

20 **ADVANCED** ETUDES

FOR SOLO SAXOPHONE



**CHALLENGING AND GENRE-DEFYING ETUDES TO EXPAND YOUR
IMPROVISATIONAL IDEAS AND SHARPEN YOUR TECHNIQUE**

BY JOSIAH BOORNAZIAN

Dedication

I would like to dedicate these etudes to my stepfather, Dr. Kenneth Bergevin, who first inspired me to become a musician and who gave me my first instruction on the saxophone. Thank you for your constant encouragement and support over the years; I hope you enjoy these etudes. I would also like to thank all of my other mentors, especially David Binney, Gary Pratt, John Daversa, Dr. Jon Pieslak, Shaugn O'Donnell, Chris Potter, and Donny McCaslin.

Introduction

Although I consider myself primarily a jazz musician, classical etudes have played an important role in my musical studies ever since I first picked up the saxophone. I firmly believe that all saxophonists should make the study of etudes an integral part of their musical lives, regardless of their stylistic background and artistic aspirations.

The composition of these etudes grew out of my desire as a composer to contribute to the ever-growing repertoire of saxophone-centric etudes, which I have always enjoyed practicing and studying. Overall, these etudes address a wide range of technical issues and compositional concepts which are highly relevant to contemporary saxophonists of all backgrounds. The aim of this book is to provide the modern saxophonist with the means to develop a diverse set of musical skills while simultaneously sharpening fundamental instrumental technique.

These challenging etudes emphasize certain specific and essential skills required of today's saxophonists, such as the utilization of wide intervallic leaps, the ability to cope with extreme registers and dynamic levels, the navigation of a complex post-tonal pitch language, the mastery of odd meters and asymmetrical rhythms and phrases, and the necessity of developing a confident and individualistic approach to musical interpretation and improvisation. Additionally, these etudes are intended to provide improvisers with samples of compositional strategies they can deploy while creating and developing improvised solos.

Although each etude addresses relatively specific technical, theoretical, and compositional concepts, these etudes are nevertheless intended to function as pieces of music worthy in themselves of expressive performance. Thus they are partially inspired by the tradition of etudes by great composers and pedagogues such as Frederic Chopin and Franz Liszt, whose etudes not only address specific technical challenges but also are satisfying pieces of music to listen to and perform. To this end, some etudes are less strict than others in adhering to a given guiding compositional principle, whether conceptual or technical, and I made an effort to allow the music to breathe and develop in its own natural course, wherever it led. It is perhaps more accurate to call these pieces "etude-caprices," then, since they could fit more or less in either category. Therefore, the concepts each etude addresses, briefly listed below, should be viewed as general strategies and loose guiding principles, not as strict laws which I rigidly followed.

Thank you for supporting my music. I hope you find these etudes both educational and enjoyable to practice, study, and perform!

Contents

- I. Shifting Shapes and Colors, pp. 1-2
This etude melodically outlines various harmonies and explores subsequent possibilities for voice-leading while simultaneously dealing with odd meters, unpredictable meter changes, and irregular phrase lengths.
- II. Octagon, pp. 3-4
Inspired by composers such as Bela Bartok and Igor Stravinsky, this etude deploys the octatonic (or diminished) scale and explores the various quasi-tonal structures that can be derived from it. It also provides various rhythmic approaches to phrasing and subdividing in a compound meter.
- III. Anchor, pp. 5-7
This etude uses various pedal points in different registers and then builds and develops melodies and implied harmonies around the pedal points.
- IV. Terraces, pp. 8-9
This etude, which requires the performer to improvise based on given parameters in the second half of the piece, focuses on the melodic and harmonic possibilities of the major triad with diatonic fourth added, also known as the major-second minor tetrachord, or pitch class set class (0237).
- V. Hot Walk, p. 10
This etude again features odd meters, unpredictable meter changes, and irregular phrase lengths. The pitch content for the first half utilizes the dominant seventh chord, the major-second minor tetrachord, and the so-called “Kumoi” pentachords, or set classes (0368), (0237), (01368), and (02578) respectively. The second half uses 3-4 note chromatic clusters, or set classes (012) and (0123).
- VI. Rue 87, 02:39, pp. 11-12
Inspired by Anton Webern and Arnold Schoenberg, this etude deals with the intervals of a half step and a minor third, creating the famous major-minor trichord, or set class (014). It also features rhythmic displacement and odd phrase lengths.
- VII. Eastern Dreams, pp. 13-14
One of the more challenging etudes in the collection, this piece employs various types of melodic decorations and multiphonics, and is inspired by music from various “eastern” cultures including Hindustani, Arabic, Armenian, and Eastern European music.
- VIII. Firearms, pp. 15-17
This etude’s pitch content is derived from combining two triads a half-step apart. The resulting melodies are related to the augmented hexatonic scale and set classes (013478) and (014578).
- IX. Phoning it In, pp. 18-20
This relatively long etude focuses on melodically outlining various harmonies and exploring subsequent possibilities for voice-leading, while also addressing odd meters, unpredictable meter changes, and irregular phrase lengths. This etude is designed to help saxophonists work toward the mastery of chromatically transposed thirds, triads, and seventh chords as well as various types of trills or tremolos.
- X. Stream, pp. 21-22
This flowingly lyrical etude focuses on melodic sequences which sound diatonic, yet which modulate and are transposed in highly chromatic manner. This piece also addresses odd meters, unpredictable meter changes, and irregular phrase lengths.

- XI. Me = Jimi, pp. 23-24
This highly rhythmic and syncopated etude features swing rhythms, melodies that explore the altissimo register, octave displacement, sudden dynamic changes, wide intervallic leaps, odd meters, unpredictable meter changes, and irregular phrase lengths.
- XII. 12 West, pp. 25-27
This highly chromatic 12-tone etude deploys variations of one specific tone row throughout the piece (the row guiding the composition was borrowed from Webern's *Kinderstueck*, 1924). It features melodies that explore many of the same concepts as etude XI.
- XIII. 7th Heaven?, pp. 28-30
As the title suggests, this etude focuses on melodically outlining various types of seventh chords (and the interval of a seventh, as well as its inversion) and exploring subsequent possibilities for voice-leading, while also addressing wide intervallic leaps.
- XIV. Ruhe, pp. 31-32
This etude is centered on the tritone and the Lydian mode. It also features wide intervals and rapidly switches between duplet- and triplet-based rhythms.
- XV. Lost Cause, Cause Lost, pp. 33-34
This etude features a chromatic yet lyrical pitch language and primarily focuses on pitting two contrasting musical ideas against each other: somberly yearning melodies and harmonies versus single pitches repeated rapidly.
- XVI. Gypsy Rant, pp. 35-36
This light, whimsical etude was written with the sounds of the augmented major triad, the diminished triad, and the minor triad with a major seventh tetrachord, or (0148), in mind.
- XVII. In Wien, In der Nacht, pp. 37-39
Inspired by Alban Berg's 1935 Violin Concerto, this etude focuses on melodically outlining various harmonies and exploring subsequent possibilities for voice-leading, while dealing with odd meters, unpredictable meter changes, and irregular phrase lengths. Wide intervals, particularly fifths and sixths are especially emphasized, as are expansively arpeggiated chords.
- XVIII. Romanze (Quasi-Passacaglia), pp. 40-42
As the title suggests, this romantic-style piece features various sections which insistently repeat an underlying harmonic structure, as in a traditional *passacaglia*. However, this is by no means a strict *passacaglia*, hence "quasi."
- XIX. Sounded, pp. 43-44
This playful etude is very loosely written with sonata form in mind.
- XX. Nascent Independent Nations, pp. 45-46
This highly rhythmic etude centers on the interval of the fourth and its inversion, the fifth, while exploring the many melodic, motivic, and harmonic possibilities these intervals can imply. This piece is also very syncopated and features odd meters, unpredictable meter changes, irregular phrase lengths, and implied polyrhythms.

-Josiah Boornazian

About the Composer

Josiah Boornazian is an award-winning saxophonist, composer, and educator currently active in Washington state, California, New York City, and Miami.



Composition

As a registered ASCAP composer, Josiah has written for a wide variety of musical settings. His output includes major works for large jazz ensemble, string quartet, solo keyboard, solo saxophone, small jazz ensemble, electronic ensembles, and symphony orchestra. Josiah has been commissioned to compose works for groups far and wide, including ensembles in California, New York, Texas, and Istanbul, Turkey.

Recording

As a recording artist, Josiah has completed multiple studio and live albums as a leader, sideman, and collaborator. Releases as a leader include *Intersection* (2010) and *Josiah Boornazian Quartet: Live at City College* (2013), and a pending 2016 release with Alessandro Fadini on the Fresh Sounds label, all of which feature Josiah's original compositions.

Performing

A prolific performer, Josiah has performed with renowned artists including Drew Gress, David Binney, Wayne Krantz, Chris Potter, Dave Douglas, David “Fathead” Newman, Ari Hoenig, Dan Weiss, John Escreet, Jacob Sacks, Fima Ephron, Jonathan Crayford, Obed Calvaire, Will Vinson, Matt Brewer, Ben Wendel, Eivind Opsvik, Ferenc Nemeth, Alan Ferber, Brad Mason, John Daversa, Donny McCaslin, the Gil Evans Orchestra, Mark Egan, Lew Soloff, Miles Evans, Mike Clark, Gil Goldstein, Yana Bibb, Jerry Watts Jr., Nir Felder, Andrea Veneziani, Alessandro Fadini, and Massimo Biolcati. Notable New York performances include the Jazz Gallery, the 55 Bar, the Firehouse Space, Trinity Wall Street, the ShapeShifter Lab, NuBlu, Club Bonafide, Rockwood Music Hall, and the Triad Theater, among others. Additionally, Josiah has toured California extensively. He has performed at the Monterey Jazz Festival (2010, 2011), the California Jazz Conservatory (formerly known as “the Berkeley Jazzschool”), the Bakersfield Jazz Workshop, the Bakersfield Jazz Festival (2005, 2006, 2007), and the Pasadena Jazz Institute, among others.

Teaching

Josiah is also a highly versatile and experienced music educator. He has taught undergraduate classes as an adjunct faculty member at the City University of New York’s City College Campus. Josiah has given numerous clinics and master-classes at universities, high schools, and junior colleges, including California State University Northridge, Central Washington University, Pasadena City College, Ventura College, Folsom High School, Rio Americano High School, Marin School of the Arts, San Francisco High School for the Arts, the Milestones Jazz Education Program, the Bakersfield Jazz Workshop, Roosevelt School of the Arts Magnet, Buchanan High School, Clovis High School, and Orange County High School for the Arts. Josiah also maintains a robust studio of private students. His students include a former California All-State Jazz Ensemble member and former students of the Juilliard School.

Education

In 2016, Josiah began pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Miami's prestigious Frost School of Music as a Mancini Fellow, where he also teaches part-time as a graduate assistant. Josiah earned a Master of Arts degree in music from the City University of New York's City College campus in 2013 and a Bachelor of Music degree from California State University, Northridge in 2011. His teachers and mentors include Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Del Tredici, Chris Potter, David Binney, Dave Douglas, John Patitucci, Will Vinson, David Sanchez, John Ellis, Tony Malaby, Gary Pratt, Gary Fukushima, Matt Harris, Rob Lockart, Gary Keller, Paul Perez, Bruce Babad, Doug Davis, and Steve Wilson, among others. Josiah's ensemble took first place in both the Reno and Monterey Jazz Festivals in 2010, and Josiah was named Most Outstanding Saxophonist at the Reno Jazz Festival that same year.

For more information including audio, video, and updates, please visit josiahboornazian.com.

All content, recordings, and compositions by Josiah Boornazian

© 2014-2016 Born-Asian Music | All Rights Reserved

www.josiahboornazian.com

I. Shifting Shapes and Colors

Introspective,
Tempo is elastic throughout

♩ = 64

1 *p* *f* *cresc...*

4 *f* *p* ♩ = 80

7 *mf* *f* *f* ♩ = 100 ♩ = 160 ♩ = 250-300

11 *p*

15 *cresc...* *f*

19 *mp* *f* *mp* *f* *accel.* *rit.*

23 *a tempo* *p* *cresc...*

27 *mf*

31 *f*

36 *accel.* *rit.* *accel.* *rit.* *p* *mf* *p* *f* *sub. p* *mf*