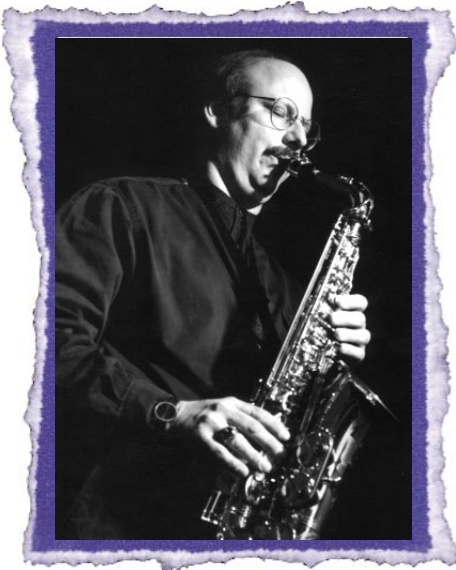




YAMAHA

Educator Series

WIND INSTRUMENTS



Ken Nigro

Ken Nigro teaches saxophone and sax ensemble at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT. He has performed with acts such as Doc Severinsen, Manhattan Transfer and the National Company of A Chorus Line. He has appeared at the White Nights Festival in Russia and the JVC Jazz Festival, and is featured on The New Millennium Jazz Ensemble CD with Harvey Swartz and Bill Mays. Ken is also active as a clinician and classical artist. He is a Yamaha Performing Artist and plays the YSS-875B (with a silver plated neck), a YAS-875B (with a gold plated neck), a YPC-62 piccolo, a YFL-561H flute (with an EC headjoint), and the WX-7 wind controller.

Becoming a Saxophonist

By Ken Nigro

After many years of teaching and presenting clinics for all ages and levels, I've discovered that a majority of saxophone students have many of the same needs. Some of these needs are often overlooked. This column deals mostly with the long process of getting ready for the first "gig" by addressing these needs. Listening is a big part of that and I've included a listening list towards that end. This list is intended as a general starting point to familiarize yourself with some of the pioneering and most influential jazz saxophonists. These recordings should be easy to acquire, with transcriptions published for most of them. In addition to using published transcriptions, it is very important to transcribe solos and tunes on your own (for intermediate & advanced players). Spend as much time listening as you can to develop a clear concept of the jazz language/style. Listening to classical recordings (sax & other instruments) is equally essential. Include in your listening classical players such as: Eugene Rousseau (alto), Donald Sinta (alto), James Houlik (tenor) and Steve Mauk (soprano). Listen for tone, articulation, dynamics, phrasing, etc.

Be sure to spend a few minutes daily playing long tones for tone development and air support. Begin with your lungs completely full of air and start playing a tone as softly as possible, starting with a note of moderate range that you can play with your best tone. Don't use vibrato. While holding the tone out as long as possible, do a gradual crescendo to full volume and then begin to fade to as soft as you can. If performed correctly, your lungs should be almost empty as you reach your softest level. Use all your air as the tone fades away (you should be able to play so softly that it is an effort to hear it!). While doing this, keep the sound and pitch very steady. Listen to yourself closely & use a tuner occasionally.

Needless to say, all major and minor scales and arpeggios should be learned thoroughly and for the entire range of the horn (intermediate players). Once these scales are learned, try playing them in "thirds" or "fourths" etc. For example, play 132435 and so forth with a major scale (C: CEDFEGFAGB etc.). Next, try 14253647 etc. In this way you will really learn your keys! Learn the blues scale (see example A) and other scales & patterns in all 12 keys (intermediate & advanced players). Practice playing through the keys in a descending chromatic order (C blues, B blues etc.). Next use the cycle of fifths (C blues, F blues, Bb, etc.). With scales, use a metronome at least half of the time.

EXAMPLE A



