California State University, Northridge

FRENCH AND AMERICAN SAXOPHONE MUSIC: TEACHERS, DISCIPLES, AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARIS

A Thesis Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Music in Music,

in Performance

By

Michael Fandetti

May 2015
The thesis of Michael Fandetti is approved:

_______________________________________  __________
Dr. Alexandra Monchick  Date

_______________________________________  __________
Dr. Lawrence Stoffel  Date

_______________________________________  __________
Professor Jerry Luedders, Chair  Date

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Abstract

The Connection Between Four Composers in Paris

By

Michael Fandetti

Master of Music in Music Performance

Paris is where the saxophone became recognized as a serious music instrument, and the city had a rich lineage of composers and virtuosic musicians. Most laypeople have heard of the Viennese composers Schubert, Beethoven, and even Schoenberg, but the composers discussed in this paper may be obscure even to many knowledgeable scholars. Beginning with Rameau, famous names from Paris include Debussy, Berlioz, Bizet, Ravel, and Messiaen. Berlioz helped promote the saxophone’s recognition as a versatile concert band instrument, and after him, many composers did as well, despite the fact that they were not saxophonists themselves. This also applies to the four composers who will comprise this thesis paper: Pierre-Max Dubois, Jean Rivier, Leslie Bassett and William Albright. They clearly understood the range and the capabilities of the saxophone. Though lesser known, they share the same legacy as the earlier French composers listed above. Although Pierre-Max Dubois studied under Milhaud and Rivier, it is noted from many sources that he was not well known. Those who knew him, however, respected him and his musical talent. His obscurity may be due to his small catalog of works. Despite
this, he won many prizes, one of which was the 1953 Prix de Rome composition prize. Jean Rivier held a position at the Paris Conservatory as head professor of composition with Darius Milhaud. Leslie Bassett studied under Messiaen (prior to Albright) and before that, Honegger was his professor. Later, Bassett taught Albright composition. Like Bassett, Albright earned many awards, prizes and even received a Fulbright Fellowship to Paris to work and compose. William Albright studied under Olivier Messiaen at the Conservatory and his Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano is a standard piece in graduate saxophone repertoire. All four of these composers’ works are played quite frequently in the world of saxophone repertoire today.
On June 28, 1846, after two failed attempts inventing a bass clarinet that overblew at the octave (instead of at the twelfth), Adolphe Sax successfully invented the saxophone in Paris. French composer Hector Berlioz writes two articles in the Paris magazine *Journal des Debats* about Sax’s new invention. In the first, which was printed in 1842, he praises Adolphe Sax as “a calculator, acoustician, and when required, a smelter, a turner and, if need be, at the same time an embosser. He can think and act. He invents, and he accomplishes.”¹ Berlioz, in the same article, describes the saxophone as an “Ophicleide with a beak” because he was referring to the wood mouthpiece and reed in lieu of a cup mouthpiece. The ophicleide’s conical body looks very similar to a saxophone, and could have, next to Adolphe’s improved metal and wood bass clarinets, been a precursor. The problem with the ophicleide was its undesirable sound. Hector Berlioz writes, “I find it very superior to the lower tones of the ophicleide, in accuracy as well as in solidity of the sound.” In the second article, he refers to the saxophone by its real name, and by this time Sax had created a family of them from contrabass to sopranino. Berlioz was a supporter of Sax and the saxophone for its uniqueness and versatility. In February 1844, he showed his appreciation for the instrument by featuring it in his choral work *Chant Sacre*.

In 1858, the Paris Conservatory named Adolphe Sax the first saxophone professor, a position he maintained until 1870. Jean-Baptiste Singelee, another good friend of Adolphe Sax’s, wrote over thirty *Solos de Concours* for saxophone, and Sax’s students learned and performed them. This was not his only contribution in treating the saxophone as a serious classical instrument; his *Premier Quatuor* may have been the first

saxophone quartet ever composed, consisting of the four principal saxophones: soprano, alto, tenor and baritone.

In the early twentieth century, as the saxophone gained recognition, more composers commissioned works featuring an alto saxophone accompanied by an orchestra, concert band, or piano. Claude Debussy composed “Rhapsodie” for saxophone and orchestra in 1901, and shortly afterwards, Vincent d’Indy wrote Choral Varie in 1903. During the time that Les Six, a group of French composers who were radically against the traditional ways of Wagner and Strauss’ German romanticism, Debussy’s chromaticism and heavy orchestration, and were also advocates of a fresh and more artistic perspective on music, was active, Arthur Honegger wrote Concerto da Camera for saxophone and Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) composed two pieces for the saxophone: La Creation Du Monde (1923) and Scaramouche.² The former is a ballet for a small orchestra and solo alto saxophone, and the latter is still a widely popular piece of repertoire today for saxophone and piano.

While Milhaud was still a student, Arthur Honegger befriended him and Germaine Tallieferre in 1911 when Honegger first began his studies at the Paris Conservatory. In 1947, Milhaud became one of the head professors of the composition department at the Paris Conservatory. A student of his, Pierre-Max Dubois, discussed with his teacher the idea of joining forces with Arthur Honegger, Francis Poulenc, Georges Auric, Louis Durey, and Germaine Tallieferre. The six composers formed a group together at Milhaud’s house, and the name Les Six was officially referred by Henri Collet in his article “The Russian Five, the French Six, and M. Erik Satie” (Comoedia, 2

January 1920). Among them was also Jean Cocteau, a poet whose writing had a significant impact on the compositions from all six of the members.

Dubois also composed a light and playful piece titled *Divertissement*, which contains evidence of how much he admired Milhaud as a mentor. This piece, which pays homage to Milhaud, contains many passages similar to those in Milhaud’s works, particularly in his *Scaramouche*. The saxophone’s chromatic sixteenth-note runs in the first movement of *Divertissement, Allegro Vivo*, are almost identical with the saxophone’s chromatic sixteenth-note lines in the first movement of *Scaramouche: Vif*. The second movements of both pieces have similar piano parts and overall rhythms for both instruments, and the third (final) movements of each piece are both playful and fun.

Darius Milhaud shared his position of head professor of composition at the Paris Conservatory with Jean Rivier, who was also most likely acquainted with Pierre-Max Dubois. Before Rivier became a composition professor at Paris, and even before he started studying music, he voluntarily took part in World War I as a French soldier. His piece *Concerto for Alto Saxophone, Trumpet and Orchestra*, is an example of music that reflects memories of being on the battlefield.

American composers, Leslie Bassett and William Albright, both having been professors at the University of Michigan, are also both related to French *Les Six* member Arthur Honegger. Honegger taught Leslie Bassett, composer of *Music for Saxophone and Piano*, and Bassett became William Albright’s (composer of *Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano*) professor at the University of Michigan.4 Both Bassett and Albright won the

3 Ibid.

Fulbright Fellowship at separate times to study with Honegger. Leslie Bassett also won the Prix De Rome in 1961.

There is a connection between Albright, Bassett, Rivier, and Dubois through their studies and relationships with Milhaud and Honegger, both of whom were members of Les Six.
Like Leslie Bassett, Pierre-Max Dubois also placed first in the *Grand Prix de Rome*. Dubois earned the prize with his composition *Le Rire De Gargantua* for soprano, tenor, bass and orchestra at the age of twenty-five. His recognition began ten years earlier when he won a prize for a piano performance at the age of fifteen, but his true passion was in musical composition, one which Darius Milhaud fostered that passion when Dubois studied music at the Paris Conservatory. At age nineteen, his *Suite Humouristique* was broadcast on French Radio. Like Milhaud, Pierre-Max Dubois’ musical creativity stayed true to his personal internal vision of composition and although composers including Leslie Bassett and William Albright were experimenting with electronic instruments during this time, Dubois did not.

Winning the *Grand Prix de Rome* earned Dubois a scholarship allowing him to stay in Rome for three years, which was provided by the city. To put the magnitude of this accomplishment into perspective, Maurice Ravel attempted to win the *agrée* (first prize) a total of five times and failed, not even gaining any recognition. The last attempt in 1905 led to a complete reorganization of the administration at the Paris Conservatory.

Ravel’s career as a Paris Conservatory student can be summarized as progressing from one failure to the next, being expelled from the conservatory twice. He first began at age fourteen, and was recognized upon entry for his giftedness as a piano player. His fifth attempt at winning the *Grand Prix De Rome* caused a scandal that music critics Jean Marnold and Pierre Lalo named *L’affaire Ravel* (the Ravel Affair). As a result Charles

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Lenepveu, head of composition at the Paris Conservatory, only admitted six contestants that happened to be his own students to the final round. Though he claimed it was a coincidence, no one believed him. Theodore Dubois, a faculty member who did not care for Ravel or his compositions, decided to retire, and Gabriel Faure was hired to replace him.

This was fortunate for Ravel because Fauré had been his teacher and biggest supporter, but the turmoil from the Ravel Affair still remained present. Fauré was not part of the same inner circle that Theodore Dubois, Lenepveu and Massenet were in, and his teaching was different, because of his independence apart from “academic constraints.”

One example of Faure admiring and having faith in his pupil Maurice Ravel is when Faure showed up to his class forty-five minutes late, which happened often without any reason, and only asked Ravel to play his composition *Jeux d’eau* on the piano. After the last note, Fauré smiled and dismissed the class. Although the classes were so short and only consisted of Ravel performing one piece for everyone, Georges Enesco stated, “Those were the days when we really made some progress.”

Apart from Ravel and Enesco, Faure’s class had other brilliant composers including Charles Koechlin, Roger-Ducasse, and Florent Schmitt. Koechlin composed many etudes for saxophone and Florent Schmitt created solo works and chamber pieces for saxophone.

Not unlike Pierre-Max Dubois, another independent and strong-minded French composer of this period, Jean Rivier, did not allow the times, which were relentlessly forcing composers to conform to the new ways, to influence him, and thus his music

7 Ibid, 265.
8 Ibid, 267.
remained very pure and personal. He was a soldier in the French army during World War I, sustaining damage to his lungs from mustard gas. It was not until after the war that Rivier began studying music. At the age of twenty-two, Rivier started attending the Paris Conservatory as a disciple of Caussade. He was fond of many musical genres, combining French Classicism and Impressionism, which had been fully developed in the late nineteenth century, and was appreciative of the avant-garde composers who were participating in modern music societies in Paris.

Jean Rivier’s personality can be summarized as enthusiastic with a good sense of humor and sensitive, as well as professional, serious about his works. His musical humor can be heard in his rhythms, which appear odd at times. His concerto for saxophone, trumpet and orchestra (or piano) shows both the playful side and the serious side of Jean Rivier.

Before Messiaen, Honegger taught Leslie Bassett. Bassett had two beliefs, according to Leslie B. Kelley: “Music is like a house of cards. It is the accumulation of taste and culture. Composers always shape the music of their time.” This is especially true for Bassett’s musical accomplishments in the 1960s because of his experimenting with electronic music and tape. The second belief is:

The foundation of music is beautiful sound. The concept of what is beautiful changes from one generation to the next as the language of music changes. Music is an expression of emotions; its syntax depends upon an initial kernel which gradually unfolds and grows.

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10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.
After studying as a graduate student with Ross Lee Finney and Homer Keller in Michigan, Bassett earned a Fulbright Fellowship to study with Honegger and Nadia Boulanger in her private studio. Bassett is the only composer out of the four in the thesis that is still alive today, and just like Dubois, he won the *Prix de Rome* in 1974. However, it is unlikely that they became acquainted with Dubois or Rivier, since Bassett did not attend the Paris Conservatory.

Bassett has won many awards, prizes and fellowships from the 1960s through the 1990s and still made many appearances at conventions, including the Institute for American Music for the International Saxophone in Montreal in 2000. Even though Bassett did not play the saxophone, he wrote a few chamber and solo pieces accompanied by piano or orchestra that either included or featured the alto saxophone.

Leslie Bassett taught William Albright. Bassett, however, still continues to outlive Albright by quite a bit as Albright passed away at fifty-three years of age due to health problems from alcohol. Regardless, after studying with Ross Lee Finney, Marilyn Mason and Olivier Messiaen, William Albright’s accomplishments in such a short amount of time are impressive. His instruments of choice were piano and organ, which he excelled at under the instruction of Mason.

Albright was best known for his ragtime music for organ and stride piano, but according to Leslie Bassett’s article “In Praise Of William Albright,” this is far from a complete report of all of Albright’s accomplishments as one of America’s foremost composers. William Albright, or Bill (as he was referred to by Bassett), was always an innovative thinker when it came to studying and composing music, new and old.13 Leslie Bassett states that he always remained a young composer for as long as he knew him.

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even up until his early passing, and mentions that once a composer turns sixty, he or she is no longer considered young.\textsuperscript{14} Bassett comes to this conclusion by observing Aaron Copland’s acquisition of “Dean of the American Composers”, and compares William Albright to the legendary composers Mozart, Schubert, Chopin and Gershwin, all of whom died at even earlier ages.\textsuperscript{15}

Like Bassett, Albright earned a Fulbright Fellowship to Paris, which allowed Albright to study with Messiaen at the Paris Conservatory. Milhaud, as mentioned earlier was a great influence to Pierre-Max Dubois, and also one of the two professors of composition next to Jean Rivier.

Though Albright is best known for his keyboard compositions and performances, he wrote for many different wind instruments, and this piece for saxophone pays tribute to a composer who influenced him greatly. As seen in the full score of the sonata (regarding the second movement):

This piece is dedicated to the memory of the composer George Cacioppo who died unexpectedly on April, 1984. Co-founder of the ONCE Group and mentor to three generations of composers, Cacioppo and his music and personality rest at the foundation of my thinking. He would very much appreciate the use of the traditional title ‘La Follia (the madness)’ in my reincarnation as ‘La Follia Nuova’.\textsuperscript{16}

ONCE was a group founded in Ann Arbor, Michigan, whose goal was to create an environment for artists to share cutting-edge ideas regarding music, visual art, film and architecture. Six music composers founded the group: Gordon Mumma, Robert Ashley, Roger Reynolds, Bruce Wise, Donald Scavarda and George Cacioppo. They also created 

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, 28.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

the ONCE festivals so artists could showcase their pieces. Gordon Mumma praised ONCE for helping many artists develop in a non-damaging environment, and also providing activities that allowed access to the broader public. Robert Ashley, like Mumma, started as a jazz pianist, who both became interested in experimenting with avant-garde composing. After the joining of these six composers, it was thanks to the Dramatic Arts Council, a community who promoted theater activity in Ann Arbor, that the idea of ONCE reached enough people for it to become a major project. A poet named Bernard Keith Waldrop, also endorsed ONCE, after “taking part in local avant-garde theater and poetry in Ann Arbor for quite some time.”

The result of this incredible group providing an environment for artists to create freely without judgment was positive in the world of modern art, and many experimental and traditional works came to fruition as a result. Though more traditionalist audience members walked out frequently on performances, and not every spectator was tolerant of these new ideas, avant-garde music had never gotten such incredible exposure since the ONCE festivals. Cacioppo stated, “Not even in New York do you have such audiences. We had janitors, house-wives, anybody… That was the spiritual impetus of the ONCE people, interaction with the community-at-large.” The idea of ONCE can be seen as a large-scale version of *Les Six*, where a group of composers got together and socialized, but created independently. The main difference is that unlike *Les Six*, whose mentor was

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16 Ibid.

17 Ibid, 370.
Erik Satie, there was no resident guru for the artists in ONCE. The original six composers had different influences. Each of them studied under different composition professors.

_The Michigan Daily_ critic David Andrew claimed it was anti-musical sound production, but more and more listeners came back every year. Even though the ONCE Festival was seen by many as organized noise, many curious listeners were intrigued and as the years passed, more of the appreciative audience began attending the annual festival. The ONCE festivals helped many composers became internationally successful as it provided a grounds for showcasing brand new compositions, and also an audience that would receive the works extraordinarily well.\(^\text{20}\)

Albright’s Sonata for Saxophone and Piano was composed the same year Cacioppo passed, 1984, so it is very likely that the death of one of his fondest mentors inspired William Albright to write this piece. George Cacioppo was to William Albright who Darius Milhaud was to Pierre-Max Dubois, who Arthur Honegger was to Leslie Bassett, and finally, who Georges Caussade was to Jean Rivier. Bassett, Albright, Rivier and Dubois all had mentors who influenced them and their composing.

\[\text{13 Ibid, 372.}\]
Chapter 3: Analysis Of The Pieces

The first half of the recital consists of saxophone music written by French composers. Compared to the second half, with music by American composers, the first half features more traditional music that is not as impressionistic. Pierre-Max Dubois’ *Divertissement* is a brief and playful piece of music, perfect for opening a program. It is mostly tonal (apart from a few chromatic Milhaud-esque runs) with a simple structure. Two out of the three movements are fast with sixteenth-note runs that provide a challenge for both the saxophonist and piano accompaniment. What is particularly worth mentioning about this piece is that the main challenge does not actually lie in learning the music and playing the correct rhythms and pitches accurately. Rather, it is maintaining effortless composure, playing light and making it sound absolutely pedestrian that makes this piece deceivingly troublesome. This is particularly the case in the first movement, because of areas with articulations that, although placed in spots that seem awkward, either make or break the piece when performed correctly.

The second movement of this piece may be the slowest out of the three, but it is not easy to perform. With the exception of three brief moments, the saxophone line remains below mezzo- piano, and just like most other slow pieces of music, the part is highly exposed. Every note must flow consistently into the next, and any slight change in voicing after taking a breath will definitely be noticed. The sound must be smooth regardless of the large interval leaps and pauses from taking a breath.
Finally, the last movement is titled “Scherzando” and though it is playful, light and humorous, it demands the performer to seek out the most important notes in the large sixteenth note runs and place most emphasis on them. The musicality in this movement truly comes from finding the melody, which becomes simple after hearing both parts together. The challenge in this movement is keeping the saxophone sound light and bouncy while not slowing down or getting heavy throughout the sixteenth and thirty-second note runs. The piano states the main theme in the beginning and after the fermata, the saxophone elaborates on it, with sixteenth notes in between the aforementioned line.

Following Dubois’ Divertissement is a piece written two years later, in 1955, by Jean Rivier, the second French composer in the first half of the recital. Rivier did not start attending music school for composing until after World War I. Concerto for Trumpet, Saxophone and Piano was composed a few decades after the war, but the piece has many characteristics that resemble what could be Rivier’s memories of the war.

“Alllegro-Burlesco,” the first movement, has a military march feel for most of it, and may carry the memory of Jean Rivier preparing for battle in a war where millions of soldiers were marching to their death. His participation as a soldier was voluntary, making him a hero. The strict staccato and accented sixteenth notes in the beginning saxophone part resemble the thump of a snare drum, or even the heart beating rapidly in every soldier’s chest. It is marked martellato appropriately, meaning hammer, pound, thump or throb. There are interjections of slow moments of waltz, which can best resemble flashbacks of being with a loved one or spending time with family.

The second movement, “Adagio” is in the somber key of C minor and much slower at eighth note equals seventy-six to eighty. The saxophone part has forte, molto
espressivo written at the entrance, and can easily portray a single soldier standing alone and bellowing on the battlefield among many fallen comrades around him. At rehearsal number twenty-seven (the trumpet entrance), is marked subito tragico e violente, which translates to suddenly tragic and violent. After the very large unison line played by the saxophone and trumpet, and also the soft interlude, the end consists of a canon between saxophone and trumpet. They overlap the opening saxophone statement at a slight delay, causing a beautiful echo effect.

Finally, the uplifting final movement, “Vivacissimo,” simulates memories of the endless joy of coming back home to see his family alive. Even though Rivier suffered damage to his lungs from mustard gas from World War I, he was alive and well enough to start his career in music and eventually become the co-professor of composition with Darius Milhaud. Similar to the first movement, which for the most part was serious with brief moments of joy, this movement has brief moments of sadness. These may be memories Rivier had of his fellow comrades getting killed on the battlefield, but his transitions back into happiness can be interpreted as his conscious decision to stop dwelling on the tragic past to focus on his own enormous musical future.

After the intermission, the second half features much more modern music. Extended saxophone technique is plentiful and there are two instances of extended piano technique as well. Tonality is, for the most part, ambiguous, and meter changes are frequent. Composed in 1968, Leslie Bassett’s Music for Alto Saxophone and Piano is a free chromatic piece that uses the saxophone in a very fluid manner, with a wide tonal and dynamic range. While it is chromatic, the liner notes claim that it is not twelve-tone or serially organized, but more like that of an abstract expressionist painting. The
improvisatory style performed by the saxophone resembles a jazz performance, and unusual performance techniques are used in the piano part as well. In the beginning of the first movement, the pianist is supposed to pluck the strings of the correct pitches inside the piano.

The first movement is fast but with little motion, subsiding twice from fortissimo high points. The second begins slow and gradually increases in tempo during the eighth-note quintuplets, until finally the saxophone has bursts of triple fortissimo altissimo pitches, the third being the highest in any piece of the recital. The third movement features mostly piano and is supposed to resemble a scherzo. There is no meter, just tick marks that help guide where the saxophone and piano have cues from each other. Finally, the last movement is the fastest and most intense movement with a recapitulation of the first movement and a cadenza at the end. There is even one moment in the cadenza where Bassett writes for the saxophone player to play “Violent”.

One of Leslie Bassett’s most successful students composed the final piece of the recital, and it shares many similarities with Bassett’s *Music for Alto Saxophone and Piano*. Before discussing William Albright’s Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, it is important to mention that William Albright was an incredibly complicated man, and his music reflected it. While he was gifted, loving, humorous and overall brilliant, he was deeply hurt, and full of rage. Quoted by Evan Chambers in *In Memoriam William Albright*,

The old saw that the difference between the artist and the madman is that the madman is pushed over the edge, while the artist jumps, and it seems increasingly clear that Bill jumped with both feet.21

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The instructions directly from Albright to the performers are examples of him transitioning through different emotions, from *placido* and *sotto voce* to “Honk! Angry” and “Violent.” This, however, was evidence of him being a true artist, translating his pain, grief and suffering, and also his wonderfully warm personality, into music.

Albright’s sonata is divided into four movements. In the first, Two-part Invention, the saxophone and piano trade the same ideas back and forth with each other. The initial three pitches played on saxophone and piano are what this movement is based on: A, F-sharp and C. Chromatic sixteenth notes are placed in between half notes and whole notes, and eventually C-sharp, G and F are introduced as passing tones, but this movement remains close to the three initial pitches.

Between the strictly-controlled Bachian Invention areas are two improvisatory (*ad libitum*) cadenzas, and between the cadenzas are minimalistic (*placido, legato*) sections where the saxophone blends into the piano. The saxophone part drones on one pitch at a time (with *tenuto* eighth notes) and steadily descends one half step at a time.

Clearly, this movement does not sound like Bach or his inventions, even though Albright has titled it *Two-Part Invention*. While Bach’s two-part inventions begin with a subject, continued with a pairing of a countersubject moving into the dominant key, and returning back to tonic to conclude it, Albright’s “parts” are based on the instrument voices. When the voices are staggered but close to each other, we have a subject or countersubject, in unison can be called an episode, and wildly separate voices make up the free sections.

The second movement, “La Follia Nuova: a Lament for George Cacioppo” is tonal in F-sharp minor, unlike the first, being quasi-atonal. Also unlike the first
movement, this piece is very slow at quarter note equals forty-four beats per minute. A
delicate, unwavering tone is required of the saxophone part, with instructions “sotto
voce” (soft voice), sweetly singing, *delicato cantado, innocente*, and *lirico*” (delicate,
singly, innocent and lyrically) put in every few measures. At the end, after the grand
pause is more instructions: Turn away from audience… “a private performance” perhaps
looking into the piano.”22 (See Example 1)

Example 1:

Following “*La Follia Nuova*” is a *scherzo* titled “Will o’ the wisp”. If the second
movement represents, as Stolte proposes, the descent into the grave, then the *scherzo*
represents the ascent into a spirit. The texture of this movement is extremely thin: one
ghost-like breath of a gesture after another. For almost the entire movement, the
saxophone remains pianissimo, with less than a full measure of sudden forte. The only
measure in this piece where the piano is by itself is in its entrance. Otherwise the piano
and saxophone are always together, with complete silence surrounding both of them in
between phrases.

Finally, in “Recitative” and “Mad Dance,” the styles of these two pieces contrast quite a bit. The first is improvisatory, slow and entirely solo for the saxophone, while the second is much faster (the quarter note equals one hundred sixty), rhythmically strict, and features many sixteenth-note passages in the piano part. After the flurry of thirty-second notes comes a long held altissimo C-sharp. Shortly after, the “Mad Dance” starts right away with a quick and steady pulse of eighth notes. The body of this final movement features a walking bass line in the piano left hand, while the right pecks chords, similar to many Charlie Parker-esque bebop tunes. The saxophone spurts out sixteenth-note runs with lots of space in between, making it sound unpredictable to the audience. Nothing of this movement is a repeat from any of the previous ones. The quick passage at the end of the Recitative is quoted in this movement also up to the altissimo C-sharp again. Towards the end, the piano recapitulates the opening eighth-note phrase of the “Mad Dance” softly. The last three measures of the piece belong to the saxophone slap-tonguing four low Cs and then honking its lowest note, B-flat at triple-fortissimo held for two whole notes.
Conclusion

The composers’ connections with one another are evident in these compositions mainly because of who influenced each of them individually. Dubois, Rivier, Bassett and Albright were all disciples of professors that truly shaped who they were as artists, and the pieces of music discussed may arguably reflect the memories that each of these composers had (or have, in Bassett’s case) while learning from them. Although these composers may not be well-known names, they pay tribute to their teachers who were better known.

None of these composers were saxophonists, but they understood and respected the versatility and potential of the instrument. With a sound that can pierce through the thickness of an orchestra, and at the same time play with such a full body of sound even at the softest dynamic, Adolphe Sax’s greatest invention is truly a masterpiece that will receive even greater works as time goes on. Because of the short existence of the Saxophone (compared to other wind instruments), the amount of classical repertoire is not a big catalogue, but it is a versatile one full of different styles, and the possibilities for chamber group compositions are seemingly limitless.


Appendix: Recital Program

Divertissment (1953)…………………….Pierre Max Dubois
   I. Allegro vivo (1930-1995)
   II. Lent et doux
   III. Scherzando

Concerto for Saxophone and Trumpet (1955)…Jean Rivier
   Allegro – burlesco (1896-1987)
   Adagio
   Vivacissimo

   Everett Kelly, Trumpet

- INTERMISSION –

Music for Saxophone and Piano (1968)…….Leslie Bassett
   I d =112 (b.1923)
   II d = 42
   III d = 60
   IV d= 120

Sonata (1984)…………………………….William Albright
   Two-Part Invention (1944-1998)
   A Lament for George Cacioppo
   Scherzo “Will O’ the Wisp”
   Recitative and Dance