Giulio Petitta

Soprano saxophone; from Baroque to Modern Music

Performing compositions belonging to a period of time that goes from Alessandro Marcello to Astor Piazzolla

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt, konstnärligt arbete

Det självständiga, konstnärliga arbetet finns dokumenterat på inspelning Masterkonsert söndag 2 juni 2013
Innehållsförteckning

Det självständiga, konstnärliga arbetet finns ..............................................................1
dokumenterat på inspelning Masterkonsert söndag 2 juni 2013 ..................................1

Introduction ..............................................................................................................2

Why? .........................................................................................................................3

Technique and Musical thought, how do I combine them? ..............................5

Repertoir ................................................................................................................7

About the adaptation of the compositions .................................................12

   The choice of the articulation: .................................................................12
   About the extension of the range of the instrument: .............................14
   Change of octave and change of notes: ......................................................16

Conclusion ............................................................................................................19

A final personal consideration .................................................................21

References ...........................................................................................................22
Introduction

I approached the music when I was fourteen years old thanks to the marching band of my home village. In Italy this kind of musical ensembles are very popular and almost all villages have one.

I was the tallest in the group of guys that was supposed to be the section of saxophones, and so I was kind of advised to play the tenor instead of the alto saxophone because of the bigger size of the instrument. This is how my music adventure began!

Quite by chance, I started to seriously study classical saxophone when I was eighteen years old thanks to the initiative of my sister who applied for me at the Conservatory of Music in L’Aquila, the main town of my region. For a couple of years I have carried out simultaneously my music studies at the Conservatory and my studies of architecture at the University and then I decided, not without difficulties, to focus only on the music because fascinated by its social function, its power of aggregation of people.

In L’Aquila I have been lucky to be part of a good group of friends. We shared the time spent practicing, the moments of conviviality and debate about concerts or movies and we felt like part of a group of artists. We founded an association called AVA, acronym for Associazione Vite Allargate (Enlarged Lifes Association, with the double meaning of the word Vite which in Italian also means waistlines): in a world where everyone is trying to lengthen the life we enlarge it of experiences! This was our catch-phrase.

In Italy I completed all of my classical saxophone studies, Bachelor and Master degrees. Afterwards, driven by my curiosity, my need to broaden the horizons and my interest in the Scandinavian countries, I tried to find an opportunity to study abroad and I came to Sweden.

To be curious? That’s one of the most important things for a musician and in life in general.

Since I was studying in Italy I felt attracted by repertoire from other instruments and I started to look for pieces appropriate, meaningful and enjoyable to be practiced and performed with saxophone.

The first piece I performed was the Preludio of the cello suite No. 1 in G major by J.S. Bach.

At the same time, considering that the saxophone is a young instrument compared with the other orchestra instruments (it was invented by Adolphe Sax just in the 1846) and in an attempt to complete the texts already in use, I also started to look for a good book of instrumental technique for a music instrument with longer tradition, suitable and useful to improve my technical skills.

After a few attempts, influenced also by my flute playing friends, I realised that the Taffanel/Gaubert Flute method could be a good start to test new ways of practicing technique.

When I moved to Sweden and started to study for Christer Johnsson, the circle was closed. I found a very good teacher always with an eye to understanding what is really important in music, which are the values of classical music and how to get the tools to express these values in the best way.
The structure of this written work consists of this initial introduction, a final part with a personal consideration and a central body of five paragraphs:

- Why?
- Technique and Musical thought, how do I combine them?
- Repertoire
- About the adaptation of the compositions
- Conclusion

The first section describes the work that I did during the course of study of the Master program, and why I did it. In the second I describe how the interpretation of a piece of music is closely correlated with the instrumental technique. The third illustrates the repertoire that I have taken into consideration during my studies. The fourth is about how I adapted the compositions for having the best results with the saxophone. The fifth is about the final result, made concrete with my final concert. The transition from one paragraph to another is consequential, at first I was motivated by the need to find high-quality repertoire. Then the pieces chosen forced me to better understand the relationship that exists between the technique and musical thought. Afterwards I did a brief description of the pieces, followed by an explanation of how I adapted the compositions for having the best yield with the saxophone. In the last of these five paragraphs I make the final remarks about the work done.

**Why?**

**Purpose and Method**

This thesis is about the work I did during my two years of studies in the Master program of Chamber Music. My aim for the past two years has been to solve the problem of a not large repertoire for soprano saxophone, and in my opinion not of high quality, and to improve my musical skills in music interpretation and instrumental technique, so that I can freely decide which kind of repertoire to deal with in my projects and make them as interesting as possible. The method I used is empirical and has been quite simple. During my years of studies in high school, my teacher of Italian literature advised me that to improve the ability to understand and write a text, there is only one way which consists of reading many interesting and high quality literature books. So I merely applied this principle in music, with the corresponding adaptation, and I started to look for high quality compositions suitable to my music instrument. From my point of view the concept of quality, which is applicable to all spheres of life, is the attention to details combined with the search for what is essential. This concept (essentiality) has also been used by Michelangelo, when the artist in creating his sculptures, proceeded by subtraction. Starting from a block of marble,
in fact, he took away everything that he thought it was not necessary until you get to the final form (already inherent in the block of marble and visible to the artist). My belief is that the high quality survives over time. To discover new compositions I tried to get ideas from everything: from the research on the web until late at night, from the concerts I went to listen, from the list of the pieces published by the same publisher (printed on the last page of music scores), until to arrive to conversations with other musicians. Usually the discovery of a new piece does open doors that put you in contact with other related pieces, almost like a chain reaction.

Three factors have influenced my studies at Kungliga Musikhögskolan in Stockholm:

The first one is that some years ago, reading the biography of the italian composer Luciano Berio, I liked the picture that the composer had used for describing himself. He liked to identify himself with a fox that goes around tasting and smelling everything instead of a blind mole that goes straight to the target. I felt so represented by this metaphor that since then I tried to look around me more carefully.

The second one is that in the last three years I decided to focus just on the soprano saxophone considering that during my studies in Italy I mostly worked on my alto saxophone.

The third one consists of the paucity of good saxophone repertoire. I started to look for pieces adaptable to the soprano saxophone, I wanted to be totally independent and I decided to not consider transcription by other composers or saxophone players already published and then I tried to combine my projects with my need to get in touch with composers considered to be important in the history of music.

I think that the binomial, combination of composer and performer, is the most important factor for having interesting pieces in the literature of a music instrument. No composer will be motivated to write for an instrument if there are no performers able to emphasize the qualities of the instrument and make the most of the ideas of the composer. This is probably the reason why neither Debussy nor Ravel wrote an important piece for saxophone. We have the confirmation in correspondence of Debussy, at the time when he was writing the *Rhapsodie* for alto saxophone and orchestra, commissioned by the American lady Elise Hall. Debussy uses words of scorn in the description of the saxophone, and in the writing of the composition he wanted to involve the instrument as little as possible. The direction I decided to pursue gave me the chance to interpret some of the pieces by the best composers of the music history. This choice has put me in the best condition to develop my critical thinking skills in the phrasing and musical interpretation, with the final result of having more opportunities to motivate and involve other musicians in building projects together.
Technique and Musical thought, how do I combine them?

In this section I will try to explain how the interpretation of a piece of music is the result of many technical aspects, in many cases used instinctively by many musicians without having a real awareness of it. A good repertoire pushes you to improve all these aspects.

The performance of a piece of music requires knowledge or at least familiarity with the idea of music interpretation of a composition. This concept includes many technical aspects such as the idea of rhythm, of phrasing, of how to go from one note to another, of how to deal with intervals according to their magnitude.

Following the suggestions of my teacher Christer Jonsson I started to consider the single notes not as square bricks, but as elements with a beginning, a middle and an ending. Since then I have used this concept for always showing the direction from one note to another note, having a good control of the embouchure and the air support. The embouchure has a relevant role, it becomes a sort of sealing between your body and the instrument. Its strength must be directly proportional to the intensity of the flexible air support.

Considering the first sentence from *Première Rhapsodie* by Debussy, in a practical way, we can observe how the musical interpretation is the result of some technical aspects:

- Before performing this piece I will have the foresight to choose a reed strong enough for helping me with a good hardiness.
- Before starting the first G I will keep my breath for a moment, a bit as stretching a bow before firing the arrow, to accumulate the right energy for a push that will allow me to get to the end of the first group of three notes.
- Immediately after the attack of the first note, I'll make sure to keep the embouchure firmly, maintaining constant air support with a slight feeling of increase.
- Making a distinction between the rhythm, considered as something alive and flexible, and the beat, pulse, understood in a metronomic way, the performing length of the three quarter notes is not the same, there is a slight increase in it.
- The last but not least, I'll move my fingers with extreme harmony.
The result of these small technical aspects will be the ones to have a good legato, not to break the line, a sense of forward direction, the natural feeling of falling in the next bar and a consequent “espressivo” feeling.

The espressivo concept considered as a combination of elements of tension and relaxation in a composition, reminds me to the Third Law of Motion by Isaac Newton: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. That means such as the traction of an elastic body will be followed by a rapid contraction, so the dilation of the rhythm in the final part of a bar will be followed by a proportional higher speed of the rhythm in the beginning of the next bar.

Improved my awareness of how the technical aspects interact with musical interpretation, I started constantly to use those described above during my playing, and of course also during my daily technique practicing. So I decided to never play two notes without putting them in a kind of relation to each other, that’s why I started practicing scales and arpeggios in many different ways, considered as succession of groups of one or more notes.

Ex 1:

I will play this scale as to recreate the arches made by the bouncing of a tennis ball, of which the speed is higher when it leaves the floor. I will wait keeping the breath before starting the first note for accumulating the right energy, then I will play the notes off beat a little earlier (in the image represented by the arrows) so that their performing length will be a bit bigger than the notes on the beat, and on the tail of their ending I will make a sort of “crescendo” (in the image represented by the bows, which also show the direction from the notes off beat to the ones on the beat) until falling and reaching the next note. As result I will have a melodic sense of forward direction.

Ex 2:

For each group of four notes the performing length of the first one is the shortest, gradually increasing until the fourth, which is the longest.

This concept of the rhythm, with a sense of gravity, drives a sort of perpetual engine that makes much more natural the execution of a piece of music. And its emphasizing should be proportional to the style of the composition and the taste of the performer.

The correctness of this concept is much more evident when we are in the presence of phrases with the repetition of the same note (because in its inside there is less
natural variation given by the change of notes), such as in this short excerpt from the *Sonata in G minor* by Bach:

![Musical notation example]

Equally important it’s to create a feeling of tension, an intensity in the movement of the fingers, keeping the pressure exercised by the fingers themselves on the keyboard flexible, directly proportional to the increasing of the intensity of the air support, and consequently also of the embouchure, almost as to mold the line of the notes as if it was clay.

In this way all the parts of the body will be in direct contact with each other and the performance will give a greater sense of solidity and control.

The way I'm going to form a phrase and perform a piece of music is the result of the relationship between the elements that make up the composition itself (considered as a succession of groups of one or more notes of the same or different duration).

For example, as well as a jump with the body needs a different time of preparation according to the magnitude of the jump in order to accumulate enough energy, a musical interval, from the technical point of view, takes a preparation time greater than an interval of lower amplitude between two notes of the same length of the preceding.

It will affect the playing time of the notes themselves and contribute significantly to the choice of phrasing the set of notes of which the interval is part of.

At the same time, if we consider a group of four notes of the same length, depending on their position, they will be played technically differently and with varying performing length. Their general characteristics and the musical idea that I want to give them will follow the conceptual distinction between the rhythm, which is considered as something alive and flexible, and the beat, pulse, understood in a metronomic way.

Technique and musical thought are totally depending on each other, they are two aspects of the same thing.

A good performance of a music composition, with a good music interpretation of it, is the right balance between these two aspects.

**Repertoire**

The choice of the repertoire is in function of the interest of the pieces, the chance to be adapted to the soprano saxophone without altering their own nature and also of my personal taste.

The choice of a piece needs to be aimed at achieving a credible result, it should not be a bad copy of the version designed for the original instrument.

I will not hide the fact that there is always the doubt of having made a risky choice, with the result of being pathetic and I think it’s very important to try to find answers also in the various reactions of the audience.
Here is the list with a short description of all the compositions that I adapted during my Master studies at Kungliga Musikhögskolan:

**Alessandro Marcello** (1684/1750) *Concerto for Oboe, Strings and Basso Continuo in D minor*

It is one of the most performed oboe concertos in the repertory. It was written in the early 18th century and has become Marcello's most famous work. In the past, it has been mistakenly attributed to Alessandro Marcello's brother Benedetto Marcello as well as to Antonio Vivaldi. Johann Sebastian Bach made the piece famous by writing a transcription of the piece in D minor as concerto for solo harpsichord (BWV 974).

**Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685/1750) *Sonatas for Flute and Harpsichord in G minor (BWV 1020) and E flat minor (BWV 1031)*

Of Johann Sebastian Bach's nine works for Querflöte (transverse flute), four contain a part for obbligato harpsichord. These flute sonatas were written between about 1720 and 1741 at a time when the recorder was being superseded by the transverse flute. After about 1725 compositions specifically for or including recorder, this instrument became increasingly rare, and these works are a celebration by Bach of the technical and expressive qualities and tonal colours newly available to him. There is some debate over the provenance of the Sonata BWV 1020 in G Minor, which some believe was composed by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756/1791) *Oboe Quartet in F major KV370 (368b) (1781) and Flute Quartet in D major KV 285 (1777)*

All Mozart's quartets with one wind instrument were all lightly written for a commission, for a specific occasion or for amusement. The oboe quartet bears no original date. In the manuscript Mozart-catalogue of Johann Anton André, in which the oboe quartet appears as no. 173, it is reported that it was written in Munich in January 1781. During his stay in Munich Mozart could often have met the oboist Friedrich Ramm, who was already known to him from the Mannheim period. Ramm was one of the foremost oboist of his time. It seems likely, therefore, that the oboe quartet was written for his pleasure or as a virtuoso piece.

The flute quartet in D major is the first of three quartets written for a commission from Ferdinand De Jean, an amateur flautist in Mannheim, probably between 1777 and 1778. Like many of his early chamber compositions for a wind instrument, the flute quartet is primarily in “concertante” style where the flute enjoys the prominent role and the strings artfully accompany.
Robert Schumann (1810/1856) *Three Romances, Op. 94, for Oboe and Piano* (1849)

In 1849, one of the most productive years in the whole of his output, Robert Schumann turned his attention to three wind instruments in chamber music settings; his Three Fantasy Pieces for clarinet and piano, and the Adagio and Allegro for horn and piano were both written within one week in February. He composed the Three Romances for oboe and piano in Dresden in December of the same year and is said to have given them to his wife, Clara Wieck Schumann, as a Christmas present.

All three pieces are very similar in the character of their main themes. They are more often cited as being the greatest works for oboe from the Romantic period.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) *Sonata for Oboe and Piano in D major, Op. 166* (1921)

The Camille Saint-Saëns's Oboe Sonata in D major, Op. 166 was composed in 1921, the year of the composer's death. This sonata is the first of the three sonatas that Saint-Saëns composed for wind instruments, the other two are the Clarinet Sonata (Op. 167) and the Bassoon Sonata (Op. 168), written the same year.

The piece is dedicated to Louis Bas, first solo oboe of the *Société du Conservatoire de l'Opéra de Paris* and is written in three movements: *Andantino*, *Allegretto* - *Ad libitum*, *Molto Allegro*.

The movements are not ordered according to the traditional fast-slow-fast sonata system but the tempo of the movements increases successively.

The first movement, *Andantino*, is music of a pastoral kind, in ternary form ABA. The core of the second movement is a Romance, marked *Allegretto*. It is preceded by an introduction and followed by an epilogue.

The last movement, titled *Molto Allegro*, short and brilliant, is characterized by short passages of virtuosity.

Claude Debussy (1862/1918) *Première Rhapsodie* for Clarinet and Piano (1909-1910) *Sirinx*, for solo Flute (1913)

The *Première rhapsodie* by Claude Debussy is a piece for accompanied solo clarinet.

A rhapsody in music is a one movement piece characterised by a free-flowing structure, a range of highly contrasted moods, colour and tonality, pervaded by a sense of improvisation.

Composed between December 1909 and January 1910, it was dedicated to the French clarinet professor Prosper Mimart.

In 1909, Gabriel Fauré, composer and at that time Director of the Paris Conservatoire, named Debussy to its Board of Directors (*le Conseil Supérieur*). One of Debussy's first duties was to supply two works for the next year's clarinet examinations. The *Rhapsodie*, was first performed as part of the examinations on July 14, 1910. The original composition was for clarinet and piano; Debussy published his own orchestration of the accompaniment in 1911.

*Sirinx*, also known under the title "*La flûte de Pan*", was written in 1913 as incidental music for Gabriel Mourey's dramatic poem *Psyché*. The reed flute of the
shepherd-god Pan is heard at the opening of Act 3, where it accompanies a dialogue between two nymphs. All the while Pan remains in his grotto, invisible to the nymphs. At the first performance of the play, Syrinx was taken by the flautist Louis Fleury, the dedicatee of the first edition. Today Syrinx is probably the best-know flute piece of the twentieth century.

**Paul Hindemith** (1895/1963)  *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* (1938)

During the period around 1940 Paul Hindemith wrote a series of sonatas, including one for just about every instrument of the orchestra. The oboe sonata of the series was written during the last few days of July, 1938. The work is tonal and neoclassical in orientation, meaning that Hindemith uses much Bach-like counterpoint in the work. The sonata does not follow the standard form for a work with that name. It is a quite short work (around eleven minutes) in two movements, the second of which is twice as long as the first. Hindemith builds the sonata by a principal of variants and continuations of a basic musical block.

**Francis Poulenc** (1899/1963)  *Sonata for Oboe and Piano* (1962), *Trio for Piano, Oboe and Bassoon* (1926) and *Sonata for two Clarinets* (1918)

Poulenc was part of the informal group of French composers known as “Les Six” whose agenda was to consciously contribute to a new music separate from the dominance of Germanic Romanticism, the intellectualisms of Schoenberg and the associations with Impressionism. Embracing clarity, simplicity, wit and even parody, they refined a genre influenced by Stravinsky, Satie and the polyhedral French artist Jean Cocteau, called Neo-classicism.

The Poulenc Sonata for two clarinets is the first of a series of three early little sonatas that Poulenc later dismissed as "entertainment", it was written in 1918 and revised in 1945. The work is very brief, not reaching the six minute. The first movement, Presto, is rhythmic; two fast sections frame a slower middle section where the second clarinet provides an ostinato accompaniment. The second, Andante, is a quiet meditation The third, Vif, is a Stravinskyan circus-like dialogue between the two instruments.

The *Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano* is one of Poulenc’s most popular chamber works and it’s dedicated to Manuel de Falla. 
The first movement is a sparkling presto, a compact caricature of contrasting sections.
The middle movement is a soft dream described by Poulenc himself as “sweet and melancholic.”
The final movement is another brisk sequence of tableaux. It is a modern version of the baroque French gigue, modified by Poulenc’s own sensibilities, with its emphasis on clarity, balance, simplicity and a generous dose of humor.

The Poulenc Oboe Sonata, his last significant work, was composed early in the summer of 1962 at "Brives-Bagnols en Forêt," as the composer carefully noted at the end of the score. The work was dedicated to the memory of Serge Prokofiev, who died nine years earlier. Poulenc first met Prokofiev in 1921, when the Russian composer was living in Paris to write for Serge Diaghilev's Ballets.
Many years later, Poulenc recalled that "my friendship with Prokofiev was based on two things. First, we each of us had a liking for the piano – I played a lot with him, I helped him to practice his concertos – and then something else that has nothing to do with music: a liking for bridge...
I ought to add that, especially in 1931 and 1932, we used to meet nearly every week and we usually spent our evenings playing bridge."

**Benjamin Britten** (1913/1976)  *Phantasy Op.2 for Oboe Quartet* (1932)

The Phantasy Quartet for oboe and strings was written for a competition for single-movement chamber works established in 1905 by Walter Wilson Cobbett, a wealthy amateur musician and professional writer on chamber music. "Phantasy" harked back to the fantasies for viols that were a prominent part of English music in the 1600s. The distinguishing feature of the old fantasies was that they included sections in different rhythms in a single continuous movement. To the early 20th century, they looked like a condensation of several sonata movements into one.
The piece was performed in a BBC radio broadcast in August 1933 by Leon Goossens, the leading English oboist of the day.
It was the first work of Britten to be performed overseas, it was given in a festival in Florence the following year, as the result of an International Society for Contemporary Music competition.
In the introduction (marked andante alla marcia), the oboe stays aloof from the strings, singing while they march. A quicker section follows in which themes are introduced and developed.
Then a slow section and at the end the music returns in a mirror image of the way it first arrived: first the quick exposition, then the opening slow march. At the last, the lone cello repeats the first seven bars of the piece, in reverse order.

**André Jolivet** (1905/1974)  *Sérénade, for Oboe and Piano* (1945)

The Sérénade by André Jolivet was written in 1945, in two different versions: one for oboe and piano and one for wind quintet with principal oboe. The piece consists of four movements, alternating slow fast slow fast movements (even if there are several changes of time in the slow movement)
Spiritual lyrical style of composition is more evident in the slow movement.


In order to make a living, Lutosławski had to write music for the state radio, recording and publishing companies, during the Communist regime in Poland.
The Dance Preludes are a product of that difficult period and they remain one of Lutosławski’s most popular works.
Completed in 1954, the original version was written for clarinet and piano. The following year, Lutosławski reworked it for clarinet, harp, piano, percussion and strings and four years later he produced a third version for the Czech Nonet (woodwind quintet, violin, viola, cello and double bass).
The orchestral versions, dates from 1955, was premiered at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1963 with Gervase de Payer as soloist and Benjamin Britten conducting the English Chamber Orchestra.
The work is in five movements and is based on folk songs from northern Poland, of which tempo changes almost from bar to bar, although the original folk material has been so seamlessly interwoven as to make any precise identification impossible. The work lasts for seven minutes.

**Astor Piazzolla** (1921/1992)  

Le Grand Tango, which Piazzolla wrote specifically for cello and piano, is one of his few chamber works and one of his few pieces of "classical" music. Dedicated to Russian cellist, Mtislav Rostropovitch and premiered by him in 1990 in New Orleans, it is driven by the varying moods and vitality of the tango. Its structure is episodic: moments of lilting languor alternate with impassioned sequences full of energy, and it ends with a great upward glissando. It has become one of the favorite pieces of cellists and there are a number of recordings available.

**About the adaptation of the compositions**

The soprano saxophone is a B flat instrument and many of the pieces I practiced are written for instruments in C. Quite soon I realised that the solution to transcribe each piece, in a long term, would not have been a good choice. So for not being slave to the transcribing I started to practice my reading one tone up, exception made for *Le Grand Tango* where the amount of the adjustments was considerable to force me to make a real transcription of the piece. Passed the initial difficulties I have now reached a reasonable reading speed. Equally important has been the search for the setup, mouthpiece and reeds, which would fit better with my instrument and that would allow me to master the tools to better express this kind of repertoire, as for example the "legato" in moving from one note to another. In general, the basic concept of the adaptations is to leave them as close as possible to the original version. The issues I had to solve are about:

- The choice of the articulation
- The extension of the range of the instrument
- Change of octave and change of notes

**The choice of the articulation:**

From a technical point of view the use of the tongue to differentiate an articulation is something that could disturb the flow of the musical phrasing, particularly in the saxophone which is an instrument that easily weigh the phrasing with the use of the "staccato".
For that reason I don’t always use the articulation written for the original instrument and mostly its choice is the result of the need of having more speed in the beginning of the bar or of the group of notes on the same beat. About of baroque music ornaments, I decided to play them in the easiest possible way considering that unlike the baroque instruments the saxophone has a greater capacity to differentiate the piece with the use of the dynamic. Below I listed some examples of the different articulations I used in performing the baroque and classical repertoire.

From the last movement of the *oboe Concerto* by Marcello:

![Musical example](image1)

In this example I show how, in my opinion, the best articulation is given by bowing the first two notes in order to have more speed with greater ease at the beginning of each measure.

From the first movement of the *G minor sonata* by Bach:

![Musical example](image2)

The bows in pencil indicate the change from the original version, result of the need of having more speed in the beginning of each group of notes on the same beat.

From the *oboe quartet* by Mozart:

a)  

![Musical example](image3)

adapt.:
Also in the examples a,b,c, with the use of the bows I choose the articulation so as to have greater agility in musical phrasing.

About the extension of the range of the instrument:

In the treble clef, the highest note in the usual range of my instrument is the F sharp over the pentagram (E as real sound), for many of the pieces I played I had to improve my skill in performing overtones and in going, in the most naturally way, from the usual range to the overtones range of the saxophone. To improve this skill, I had to develop greater sensitivity in the use and in the interaction of components that allow me to perform the overtones. Here is the list of components:

- the mastery of the embouchure with light and variable pressure on the reed.
- the awareness and use of the mobile part of the oral cavity (tongue and larynx). To better explain through an image, these parts can be considered as a trombon slide and their movements is analogous to that of when producing whistles of different height.
- variable air support.
- the choice of the most appropriate fingering for having the best pitch of the overtones and or greater ease in the transition from one to another.

All these elements must be balanced with each other and most of the work is to observe and understand the cause-effect relationship that exists between them. Here below some examples from the original music part:
From the *oboe quartet* by Mozart:

In the excerpt above I have to perform the F over the pentagram (G as real sound of the saxophone) as overtone.

From the *oboe sonata* by Camille Saint-Saëns:

Here also the last two notes of the ascending scale are performed as overtones.

From *Sérénade* by Jolivet:

a)  

b)  

c)  

In the exemples a,b,c, we can observe how overtones combine with the usual range.
From my adaptation of Le Grand Tango by Piazzolla:

This excerpt already transposed for soprano saxophone shows other different combinations.

Change of octave and change of notes:

Some parts of the compositions were too low, I had to adapt them playing these parts one octave up (Ex.1 and Ex.2 below). About Dance Preludes, in the end of the third prelude instead to change octave I preferred to change notes, in according with the harmony, for being closer to the original musical idea (Ex.3 below).

Ex 1:

From Première Rhapsodie by Debussy:

orig.: adapt.: 
Ex 2:

From *Phantasy* by Benjamin Britten

orig.:

```
\begin{verbatim}
\textbf{Andante (d. j. of preceding)  \raisebox{1.5em}{\tiny \textit{sempre molto marzelo}}} \hfill \textit{sempre.}
\end{verbatim}
```

this low trill is too uncomfortable with saxophone.

adapt.:

```
\begin{verbatim}
\textbf{\textit{a tempo}}
\end{verbatim}
```

Ex 3:

From *Dance Preludes* by Witold Lutosławski

orig.:

```
\begin{verbatim}
\textbf{\textit{a tempo}}
\end{verbatim}
```

adapt.:

```
\begin{verbatim}
\textbf{\textit{a tempo}}
\end{verbatim}
```

From *Le Grand Tango* by Piazzolla:

About *Le Grand Tango* it should be made a separate mention, it is the piece with bigger amount of adjustments. I had to change octave quite often, find a solution for the “glissando” (ex. a and d below) that mostly consists in making a big crescendo on the starting note until reaching the note of arrival of the glissando or using a diatonic scale (in many cases I could use a real glissando but it sounded as a parody of the original), and also for the bichords of the cello deciding to leave the most important note melodically (ex. b and c below).
Conclusion

My final concert has been the testing ground for these two years of research and intense practising. To be sure to be well prepared, using all possible opportunities including concerts and exams, I had already performed the whole repertoire mentioned in this thesis before my Master concert, noting that my increased awareness of the technical aspects described in the previous paragraphs helped me to improve the control of anxiety triggered by the performance. For some pieces I have also tried different combinations of instruments, such as for Poulenc Trio which I performed with the bassoon the first time and with the cello instead in the following concert, moving from a purely ironic nature to a more elegant style of the piece.

The compositions which have proved being the most fragile were the quartets by Mozart, in particular that for flute because of its texture slightly more in the high register. In general, for its simplicity and lightness the music by Mozart has been shown to be the most difficult. It required a refinement of the rhythmic sense, of the promptness in the musical initiative and of the control of the articulation, and it has proved very easy to break the balance of it. Of all the music pieces, those written for oboe were the easiest to adapt because of the greater similarity of this instrument to the soprano saxophone, their range is almost the same. Contrariwise, in the study of music composed for clarinet I have encountered many difficulties in the attempt to reach the softness, the legato, the agility typical of this instrument. In general I realized that the adaptability of a composition is directly proportional to the proximity between the characteristics of the instrument for which it is conceived the composition and the saxophone, that's why for example it is extremely easier to adapt a piece written for a wind instrument that one for a string instrument.

The program of my final master concert consisted of three compositions originally written for oboe and piano by Francis Poulenc, Paul Hindemith and André Jolivet, and one sonata originally written for clarinet in B flat and clarinet in A by Francis Poulenc. The choice of the pieces was made according to the need of performing a recital for saxophone
and piano, with a piece totally different as the sonata for two clarinets in the middle of the concert so as to create more contrast.  
I was lucky for the participation of two wonderful musicians as Mårten Landström at the piano and Kjell Fageus at the clarinet in A.  
The audience response has been very positive and it has been a rewarding experience for me.  
At the conclusion of the work I can say that it has had some positive and useful feedback and has helped my growth as a musician.

Program

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)
Sonata (1962)
I. Allegro  
II. Interlude  
III. Presto
Giulio Petitta – saxophone, Mårten Landström – piano

Paul Hindemith (1895–1963)
Sonata (1939)
I. Menuet  
II. Minuetto – Allegro

Giulio Petitta – saxophone, Mårten Landström – piano

Interval

Francis Poulenc (1899–1963)
Sonata (1918)
I. Piu vivo  
II. Andante  
III. Vf

Giulio Petitta – saxophone, Kjell Fageus – clarinet

André Jolivet (1905–1974)
Sérénade (1945)
I. Sérénade  
II. Caprice  
III. Impromptu  
IV. Marche bucolique

Giulio Petitta – saxophone, Mårten Landström – piano
A final personal consideration

I spent two years of my life in Sweden attending the Kungliga Musikhögskolan in Stockholm. At first I had a lot of enthusiasm, I studied as much as possible to try to improve as much as possible so as to be in a position to play interesting music, able to enrich the soul, and with the hope that good musical skills could help me to involve talented musicians in my projects. I learned to read a tone above and I have “stolen” eighteen pieces from the best repertoire for other instruments.

After nine months since my final concert of my Master studies, I wonder how it assesses the situation. In the last two months I have sent two hundred mails, I have made many phone calls, contacted two dozen schools, I spent many hours in the night surfing in internet looking for new ideas for repertoir …right now I only have one concert per month and I wonder if it is worth the money. The more I get, greater gets the number of questions rather than the answers. To be honest I'm not even totally convinced of the concepts expressed in this written work, considering that in my opinion what you are convinced in it must be supported by facts, and the facts are still somewhat skimpy, certainly I increased my knowledge .. but is it enough? I hope the time will answer to my questions!

Last Saturday I had a gig in Åkers kyrka, a small cozy medieval church seventy kilometers from Stockholm. At the beginning of the concert, when I went on stage I felt a little embarrassed because no one applauded as welcome, and the faces of the people were very aloof. Then in the middle of the concert, I realized that some people were listening with closed eyes, as if to help themselves to listen to the music and spirit, and honestly that gave me a lot of good energy. Perhaps this is the reward of all? ..or maybe they just fell asleep!

Many thanks to my family who gave me the chance to be who I am

to my teacher Christer Johnsson for his precious help

to Karin Hjertzell for her way of taking care of the students

to Nicole, who has been close to me during the two years of the master.
References:


