscript{128} The Chautauqua Movement, named for Chautauqua, New York, its birthplace, was a traveling lecture and performance circuit of educationally- and culturally-oriented material. Many professional bands, choruses, and opera companies, as well as saxophone ensembles, performed through venues associated with the movement.\textsuperscript{129} The Lyceum was a similar educationally oriented circuit that traced its origins to early-nineteenth century Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{130}

Vaudeville, Chautauqua, and Lyceum-driven ensembles expanded the reach of saxophone groups greatly into the American heartland. Whereas the performances of the Six Brown Brothers, Sousa’s Saxophone Corps, and Wiedoeft’s sextet could be heard in major cities and on record, they were still inaccessible to many audiences in smaller cities. All of the popular entertainment

\textsuperscript{126} Plugge, 102.
\textsuperscript{128} Plugge, 129.
establishments, however, made it possible for audiences to hear homegrown, professional saxophone ensembles. One of the earliest was formed in 1915 in Des Moines, Iowa. The Metropolitan Sextette, and other ensembles like it, led to a wider audience for saxophone ensembles as the twentieth century wore on.\footnote{Lewis, 22.}

The popularity of all of these groups eventually led to the formation of semi-professional and amateur ensembles, beginning in the early 1920s.\footnote{Barroll (May 1924), 51.} Two groups that fit the former category are the Sawyer Concert Band of Detroit, and the Southern California Saxophone Band of Los Angeles. Both of these groups were led by saxophonists who are little known now, but, in their time, were charismatic and influential figures that helped propel the saxophone to greater popularity. The first of these individuals was Duane Sawyer, the owner of a very large and successful private music studio in Detroit in the 1920s.\footnote{Cottrell, 149}

Throughout its existence, the ensemble led by Sawyer used many names. Some of these include the Sawyer Concert Band,\footnote{Barroll (May 1924), 51.} the Detroit Saxophone Band,\footnote{Murphy (dissertation), 49.} and the “100-Piece Saxophone Band.”\footnote{Holly J. Hubbs, “American Women Saxophonists from 1870-1930: Their Careers and Repertoire” (DA diss., Ball State University, 2003): 43.} While relatively little is known about this ensemble today, it was a popular group, gaining attention in national music periodicals of the time.\footnote{Barroll (May 1924), 51.} It operated throughout the 1920s, and was publicized as the largest saxophone band in the world, including at least sixty-nine saxophonists (if not the purported one hundred) playing every voice from

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[131]{Lewis, 22.}
\footnotetext[132]{Barroll (May 1924), 51.}
\footnotetext[133]{Cottrell, 149}
\footnotetext[134]{Barroll (May 1924), 51.}
\footnotetext[135]{Murphy (dissertation), 49.}
\footnotetext[136]{Holly J. Hubbs, “American Women Saxophonists from 1870-1930: Their Careers and Repertoire” (DA diss., Ball State University, 2003): 43.}
\footnotetext[137]{Barroll (May 1924), 51.}
\end{footnotes}
The group provided steady employment to many saxophonists who were active in the Vaudeville, Chautauqua, and Lyceum circuits. The leader of the Southern California Saxophone Band, Kathyne Thompson, was a fascinating, pioneering saxophonist about whom more study must be done. While information on her is scarce, it is known that she was born in the Midwestern United States near the turn of the twentieth century and that she had moved to Los Angeles by 1920. A student of the famous saxophonist E.A. Lefebre, Thompson was connected to the earliest tradition of saxophone playing in the United States. As a pedagogue, she was a founder of the Thompson-D’Ippolito School of Saxophone in Los Angeles and published a handful of etude books and solo pieces for the saxophone. Thompson’s saxophone studio was a training-ground for many young musicians who would later play on the Vaudeville stage.

Thompson’s Southern California Saxophone Band operated throughout the 1920s. The group was quite popular regionally, from the early years of the decade. They were frequent performers on Los Angeles radio station KHJ. By 1923 the group had started to receive national attention, with mentions in

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138 Murphy (dissertation), 49.
139 Hubbs, 43.
140 Ibid., 76.
141 Plugge, 152.
142 Hubbs, 77.
143 Ibid., 78.
144 Murphy (dissertation), 49.
145 Ruedeman, 292.
popular musical periodicals of the time.\textsuperscript{146} Unfortunately, the later history of this group is murky, and the documentation begins to trail off by the middle part of the decade.

At least one saxophone ensemble was formed in opposition to the spread of groups that performed mainly "syncopated" music. Aldon Laus, principal bassoonist and saxophonist with the Boston Symphony, founded the Boston Saxophone Orchestra in 1924. This large group (with forty-three members on at least one concert in 1926) exclusively performed transcriptions of classical repertoire, eschewing the popular connotations the saxophone was accumulating at the time. Such saxophone stars as Jascha Gurewich, the former Sousa Band soloist and composer, performed with the ensemble.\textsuperscript{147}

Saxophone ensembles also became a popular pastime for many amateur musicians in the 1910s and 1920s. Groups were started by civic clubs, companies, fraternal organizations (such as the Freemasons and the Elks), schools, colleges, and municipalities.\textsuperscript{148} The rise of these ensembles can, in part, be attributed to the popularity of many of the professional saxophone groups mentioned previously, and also the ever-widening popularity of "syncopated" musics.\textsuperscript{149} However, their existence can also be traced to many former Army bandsmen who returned home following World War I with additional training on

\textsuperscript{146} Hubbs, 76.
\textsuperscript{147} Cottrell, 150.
\textsuperscript{148} Barroll (May 1924), 51.
\textsuperscript{149} Cottrell, 138.
the saxophone. These individuals often set up teaching studios in their
hometowns, eventually leading to the establishment of ensembles.\textsuperscript{150}

Many companies specializing in musical products also promoted the
formation of local saxophone bands as marketing tools.\textsuperscript{151} Several publishers
offered music for consumption by these newly formed groups, often focusing on
popular music of the day. Leo-Feist, Inc., offered several arrangements of “fox-
trots,” “waltzes,” and other popular dance-styles for ensembles of up to nine
parts.\textsuperscript{152} Similarly, the Waterson, Berlin, and Snyder Company of New York
offered arrangements of popular tunes for saxophone quintets, sextets, and
septets.\textsuperscript{153} The Walter Jacobs Company offered collections of compositions, all
arranged for symphonic orchestra, band, or saxophone ensemble.\textsuperscript{154}

Perhaps no greater example of the involvement of corporations in the
formation of saxophone ensembles exists than a particular case involving the
Holton Company. In the early 1920s, the corporation pushed for the existence of
amateur ensembles, hoping to sell more saxophones. They began publishing
the \textit{Beginner’s Saxophone Band Instructor}, a book intended to aid in the
formation of such groups in the early part of the decade.\textsuperscript{155} In at least one
example, a representative of the company formed a saxophone ensemble
himself.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{150}{Meritus, 50.}
\footnotetext{151}{Ibid., 50.}
\footnotetext{152}{Hubbs, 104.}
\footnotetext{153}{Ibid., 105.}
\footnotetext{154}{Walter Jacobs, Inc., “Practical Collections for School Bands and Orchestras (Advertisement),” \textit{Music Supervisors’ Journal} 17, no. 1 (October 1930): 39.}
\footnotetext{155}{Plugge, 93.}
\end{footnotes}
In 1921, a Holton dealer in Racine, Wisconsin named Stanley Gere, formed an ensemble that would later be called Gere’s Saxophone Band. Originally formed as an amateur quartet, the members found it too “hard to find music written” for that genre, perhaps bizarrely for those familiar with the saxophone quartet as it is today.\(^\text{156}\) They decided to form a larger group so that transcriptions of music originally written for full wind band could be performed. The larger ensemble began with fifteen members, but by 1925, had exploded to approximately fifty saxophonists.\(^\text{157}\) Such groups proved to be highly profitable for the companies involved in their formation.

Amateur ensembles formed throughout the country, with the first identifiable group being O.P. Thayer’s Saxophone Band, made up of eighteen saxophonists, as well as two clarinetists, two drummers, and a drum major, formed in Rock Springs, Wyoming by 1902.\(^\text{158}\) Another early group was begun in 1915 in the small town of Dante, South Dakota, consisting of ten saxophonists (two sopranos, three altos, two tenors, two baritones, and one bass). The group provided music for all sorts of civic activities, including church services.\(^\text{159}\) Also in 1915, a saxophone ensemble of at least fifty performed at San Francisco’s Panama Pacific International Exposition.\(^\text{160}\)

Hayward Murphy started another early amateur ensemble in the 1910s in Detroit. The Detroit Saxophone Club was directly inspired by the popularity of the Six Brown Brothers. However, the group did not play “jazz-like” music,

\(^\text{156}\) “A Saxophone Band That Succeeded From the Start,” 51.
\(^\text{157}\) Ibid.
\(^\text{158}\) Cottrell, 148.
\(^\text{159}\) Theodore R. McDowell, “Saxophone Choirs” The Instrumentalist 62, no. 8 (March 2008), 94.
\(^\text{160}\) Cottrell, 148.
preferring instead to perform arrangements of band music. The nine-member ensemble was even conducted by a former military band director.\textsuperscript{161}

To truly understand the popularity of the saxophone ensemble during this time, just a partial list of amateur groups follows. The Chicago Health Department fielded its own group, as did the Chicago Masonic organization.\textsuperscript{162} A small sampling of the cities that had their own saxophone ensembles includes Boston; Cleveland; Denver; Louisville; McPherson, Kansas; Milwaukee; Montgomery, Alabama; New York City; Oakland, California; Omaha; Racine, Wisconsin; Rochester; Salt Lake City; Seattle; and Trenton, New Jersey.\textsuperscript{163} \textsuperscript{164} \textsuperscript{165} The genre, by the mid-1920s, had become a national phenomenon.

Saxophone groups became so popular that they soon performed public concerts, instead of or alongside more established ensembles. \textit{The Washington Post}, in the summer of 1923, makes mention of a large saxophone ensemble playing in the place of a band on an evening’s concert.\textsuperscript{167} As late as 1936 a New York Times article tells of a Works Progress Administration-funded saxophone ensemble operating for the public’s entertainment in Harlem, along with a WPA orchestra and chorus.\textsuperscript{168}

Other places that the saxophone ensemble experienced a great deal of exposure at this time were American educational institutions. Colleges,
secondary schools, and private music studios all sponsored groups. Just a few
of the private institutions, aside from Kathryne Thompson’s (mentioned earlier),
include the Ernst Saxophone Conservatory in New York City, which boasted two
groups, one with thirty members and another with seventy-five.\(^{169}\) In St. Louis,
John Sauter’s Modern Saxophone School had a thirty-member ensemble.\(^{170}\) As
early as 1920, Gustav Schuster’s music school in Salt Lake City had a thirty-five-
member group that expanded to at least forty saxophonists by 1922.\(^{171}\)

Many institutions of higher learning included saxophone ensembles as
either extracurricular groups or credit-granting ensembles in the 1920s. By 1924,
Syracuse University had its own saxophone band.\(^{172}\) Directed by Fred Livingston,
the ensemble had at least forty members.\(^{173}\) Other universities that had
saxophone groups at this time include Louisiana State University\(^ {174}\) and the
Georgia Institute of Technology, whose ensemble frequently broadcast over the
school’s radio station.\(^{175}\) Perhaps the most interesting of these ensembles was
the all-female, fourteen-member group of the Moody Hospital Training School of
Dothan, Alabama, made up entirely of student nurses.\(^{176}\)

Still another area in which saxophone ensembles flourished was the
 growing school-band movement; especially important for the genre was the
National Solo and Ensemble Contest. The National Band Contest was founded

\(^{169}\) Murphy (dissertation), 92.
\(^{170}\) Ibid., 92-93.
\(^{171}\) Murphy (journal article), 7.
\(^{172}\) Murphy (dissertation), 49-50.
\(^{173}\) Barroll (November 1924), 50.
\(^{174}\) Murphy (dissertation), 50.
\(^{175}\) “Tech Saxophone Band to Repeat Program Tonight,” The Atlanta Constitution, October 14th,
1929.
\(^{176}\) “The Southern Division,” The American Journal of Nursing 29, no. 5 (May 1929), 531-536.
in 1926 by the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music and the Music Supervisors’ National Conference’s Committee on Instrumental Affairs.\textsuperscript{177} Originally just a venue for performance by secondary school concert bands, the great bandmaster A.R. McAllister was given the responsibility of organizing an accompanying solo and ensemble contest for wind and percussion instruments. The first such competition for soloists was held in 1929 with categories for ensembles added in 1930.\textsuperscript{178}

Competitions were held every year for ensembles from 1930 until 1937.\textsuperscript{179} While they were not sanctioned ensembles in the first year of the contest, both saxophone quartets and sextets were introduced in 1931.\textsuperscript{180} The preferred instrumentation for sextets appears to have been two altos, two tenors, one baritone, and one bass saxophone (the same instrumentation as the Six Brown Brothers ensemble after 1916).\textsuperscript{181} \textsuperscript{182} An official music list published for the 1935 competition points to the type of literature that these ensembles were performing. The competition music appears to have been made up entirely of transcriptions of “light classic” pieces, including the overture to Donizetti’s \textit{Lucia di Lammermoor}, Schubert’s \textit{Marche Militaire}, and von Suppe’s \textit{Poet and Peasant Overture}, in keeping with the wind-band programming practices of the time.\textsuperscript{183}

This idea of a competition repertoire made up entirely of transcriptions may seem odd to musicians today. However, a look at the compulsory music list

\textsuperscript{177} Meyers (dissertation), 13.
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 13-14.
\textsuperscript{179} Meyers (journal article), 46.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 47.
\textsuperscript{181} C.G. Conn Corporation (1937), 71.
\textsuperscript{182} Cottrell, 147.
\textsuperscript{183} MENC, 71.
for saxophone quartet indicates that, with the exception of Edward Lefebre’s AATB transcription of the Singelee *Premier Quatuor*, the smaller ensemble’s repertoire was also chosen from “light classics” and popular tunes.\(^{184}\) Again, in that era, wind bands frequently performed transcriptions of this type of music, so it would have been quite natural for the organizers of this contest to suggest transcriptions. In fact, there is an indication in the 1935 music list that saxophone sextets could also perform music taken from the brass sextet repertoire.\(^{185}\)

While it appears that many of the records pertaining to winners in the National Solo and Ensemble Contest have been lost, at least one music manufacturer preserved some of this information through its advertisements. The C. G. Conn Corporation promoted its instruments throughout the 1930s using the names and images of contest winners who used the company’s saxophones. From this, we can tell that many of the sextets (at least those that were receiving prizes in the contest) came from the Midwest, usually quite close to Chicago.

In 1931, the Joliet, Illinois High School Saxophone Sextet and the Morton High School Saxophone Sextet of Cicero tied for first place in the National Solo and Ensemble Contest.\(^{186}\) Once again, in 1934, the Joliet High School group won first prize.\(^{187}\) In 1936, a sextet from Elmhurst High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana took the top prize.\(^{188}\)

\(^{184}\) MENC, 70.
\(^{185}\) Ibid., 71.
\(^{186}\) C.G. Conn Corporation (1932), 2.
\(^{187}\) C.G. Conn Corporation (1934), 6.
\(^{188}\) C.G. Conn Corporation (1937), 71.
Unfortunately, by 1937, the contest had become too large, and it was split into a ten-region format. Perversely, this move to make the event more manageable doomed it, as the excitement surrounding the contest quickly dissipated without the national spotlight. Eventually, most of the regional contests folded.\textsuperscript{189}

The collapse of the National Solo and Ensemble Contest, as well as the worsening economic depression of the 1930s severely damaged the further growth of large saxophone groups in the United States. However, the use of the genre in saxophone pedagogy retained some extremely influential proponents well into midcentury. Larry Teal conducted a group of students at Wayne State University in the 1940s.\textsuperscript{190} He also led an ensemble at his Detroit Teal School of Music into the 1950s.\textsuperscript{191}

It appears that Teal’s groups usually performed transcriptions.\textsuperscript{192} However, in at least one case, there is evidence that his ensembles performed original music written for saxophones by Percy Grainger. In 1942 the composer sent Teal his \textit{Immovable Do} and \textit{Annunciation Carol} in their saxophone ensemble versions.\textsuperscript{193} Grainger was a great advocate of saxophone groups and encouraged them to perform both original works and arrangements. He

\begin{flushend}
\textsuperscript{189} Meyers (journal article), 55.
\textsuperscript{190} Teal, 123-124.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 149.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 123-124.
\end{flushend}
suggested that transcribed vocal music of the Renaissance would be a particularly pleasing repertoire for the use of large groups.  

While ensemble activity in the United States was profuse throughout the early twentieth century, the genre’s growth later in the century would depend on events taking place in Germany in the 1920s. Gustav Bumcke, while not a commonly known figure among saxophonists today, played a vital role in the survival of the large saxophone ensemble. He was born in Berlin on July 18th, 1876. Originally a pianist and composer, he studied with renowned figures like Max Bruch and Engelbert Humperdink in his youth.

Bumcke’s career as a saxophonist began in 1902, during a trip to Paris. He was fascinated by the instrument and eventually studied saxophone with Adolphe Sax, Jr. and Victor Thiels, the saxophonist of the Paris Opera. Before his return to Prussia, the young musician bought eight saxophones, and in 1903 Bumcke established a saxophone class at Berlin’s Stern’schen Konservatorium.

Bumcke was a strong advocate of saxophone ensembles of all types and believed that the instrument was most satisfying when grouped into quartets, quintets, or larger ensembles. In fact, by the late 1920s, Bumcke had founded

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195 Plugge, 34.
197 Zumwalt, 10.
196 Ibid.
199 Ibid.
200 Plugge, 34.
the first known saxophone ensemble in Germany. By 1931, the ensemble had reached a size of seventeen saxophonists, with a range from soprano to bass. Eventually, the ensemble would incorporate a sopranino, as well. Bumcke seems to have mainly drawn the personnel for the ensemble from his students at the Konservatorium.

As mentioned previously, Bumcke was also a composer, and a set of original works for the saxophone ensemble is included in his oeuvre. His *Drei Fantasien fur Saxophon-Orchester*, Op. 50, penned in 1930 and 1931, consists of three pieces. Each had an instrumentation utilizing sopranino (or clarinet in substitution), soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass saxophones. All of the pieces are fantasies on popular tunes or hymns, with the second (on *Nearer My God to Thee*) perhaps being the most familiar to English-language audiences.

Interestingly, at least one famous (to saxophonists) author writing in Germany in 1931 dismissed most larger saxophone ensembles. Jaap Kool, in his landmark *Das Saxophon*, spoke very positively of quartets and quintets of saxophones. However, he wrote disparagingly of larger groups, stating, “The saxophone is by no means an instrument to be heard en masse.” It is uncertain if Kool had heard Bumcke’s saxophone ensemble before making this assertion.

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201 Ballard, 2.
203 Zumwalt, 10.
205 Kool, 252.
206 Ibid., 245.
Unfortunately, as the thirties progressed in Germany, the Nazi menace began to crush and destroy all manner of people, institutions, and ideas. Bumcke was one of the terrible regime’s many victims. The saxophone, labeled a “verboten” instrument, was looked down upon greatly by many of Hitler’s henchman. Eventually, Bumcke was forced to resign his teaching position at the Konservatorium under political pressure. He remained in Germany and died there on July 4th, 1963. 

Despite his tragic life, Bumcke would have an enormous influence on all later developments in the field of the saxophone ensemble through his student and disciple Sigurd Rascher. Just as Bumcke had undoubtedly been inspired to form ensembles of saxophones after his contact with Adolphe Sax, Jr., Rascher was inspired throughout his career to form various large ensembles as a result of his contact with Bumcke. Rascher performed in Bumcke’s quartet during his time in Berlin in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and is thought to have performed in the large group, as well. Whatever his exposure, however, Rascher was familiar with the genre and would carry a love of it with him in his later career in the United States.

Throughout his later life, Rascher utilized saxophone ensembles as an integral part of his teaching at the workshops that he conducted throughout the United States. Initially, his repertoire for these ensembles was drawn almost entirely from transcriptions of Baroque and Classical-era music. These early arrangements through the 1960s, were written for a sextet of one soprano, two 

207 Zumwalt, 10. 
208 Plugge, 34. 
209 Ruedeman, 66.
altos, one tenor, one baritone, and one bass. It is perplexing to note that this is a very different ensemble than Bumcke’s. However, the matter of pragmatism comes into play: it was simply what Rascher could assemble from the students on hand in the 1950s and 1960s.

Rascher, for the rest of his life, encouraged the formation of large groups of saxophones, as he believed that they were a vital part of Adolphe Sax’s original vision for the instrument. He felt that the ensemble should have its own, original body of literature, and worked to help create it by collaborating with composers. Rascher even went so far as to state that professional saxophone chamber orchestras should be formed, operating on an equal footing with string chamber orchestras. While this vision, for the most part, has been far from successful, another idea of Rascher’s has proven prophetic: he felt that colleges and universities would be the setting for the popularization (relatively speaking) of the large saxophone ensemble.

In 1969, Rascher brought the saxophone ensemble to the attention of many other North American saxophonists. After the popularity of the genre in the 1920s and 1930s, it had fallen into great neglect, notwithstanding the efforts of individuals like Larry Teal. However, many younger saxophonists were quite unfamiliar with the history of saxophone groups larger than quartets. In 1969, at the first World Saxophone Congress, held as part of the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, Rascher led an eighteen-member ensemble in a

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210 Laurence Wyman, email to author.
211 Wagoner, 54.
212 Gwozdz (America Remembers), 3.
213 Sigurd Rascher (1975).
performance of transcriptions of works by Bach, Grieg, and Karel Husa. Many saxophonists heard the potentialities of large groups for the first time at this event.

By 1973, Rascher had formed his own professional ensemble. Yet again, a saxophone gathering proved to be an ideal location both for this group's performance and the dissemination of the idea of the saxophone ensemble as a viable medium of expression. The Rascher Saxophone Ensemble's first performance occurred at the World Saxophone Congress Region VIII conference in Annville, Pennsylvania in 1973. Their first recording, made sometime between 1973 and 1974, gives a picture of an eleven-member ensemble of two sopranos, five altos, one tenor, two baritones, and a bass. A 1975 recording of the RSE shows an expansion of the group to twenty-two players, including two sopranos, eleven altos, three tenors, two baritones, three basses, and one contrabass.

The early RSE personnel lists read like a who's-who of latter-day Rascher-influenced teachers and performers. Many of these figures have also had a significant impact on the modern history of the large saxophone ensemble. Just a few of the most important in this regard include Linda Bangs, Lawrence Gwozdz, Bruce Weinberger, and John Worley. Both through his students and ensembles, Rascher left an incredibly strong foundation for saxophone groups. In fact, for many years, Rascher and his pupils were the chief driving-forces behind the medium.

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214 Liley (WSC), 3-9.
215 Rascher (197x).
216 Ibid.
217 Rascher (1975).
218 Rascher (197x).
One of the first to follow Rascher’s encouragement to form large ensembles was the saxophonist, theorist, and pedagogue Laurence Wyman. He formed the Fredonia Saxophone Ensemble at the State University of New York, Fredonia (the institution at which he taught) in 1969. Originally, the ensemble was a sextet with an instrumentation of one soprano, two altos, one tenor, one baritone, and one bass (in imitation of Rascher’s early saxophone workshop ensembles). Later, Wyman expanded the group to a septet by adding an extra tenor, and then the ensemble grew to an octet, with the further addition of an alto. By the early 1970s the group was issuing recordings and touring throughout the Northeast; and the ensemble still exists today, under the direction of current SUNY Fredonia saxophone professor Wildy Zumwalt.\footnote{Laurence Wyman, email to author.}

Yet another important saxophone ensemble that has spread the idea to many young collegiate saxophonists is the Sax-Chamber Orchestra at the University of Southern Mississippi, led by Lawrence Gwozdz. Beginning in 1972, Gwozdz was a student-member of Wyman’s ensemble at SUNY Fredonia, and was a member of the Rascher Saxophone Ensemble in his early career, as well.\footnote{Lawrence Gwozdz, email to author.} He formed the Sax-Chamber Orchestra in the 1984-1985 school year, his first as a faculty member at USM.\footnote{Rascher (197x).} In its initial stages the group was an octet, later growing to a maximum number of twenty-seven saxophonists in the mid-1990s. Now, however, the Orchestra is an eleven (sometimes twelve)
member, auditioned ensemble, inspired by Gwozdz’s own early experience in Rascher’s eleven-saxophonist group.  

The activities of Rascher’s disciples were not limited to the formation of ensembles with college students, however. Some created groups with even younger students. In the 1980s, Ronald Caravan led a yearly twelve-saxophone ensemble as part of the Northeastern Instrumental Music Festival in Lake Placid, New York. These groups performed both transcriptions and original literature.

Aside from influential work forming student ensembles, however, many of Rascher’s students also took his advice to form professional groups. One of the most well known of these was the Saxophone Sinfonia. The group was formed and conducted by David Bilger. Bilger studied saxophone with Donald Sinta, Joseph Allard, and Sigurd Rascher, and conducting with Frederick Fennell. He spent much of his career as a teacher at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania.

Bilger was already very involved with large ensembles before the formation of the Saxophone Sinfonia. In 1979 he had conducted a group of ten saxophonists at that year’s World Saxophone Congress, held in Chicago. The impetus for the formation of a professional group came, however, when Bilger was forced to take a break from his own saxophone performance schedule for a

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223 Lawrence Gwozdz, email to author.
time, due to Bell’s palsy. To much fanfare, the Sinfonia's first performance was at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center on June 11th, 1982.

In its first iteration, the Saxophone Sinfonia was an eighteen-member group. It consisted of two sopranos, eight altos, four tenors, two baritones, and two basses. In its early days, and throughout its existence, the ensemble was full of notable Rascher-trained (and non-Rascher-trained) performers. Some of those who took part in the first performance and premiere recording of the group include Ronald Caravan, Paul Cohen, Lawrence Gwozdz, Patrick Meighan, Lee Patrick, and John Worley, among many others.

From their first concert, the Saxophone Sinfonia put an emphasis on the performance of original literature for large ensembles. At their debut, they performed Ronald Caravan’s *Jubilate!*, Erwin Chandler’s *Sinfonia for Saxophone Ensemble*, Walter Hartley’s *Octet*, Sigurd Rascher’s modern performance edition of the Kastner Sextuor, and Carl Anton Wirth’s *Portals*, along with transcriptions of works by Grieg and Vivaldi. Approximately half of the group’s early literature consisted of original music for saxophone ensembles. Apparently the ensemble made quite an impression on the critic John Rockwell, who wrote in *The New York Times* that the Saxophone Sinfonia sounded “just grand.”

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226 Associated Press.
227 Rockwell.
228 Bilger (*Holiday Homecoming*), 5.
229 Bilger (*Saxophone Sinfonia*).
231 Rockwell.
232 Associated Press.
233 Rockwell.
Another professional saxophone ensemble was formed by a Rascher protégé in 1990 when Linda Bangs-Urban started the South German Saxophone Chamber Orchestra. Bangs-Urban was born in the United States, immigrating to Germany later in life. She studied with Rascher and served as the baritone saxophonist in the Rascher Saxophone Quartet from 1969 until 1992. Her ensemble has a maximum instrumentation of twenty saxophonists, plus percussion, when needed, with the overall makeup consisting of two sopranos, eight altos, five tenors, three baritones, and two basses. As with the Saxophone Sinfonia, the performance of original literature was a prime concern of Bangs-Urban.

Both individually and through his influence, Sigurd Rascher was responsible for a great deal of music that was written expressly for performance by large groups of saxophones. Many pieces were dedicated directly to Rascher, with instrumentations ranging up to eleven players. Just a few of these include Ronald Caravan’s *Jubilate!*, an octet written in 1982; Werner Wolf Glaser’s *Quintet*, completed in 1977; Walter Hartley’s *Octet* of 1975; Brian Israel’s 11-saxophone 1985 composition *Arioso and Canzona*; and Erland von Koch’s 1981 composition *Moderato e Allegro* for eleven saxophones. Through his

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234 Bangs-Urban, 10.
235 Ibid., 9.
236 Ibid., 11.
237 Ibid., 1.
238 Ibid., 186.
240 David James Wozniak, “The Life and Music of Brian Israel With an Emphasis on His Music for Saxophone” (DMA diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, 2012), 94.
relationships with his students, however, Rascher exerted an even greater influence on the production of new music for the genre.

As early as 1972, the Fredonia Saxophone Ensemble started to commission new works. 241 Many of the other Rascher-inspired groups discussed above have had works written for them since then. Both the University of Southern Mississippi Sax-Chamber Orchestra and the South German Saxophone Chamber Orchestra have been strong proponents of original literature. 242 243 Rascher and his followers have had an unbelievable influence on the history of the genre and the propagation of new works.

As mentioned previously, several Rascher-led and -inspired groups performed at early meetings of the World Saxophone Congress. This provided a venue for other performers, not attached to the Rascher legacy, to see the possibilities for massed saxophones. By the mid-1970s more activity occurred in the genre that at any point since the 1930s. Much of this had to do with the new venue of the World Saxophone Congress, which enabled saxophonists from far-flung locales to much more easily share ideas with one another.

In 1974, a septet from Brussels had performed at the Congress in Bordeaux. 244 The Rascher-influenced idea took hold decisively at the 1976 meeting in London, where an eighteen-member ensemble performed at the closing ceremony. However, another, even grander, event caught the attention of many in attendance. A massed group of approximately one hundred and

241 Gwozdz (America Remembers), 7.
242 Ibid., 5-7.
243 Bangs-Urban, 8.
244 Liley (WSC), 16.
twenty saxophonists performed, igniting the imaginations of many who were present and one, in particular, who was not.\textsuperscript{245}

Jean-Marie Londeix, one of the undisputed leaders of the saxophone ensemble movement of the 1970s onward, founded the International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux in 1977.\textsuperscript{246} He was originally inspired by listening to a recording that had been made of the massive ensemble that had performed at the London Congress.\textsuperscript{247} Saxophone ensembles helped to provide Londeix's students with a previously absent opportunity: performance in a larger ensemble.

Pupils in the Bordeaux Conservatory (and young saxophonists throughout the French conservatory system) had previously received solo and quartet instruction, but no wind ensemble opportunities and extraordinarily limited opportunities for orchestral performance were available. Therefore, the ISEB provided students with invaluable experience in this regard. This previously-unfilled need would pave the way for the future success of ensembles in French and French-inspired conservatories.\textsuperscript{248}

Saxophone ensembles became an integral part of Londeix's teaching at the Conservatory from the late 1970s on. Aside from the large-ensemble experiences they provided to students, they also allowed young saxophonists to play all of the various sizes of saxophone.\textsuperscript{249} From its beginning, the ensemble was made up of twelve saxophonists, performing on all of the saxophones from

\textsuperscript{245} Liley (WSC), 18.
\textsuperscript{246} Ingham, 72.
\textsuperscript{247} Umble, 191.
\textsuperscript{248} Ibid., 125.
\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., 125.
sopranino to bass.\textsuperscript{250} Twelve was originally chosen for a very pragmatic purpose: It was the maximum number of students allowed in Londeix’s advanced class at the Conservatory.\textsuperscript{251}

While originally happenstance, the existence of a twelve-member ensemble of defined instrumentation led to a first for the saxophone ensemble: There was now a standard size and configuration for saxophone groups, at least in one part of the world. With Rascher-led and -inspired ensembles, as we have seen, the size of the forces and instrumentation involved was far from standardized until the 1990s. Londeix’s was a commissioning ensemble that could help spread a body of repertoire of definite instrumentation.\textsuperscript{252} This is one of the things that could account for the explosion in the number of ensembles operating in the last few decades.

From its earliest existence, the ISEB commissioned a great deal of original literature, in addition to Londeix’s own transcriptions. Two composers that were identified with Londeix throughout his career were also some of the earliest to pen works for his ensemble. The first is Francois Rosse, whose \textit{Spath} for twelve saxophones was written in 1981.\textsuperscript{253} Rosse’s student, Christian Lauba, wrote three works for the ensemble throughout the 1980s. \textit{La Foret perdue}, written in 1982, was the composer’s first work of any kind for saxophone.\textsuperscript{254}

\textsuperscript{250} Umble, 125.
\textsuperscript{251} Ibid., 191.
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 125.
\textsuperscript{253} Ibid., 95.
\textsuperscript{254} Ibid., 104-105.
Lauba’s other works for the International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux include 1985’s *Mutations-couleurs* and *Les Sept Iles* from 1988. Yet another composer who wrote multiple works for the ISEB was Robert Lemay, whose *Vauges vertiges* was written in 1989. As late as 2005, Lemay wrote *Calligramme* for Londeix, Jean-Michel Goury, and Jean Francois Guay. These are just three of the many composers who wrote original works for Londeix and the International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux.

The ISEB performed over one hundred and twenty concerts in the time that it was in existence. Even after his retirement from full-time teaching in 1994, Londeix continued to conduct the ensemble until 1999. Despite his full retirement, however, the efforts that he exerted had further established a firm foundation for the survival of saxophone ensembles throughout the world. The period since the 1980s has been one of the most fruitful yet for serious saxophone ensembles.

On the gala concert on the final evening of the 1985 World Saxophone Congress in Washington, D.C., both the Saxophone Sinfonia and the International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux performed. Each group played a good deal of original literature, with Bilger’s group performing works by Caravan, Hartley, and John Worley, while Londeix’s ensemble played a program of Murgier, Lauba, Mintcher, and Serocki. In addition, an all-star ensemble

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255 Umble, 105.
256 Durst, 59-60.
257 Ibid., 90-91.
258 Umble, 95.
259 Ibid., 133.
260 Liley (WSC), 28.
had been formed by members of the premiere United States military bands, and had performed at the same conference.\textsuperscript{261} Perhaps most grandly, at the same event, approximately two hundred and fifty saxophonists from fourteen different nations performed in a massed saxophone ensemble on the steps of the United States Capitol Building.\textsuperscript{262} Clearly, a turning point had been reached in the popularity of the genre.

To again step back in time for a moment, the increase in the number of ensembles throughout the world can be traced back to the formation of the ISEB and other like-minded ensembles, mostly formed at pedagogical institutions. Indeed, there was an explosion in the number of ensembles from the 1970s onward.\textsuperscript{263} This began in France and eventually worked its way through the rest of the world, thanks in no small part to French pedagogy. For example, by 1978 a fifteen-member group had been formed at the Lyon Conservatory. Masahiro Maeda, a Japanese expatriate student, was in this first ensemble at Lyon and would go on to form ensembles at all of the Japanese institutions where he would later teach, as well as beginning the professional Mi-Bemol Saxophone Ensemble.\textsuperscript{264} By the late 1980s, ensembles had already spread throughout Japan, including the huge JSA Saxophone Orchestra, among others.\textsuperscript{265}

This rapid expansion in the numbers of large ensembles is a matter of influence. As was discussed earlier, Rascher-influenced saxophonists have formed ensembles at the educational institutions at which they have taught, due

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{261} Liley (WSC), 27.
\item \textsuperscript{262} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{263} Easton, 57.
\item \textsuperscript{264} Cohen, 14.
\item \textsuperscript{265} Liley (WSC), 30.
\end{itemize}
to their leader’s great interest in the genre (which originally came from the interest of Rascher’s teacher, Gustav Bumcke). Likewise, French saxophonists and those studying in the French tradition, beginning with Londeix’s students, have spread the use of saxophone ensembles in a pedagogical context wherever they have gone. Eventually, even saxophonists not allied with these traditions have been influenced by the performances and recordings of Rascher- and Londeix-inspired groups, and have formed ensembles of their own.

By the end of the twentieth century, ensembles existed throughout the world. A great many of these are outgrowths of college or conservatory saxophone programs, stretching throughout North America, Europe, and Asia.\(^{266}\) Perhaps the largest centers of this activity have been France,\(^ {267}\) the United States,\(^ {268}\) and Spain.\(^ {269}\) In recent years the number of professional and semi-professional saxophone ensembles in existence has also increased greatly.

Just a short sampling of these adult ensembles shows how widespread the movement now is. Along with the previously mentioned Saxophone Sinfonia in the United States and the Mi-Bemol Ensemble in Japan, there is the Austrian Saxophone Project Wien; Philippe Geiss’s Strasbourg-based Sax & Co.; Ed Bognard’s World Saxophone Orchestra, found in Holland; the Italian Saxophone Orchestra, led by Frederico Mondecelli; Saxophone Baroque, based in Osaka, Japan; and the Spanish Ensemble de Saxofonos de Barcelona, among many

\(^{266}\) Ballard, 1.
\(^{267}\) Liley (WSC), 37.
\(^{268}\) Ibid., 32.
\(^{269}\) Durst, 97-98.
others. One country that seems to especially love its saxophone ensembles is Great Britain. Many semi-professional groups exist throughout the nation, including the twelve-member Yorkshire Saxophone Ensemble and the forty-member National Saxophone Choir of Great Britain.

The popularity of the large saxophone ensemble continues to expand throughout the world. From its beginnings as part of Sax’s plan for his namesake instrument, the genre has gone through many bouts of popularity and near-extinction to reach the point it is at today. With continued care, the large saxophone ensemble is now on a trajectory towards future sustained success. A few problems must be addressed, however, perhaps the most daunting of which is instrumentation, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

\[270\] Ingham, 200.  
\[272\] Mackney, 45.
One of the greatest challenges to the future stability of the saxophone ensemble as a concert genre is the absence of knowledge regarding its original literature. Much of this has to do with the fact that no universally agreed-upon instrumentation currently exists. Despite its nearly one hundred and seventy year history, a great number of divergent approaches still exist to this fundamental aspect of organization. One of the main goals of this chapter is to provide firm data on various instrumentations and permutations of the original literature for the saxophone ensemble so that more logical choices might be made in regard to forming these groups in the future. In addition, information will be examined in regard to the historical eras in which original works were composed.

In all, the most recent edition of the *Londeix Guide to the Saxophone Repertoire* lists nine hundred and four individual, original works for saxophone ensembles from quintets through large saxophone choirs. However, out of all of these, only seven hundred and seventy-eight are of determinable size. Still less,

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273 Wagoner, 53.
six hundred and thirty-eight, are of defined instrumentation,\textsuperscript{274} and it is from this latter group that the appropriate data will be derived.

The first shocking piece of information is the sheer number of different instrumentations available. In all, there are one hundred and forty-eight different permutations of saxophone ensemble instrumentation that are represented in the original literature.\textsuperscript{275} To determine the most logical and usable of these, the data must be examined in greater detail.

The saxophone quintet has a rather large body of literature, whereof one hundred and eighty-one original works, one hundred and forty-eight have a discernible instrumentation. Seventeen different instrumentations have been used, with only nine of these representing more than one work. The most often-used permutation is that of soprano, two altos, tenor, and baritone, with sixty-eight works. Next comes the configuration of two altos, two tenors, and baritone, with twenty-one pieces. The instrumentations of soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass and that of soprano, alto, two tenors, and baritone each have fifteen original works.\textsuperscript{276}

Historical precedence seems to play very little part in the instrumentation of quintets. Jerome Savari's \textit{Quintetto} and Armand Limmander de Nieuwenhove's \textit{Quintette}, both published in the 1860s by Sax, utilize a make-up of two sopranos, alto, tenor, and baritone.\textsuperscript{277} However, this instrumentation has

\textsuperscript{275} Ronkin, 559-570.
\textsuperscript{276} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{277} Plugge, 8-10.
### Table 3.1: Instrumentation of Quintets

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### Table 3.2: Instrumentation of Sextets

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only been utilized in seven other works for quintet.\textsuperscript{278} Other configurations with multiple works include that of five altos, with five pieces; soprano, sopranino, alto, tenor, and baritone with three; two altos, two tenors, and bass saxophone with two; and three altos, tenor, and baritone, also with two.\textsuperscript{279}

There are one hundred and two original works for sextets, with eighty-six of these having a known instrumentation. The most popular, in terms of original literature, has been the configuration of soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone, with thirty-one pieces. Next comes soprano, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass, with eleven, followed by soprano, three altos, tenor, and baritone, with ten. One historically significant instrumentation is that of soprano, two altos, tenor, baritone, and bass, as it was utilized by Sigurd Rascher in his earliest saxophone ensembles in the United States, and served as the first configuration of the SUNY Fredonia saxophone ensemble.\textsuperscript{280} Yet again, historical significance does not yield numerical strength, as only eight original works have been written for this make-up.\textsuperscript{281}

Another noteworthy sextet configuration is that of two sopranos, two altos, tenor, and baritone, which was used by the composers Jerome Savari, Emile Jonas, and Jean Hure, all in works published by Sax in the 1860s.\textsuperscript{282} Oddly, given this tradition, they represent three of the scant five works penned for that instrumentation. Other sextets with more than one original work include soprano, alto, two tenors, baritone, and bass; two sopranos, alto, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and baritone.

\textsuperscript{278} Ronkin, 559-570.
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{280} Laurence Wyman, email to author.
\textsuperscript{281} Ronkin, 559-570.
\textsuperscript{282} Plugge, 8-10.
and three altos, two tenors, and baritone, all with two pieces each.\footnote{Ronkin, 559-570.} One instrumentation that is quite significant to the development of saxophone ensembles has been almost completely ignored by composers: The instrumentation of two altos, two tenors, baritone, and bass was utilized by the Six Brown Brothers (after 1916),\footnote{Cottrell, 147.} John Philip Sousa's Saxophone Corps\footnote{Hester, 79.} and by groups participating in the National Solo and Ensemble Contest in the 1930s,\footnote{C.G. Conn (1937), 71.} but only one original work, according to the data, has been written for this make-up.\footnote{Ronkin, 559-570.}

There are sixty-nine known original works for saxophone septets, with sixty-two of these having a discernible instrumentation. This number is spread over twenty different configurations. The most often written for is the combination of soprano, two altos, two tenors, baritone, and bass, with fifteen.\footnote{Ibid.} This, also, was a later instrumentation of the saxophone ensemble at SUNY Fredonia.\footnote{Laurence Wyman, email to author.}

Other popular septet make-ups include sopranino, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, bass, and contrabass, which includes eleven works; soprano, two altos, two tenors, and two baritones, which has six; soprano, three altos, two tenors, and baritone, which includes four; and both soprano, three altos, two tenors, and baritone; and three altos, two tenors, baritone and bass, which have three works
Table 3.3: Instrumentation of Septets

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Table 3.4. Instrumentation of Octets

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each. Six different configurations have had two works written for them.\textsuperscript{290} The most interesting and significant of these is the configuration of two sopranos, two altos, two tenors, and baritone. Jerome Savari’s \textit{Septuor} of ca.1861, published by Sax, uses this instrumentation, again suggesting that historical precedent has had little to do with the future popularity of an instrumentation.\textsuperscript{291}

As for octets, there are one hundred and sixteen original compositions, ninety-two whose instrumentation could be determined. These are spread across twenty-two distinct make-ups. The most utilized of these has been that of two sopranos, two altos, two tenors, and two baritones (a double SATB quartet), with forty-seven works.\textsuperscript{292} Also, this is an historically important instrumentation, as Savari’s \textit{Octuor} (published by Adolphe Sax around 1861) utilizes it.\textsuperscript{293}

While the other octet configurations fall far behind the double quartet in terms of numbers, seven of them use a two soprano, two alto, two tenor, baritone and bass set-up, while six utilize one soprano, three altos, two tenors, baritone, and bass.\textsuperscript{294} The latter is an instrumentation used still later in the history of the Fredonia saxophone ensemble.\textsuperscript{295} The next four configurations have three original works apiece: those of sopranino, soprano, two altos, two tenors, baritone, and bass; soprano, three altos, two tenors, and two baritones; two sopranos, three altos, two tenors, and baritone; and, finally, four altos, two tenors, and two baritones. The rest of the set-ups either have one or two original works,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{290} Ronkin, 559-570.
\item \textsuperscript{291} Plugge, 8-10.
\item \textsuperscript{292} Ronkin, 559-570.
\item \textsuperscript{293} Plugge, 8-10.
\item \textsuperscript{294} Ronkin, 559-570.
\item \textsuperscript{295} Laurence Wyman, email to author.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
with the only historical instrumentation, Sousa’s latter-day octet of four altos, two tenors, baritone, and bass,\footnote{Hester, 79.} having but a single work.\footnote{Ronkin, 559-570.}

The nonet is a little-utilized size of saxophone ensemble. It has but seventeen original works, with thirteen of these being of known instrumentation, with seven configurations utilized. The most popular of these has been that of two sopranos, two altos, two tenors, two baritones, and one bass saxophone, with five works. Besides that, only the instrumentations of sopranino, two sopranos, two altos, two tenors, baritone and bass; and that of two sopranos, three altos, two tenors, baritone, and bass have more than one work written for them, with two apiece.\footnote{Ibid.}

Dectets have, likewise, been little used by composers for original works for saxophone ensemble. Twenty-one of these exist, with fifteen having a discernible configuration, with seven distinct instrumentations. The soprano, two soprano, two alto, two tenor, two baritone, and one bass grouping is the most popular, with five works. Four separate set-ups exist for which two compositions have been written: two sopranos, three altos, three tenors, baritone, and bass; two sopranos, three altos, three tenors, and two baritones; two sopranos, four altos, two tenors, baritone, and bass; and the instrumentation of ten altos.\footnote{Ibid.}

The eleven-member saxophone ensemble has a rather special place in the history of the genre, as many ensembles led or inspired by Sigurd Rascher

\footnotetext{296}{Hester, 79.}
\footnotetext{297}{Ronkin, 559-570.}
\footnotetext{298}{Ibid.}
\footnotetext{299}{Ibid.}
### Table 3.5: Instrumentation of Nonets

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### Table 3.6: Instrumentation of Dectets

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utilized eleven instruments.\textsuperscript{300} Some interesting observations in this regard can be drawn from the available data. Quite contrary to expectations, only thirty-one original works have been written for ensembles of this size, with merely twenty-three of these being of discernible instrumentation. In all, twelve instrumentations are represented. Of these, the most often used is the combination of two sopranos, four altos, two tenors, two baritones, and one bass saxophone, with nine works.\textsuperscript{301}

David Bilger suggested the above as being an ideal set-up for a saxophone ensemble, in an effort to standardize the instrumentation of the genre.\textsuperscript{302} Likewise, Wozniak has called this configuration the “Rascher tradition” of ensemble instrumentation.\textsuperscript{303} However, it is quite difficult to ascertain how nine original compositions constitutes a tradition, in-and-of itself. Likewise, an earlier Rascher-led group utilized another eleven-member make-up of two sopranos, five altos, one tenor, two baritones, and one bass saxophone that is entirely unrepresented in the instrumentations of the known original compositions.\textsuperscript{304} Other eleven-member ensembles with multiple compositions include the configurations of two sopraninos, two sopranos, two altos, two tenors, two baritones, and one bass; one soprano, three altos, three tenors, three baritones, and one bass; and two sopranos, three altos, three tenors, two baritones, and one bass, all with two original pieces each.\textsuperscript{305}

\textsuperscript{300} Rascher (197x).
\textsuperscript{301} Ronkin, 559-570.
\textsuperscript{302} Bilger (Holiday Homecoming), 4-5.
\textsuperscript{303} Wozniak, 62.
\textsuperscript{304} Rascher (197x).
\textsuperscript{305} Ronkin, 559-570.
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Table 3.7: Instrumentation of 11-member groups

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Table 3.8: Instrumentation of 12-member groups
The most popular saxophone ensemble size for composers is, quite clearly, the twelve-saxophonist set-up, with one hundred and eighty-eight original works, of which one hundred and sixty-four have known instrumentation. The most popular configuration, by far, is that of sopranino, two sopranos, three altos, three tenors, two baritones, and one bass saxophone, with one hundred and thirty-five original works, the most of any of the reviewed saxophone ensemble instrumentations. This is the make-up of the International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux, founded by Jean-Marie Londeix, as well as all of the ensembles that have followed Londeix’s model, including the Paris Conservatory’s group. All of the other instrumentations of twelve-member groups are dwarfed by this configuration, but one other significant make-up is represented in that of two sopranos, four altos, three tenors, two baritones, and one bass, with three original works. This is the maximal instrumentation of the University of Southern Mississippi Sax-Chamber Orchestra.

Other twelve-member ensembles with more than one original work are sparse. Eight works have been written for the two soprano, four alto, two tenor, two baritone, and two bass configuration. The triple quartet of three sopranos, three altos, three tenors, and three baritones has seven original pieces. Finally, an ensemble of three sopranos, three altos, three tenors, two baritones, and one bass has two works.

306 Ronkin, 559-570.
307 Umble, 192.
308 Cottrell, 284.
309 Ronkin, 559-570.
310 Gwozdz (America Remembers), 10.
311 Ronkin, 559-570.
Thirteen-member ensembles are quite rare, with only eight original compositions in existence, only six of which have a known make-up. Furthermore, there are six separate instrumentations. Fourteen-strong ensembles are a bit more popular, with thirteen works, ten of whose configurations are known, with six different discernible instrumentations. The most common of these is that of sopranino, three sopranos, four altos, three tenors, two baritones, and bass, with three original works. The configurations of one sopranino, two sopranos, four altos, four tenors, two baritones, and bass; and that of two sopranos, five altos, three tenors, three baritones, and bass have two pieces each.\(^{312}\)

The fifteen-member ensemble is quite similar in terms of popularity. There are twelve original compositions, with ten whose instrumentation can be determined, spread across eight instrumentations. However, one of these is quite historically significant, with the grouping of sopranino, two sopranos, seven altos, three tenors, baritone, and bass being the instrumentation utilized by Gustav Bumcke in his own original works for the large saxophone ensemble.\(^{313}\) However, Bumcke’s own compositions are the only ones known with this configuration. The only other fifteen-member ensemble configuration with more than one work written for it is the grouping of two sopranos, six altos, four tenors, two baritones, and bass saxophone, with two works.\(^{314}\)

All other sizes of saxophone ensemble appear to be quite unpopular with composers. Seven works have been written for sixteen-member groups, with

\(^{312}\) Ronkin, 559-570.  
\(^{313}\) Viola, 11-12.  
\(^{314}\) Ronkin, 559-570.
### Table 3.9: Instrumentation of 14-member groups

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### Table 3.10: Instrumentation of 15-member groups

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</table>
only three whose instrumentation can be determined. All of these are scored for a quadruple quartet of sopranos, altos, tenors, and baritones. Only one known seventeen-member ensemble exists, with a quixotic instrumentation of soprano, alto, tenor and baritone played by one player, two players doubling on both soprano and alto, one playing both tenor and baritone, and the rest performing on sopranino, two sopranos, five altos, three tenors, baritone, and bass.315

Only one original work exists for an eighteen-member ensemble, and its instrumentation is unknown. This is quite odd, as two prominent saxophone ensembles are, or have been, groups of this size. The original instrumentation of the Saxophone Sinfonia consisted of a possible maximum of two sopranos, eight altos, four tenors, two baritones, and two basses.316 Yet another group, the Mi-bemol Saxophone Ensemble, utilizes a very similar configuration of two sopranos, eight altos, four tenors, three baritones, and one bass.317 Of course, the latter group makes no excuses that its repertoire is made up of transcriptions, virtually exclusively.318

Original works for twenty-member ensembles are again, quite rare. Four works exist, with all of these being of known instrumentation. There are three separate groupings, with the configuration of five sopranos, six altos, five tenors, and four baritones having two original works.319 The South German Saxophone Orchestra has a maximum instrumentation of twenty saxophonists, with two

315 Ronkin, 559-570.
316 Bilger (Saxophone Sinfonia).
317 Wagoner, 53.
318 Cohen, 18.
319 Ronkin, 559-570.
sopranos, eight altos, five tenors, three baritones, and two basses.\textsuperscript{320} Only one original piece has been written for this particular make-up.\textsuperscript{321}

No original works exist for a twenty-two-member saxophone group, despite the fact that a later Rascher-led ensemble consisted of that many performers, including two sopranos, eleven altos, three tenors, two baritones, three basses, and one contrabass saxophone.\textsuperscript{322} One work exists for a twenty-four-strong ensemble, whose instrumentation is unknown. One piece also exists for a thirty-five member group, with the make-up of four sopranos, eighteen altos, eight tenors, four baritones, and one bass. Further, three works exist for a sixty-member group, one for a seventy-nine member ensemble, and one for a one hundred piece saxophone band, but none of these have a discernible instrumentation.\textsuperscript{323}

One stumbling block to those who form saxophone ensembles, before even deciding upon the size of the ensemble, has been the choice of whether or not the sopranino, bass, and contrabass saxophones are necessary. In an effort to answer this question, all of the original works of known instrumentation were reviewed to determine how often each of these voices are utilized. In all, sopraninos are used in two hundred and seven of the six hundred and thirty-eight works. The bass is used in three hundred and twenty-one works. Finally, the contrabass is used in only fourteen scores.\textsuperscript{324}

\textsuperscript{320} Bangs-Urban, 11.
\textsuperscript{321} Ronkin, 559-570.
\textsuperscript{322} Rascher (1975).
\textsuperscript{323} Ronkin, 559-570.
\textsuperscript{324} Ibid.
To break it down even further, nine works require the use of just sopranino, in addition to the use of the soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone. Likewise, one hundred and twenty-four works use the bass, in addition to the four most common saxophones. A range of sopranino, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass is utilized in one hundred and eighty-four original compositions. Only thirteen require the previous instrumentation, plus a contrabass.\textsuperscript{325}

No works exist that add bass and contrabass alone to soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone, and only one is known to use sopranino and contrabass, without the presence of a bass. None use contrabass alone with soprano, alto, tenor and baritone. One quixotic work utilizes a sole C-melody saxophone in tandem with the four primary saxophones. This leaves three hundred and six original works out of the six hundred and thirty-eight that utilize only the soprano, alto, tenor and baritone voices: nearly half of the total number.\textsuperscript{326}

It could definitely be argued that a satisfactory saxophone ensemble could be formed with some combination of just soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone. Adding just a bass to this would result in a wealth of available literature, with four hundred and thirty works being available with various combinations of soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass. Adding just a sopranino to the SATB instrumentation would only yield three hundred and fifteen possibly playable works. However, various combinations of sopranino, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass saxophones results in the ability to perform nearly all of the

\textsuperscript{325} Ronkin, 559-570. \\
\textsuperscript{326} Ibid.
original literature of discernible instrumentation for saxophone ensembles: six hundred and twenty-three works out of a possible six hundred and thirty-eight.\textsuperscript{327}

The contrabass saxophone, extremely rare and costly, does have a place in the saxophone ensemble. Sigurd Rascher, himself, believed it to be a highly desirable component of a group.\textsuperscript{328} However, according to the data, only fourteen pieces in the original repertoire for the saxophone ensemble require its use.\textsuperscript{329} Therefore, it can certainly be done without, along with the ancient C melody saxophone, which is required for only one original composition.\textsuperscript{330}

What then, would an ideal saxophone ensemble instrumentation look like? There are at least one hundred and forty-eight possible combinations that have previously been used by composers.\textsuperscript{331} However, the majority of these have but one or two original pieces written for them. In fact, only eleven different configurations have ten or more original works.\textsuperscript{332}

While all of these have been mentioned previously in this chapter, it is perhaps enlightening to place them in context together. The twelve member Londeix-inspired instrumentation of sopranino, two sopranos, three altos, three tenors, two baritones, and bass saxophone is, again, the most popular, with one hundred and thirty-five works. Next comes the soprano, two alto, tenor, and baritone quintet with sixty-eight, and the two soprano, two alto, two tenor, and two bass octet with forty-seven. The sextet make-up of soprano, two altos, two

\textsuperscript{327} Ronkin, 559-570.
\textsuperscript{328} The Legendary Saxophonists Collection 39: Sigurd Rascher Recital, Masterclass and Concert Films 1, DVD, compiled by Andrew Jackson (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Andrew Jackson, 2008).
\textsuperscript{329} Ronkin, 559-570.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{331} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid.
tenors, and baritone yields thirty-one pieces, while the quintet of two altos, two
tenors, and baritone has twenty-one original works.\textsuperscript{333}

Three different configurations have fifteen original works written for them.
Namely, these are the soprano, two alto, two tenor, baritone, and bass septet;
the quintet of soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass; and the soprano, alto, two
tenor, and baritone quintet. Both the sopranino, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone,
bass, and contrabass septet and the sopranino, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone,
and bass sextet have eleven works. Finally, ten works are available for the
sextet of soprano, three altos, tenor, and baritone.\textsuperscript{334}

These eleven groupings represent three hundred and seventy-nine of the
original works for saxophone ensembles: More than half of the available
literature.\textsuperscript{335} Perhaps it would be wise for those wishing to form their own
ensembles to conform their instrumentation to one of the more frequently utilized
types of ensembles. Then again, perhaps a group should be formed that would
enable the director to draw different instrumentations from a larger whole, so that
the widest number of pieces would become available for performance.

Perhaps the most flexible instrumentation would be a fourteen-member
ensemble of sopranino, three sopranos, four altos, three tenors, two baritones,
and one bass. With the myriad possible combinations of the saxophones in this
maximum instrumentation, five hundred and forty-seven original saxophone
ensemble compositions would be available for performance.\textsuperscript{336} For those with a

\textsuperscript{333} Ronkin, 559-570.
\textsuperscript{334} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{335} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{336} Ibid.
bass saxophone and no sopranino, the fourteen-member configuration of two sopranos, five altos, three tenors, three baritones, and one bass may be ideal. Many sizes and types of ensembles can be formed from this selection of instruments, making three hundred and seventy-three compositions readily playable.337

For those with neither sopranino nor bass saxophones at their disposal, the saxophone ensemble is still a very viable possibility. The ideal maximum instrumentation of a two soprano, two alto, two tenor, and two baritone octet would make available two hundred and twelve works.338 This is certainly more than enough to keep any group occupied for a great deal of time. Through these three combinations, the greatest amount of literature possible could be played with very manageable forces.

Another interesting set of data that should be examined is the concentration of original saxophone ensembles composed throughout the decades. The *Londeix Guide* gives composition dates for six hundred and fifty-nine works.339 Of these, approximately ten were composed during the time of Sax, beginning in the 1840s and running through the 1880s. According to the available information, no original works for the genre were composed from the 1890s through the 1910s.340

The “saxophone craze” appears to have reignited a small amount of interest in composing original works, as six were written in the 1920s, seven in

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Ronkin, 559-570.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.
the 1930s, and a mere four in the 1940s. Five works were created in the 1950s. Nine saxophone ensembles were composed in the 1960s.\footnote{Ronkin, 559-570.}

A precipitous increase in the number of original ensembles occurred in the 1970s, with forty-three works written in that decade. The upward trend continues to this day. One hundred and sixty-four pieces were written in the 1980s. The 1990s yielded one hundred and ninety-five works, and the first decade of the 21st century yielded two hundred compositions.\footnote{Ibid.}

This great increase in the number of original works may have something to do with the many educational and professional ensembles formed in the last five decades. These include the Fredonia Saxophone Ensemble, formed in 1969;\footnote{Laurence Wyman, email to author.} the Rascher Saxophone Ensemble, which began in 1973;\footnote{Rascher (197x).} and Jean-Marie Londeix’s International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux, founded in 1977.\footnote{Ingham, 72.} The expansion of the repertoire continued, as groups such as David Bilger’s Saxophone Sinfonia was formed in 1982,\footnote{Bilger (Saxophone Sinfonia).} and the University of Southern Mississippi’s Sax-Chamber Orchestra began operating in 1984,\footnote{Lawrence Gwozdz, email to author.} followed by the genesis of many other ensembles promoting new literature for larger groups of saxophones throughout the world.

As the data suggests, the presence of standing ensembles that actively pursue new literature has greatly expanded the scope of the repertoire. This activity must continue into the future, unless the saxophone ensemble is to
disappear again, as it has in the past. To enable the performance of the widest variety of music, groups should be formed with instrumentations that allow for this. In addition, to ensure a widening body of literature that can be performed by the largest number of ensembles, composers should be pointed towards a "standardized" instrumentation (or instrumentations) for the large saxophone ensemble.
Figure 3.1: Number of Original Ensembles Composed By Time Period
CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSION

The saxophone ensemble has a long and proud history, from the very beginnings of the instrument in the 1840s, through Sax's pedagogy at the Paris Conservatory. Following Sax's death, the genre lay dormant for some time, until the association of the saxophone with "syncopated" musics of the early-twentieth century pushed the saxophone ensemble back into prominence. Groups such as the Musical Spillers, the Six Brown Brothers, John Philip Sousa's "Saxophone Corps," and countless other groups, both amateur and professional, all created a new tradition for the genre. Despite the worldwide depression that would cause many of these groups to cease operations in the late 1920s and early 1930s, a foundation was laid for the future.

Many groups were formed in educational contexts in the early-twentieth-century. From the saxophone sextets that competed in the National Solo and Ensemble contests to the saxophone bands of popular teachers, all the way to Larry Teal's student ensembles, the genre retained its position as an important teaching tool well into the mid-twentieth century. With Sigurd Rascher's advocacy of such groups (and the continued support of them provided by his students), the genre was repopularized on a much larger scale, beginning in the 1960s, both as a pedagogical and professional activity. Jean-Marie Londeix provided the final impetus for the great resurgence of saxophone ensemble
activity throughout the world in recent years, creating a rich musical genre with a large body of original literature, with ensembles found throughout the world. Today the saxophone ensemble is thriving; and through care, it will continue to be a vital force in the development of the instrument for decades to come.

Two important subjects deserve more study following this document. The first is the pioneering figure of Gustav Bumcke, who is so important to this subject and many others regarding the saxophone. The historical record (in English, at least) dealing with this important saxophonist is quite slim, and a further look at him by some adventurous saxophonic scholar could prove to be immensely valuable. Second, a more-easily-researchable database of saxophone ensembles (categorizable by composer, instrumentation, etc.) should be developed. The saxophone literature guides that are currently available are not very useful to those wishing to find saxophone ensembles of specific size and make-up.

While not entirely necessary, the standardization of one or more instrumentations for the saxophone ensemble may be desirable. Currently, so many divergent traditions of configuration exist as to be disorienting and confusing to those wishing to form new groups. Therefore, some recommendations in this regard are offered.

The twelve member Londeix-inspired instrumentation of sopranino, two sopranos, three altos, three tenors, two baritones, and bass saxophone could be considered to be the most “standard” of ensemble configurations at present, and its use can certainly not be gainsaid in terms of the quantity of literature available,
as evidenced in chapter three. However, perhaps an even more logical base-instrumentation would be a fourteen-member ensemble of sopranino, three sopranos, four altos, three tenors, two baritones, and one bass. It should be understood that this ensemble should not necessarily be used as one unit, but rather as a force from which to draw saxophonists for ensembles of many different sizes and make-ups. For those wishing to form an ensemble who have access to a bass saxophone but no sopranino, the fourteen-member configuration of two sopranos, five altos, three tenors, three baritones, and one bass may be ideal, for the same reasons as the previous suggestion. Finally, for those with neither bass nor sopranino saxophones, a base-instrumentation of a two soprano, two alto, two tenor, and two baritone octet allows for the performance of a wide array of original ensemble literature.

One further word in the way of recommendations is necessary in regard to original literature. While transcriptions are wonderful sources of repertoire that would otherwise be inaccessible to saxophonists, new and existing original literature for the saxophone ensemble must be performed. Many fine pieces are available, as has been discussed, and the saxophone ensemble could use even more literature from the best composers of today.

Original works should be performed and new music should be commissioned to ensure that the saxophone ensemble has a place of prominence in the musical world, just as the quartet is now enjoying with the surge in quality literature for that ensemble in the last several years. Otherwise, the large ensemble runs the risk of being a novelty, as it has been too often in
the past. The future of the saxophone ensemble will be bright, if those who lead and perform in such groups look to the historical record for both advice and warning.
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