

5-2015

# How Classical Saxophone Music influenced by Jazz

Alfredo Alexander Maruri  
*University of Arkansas, Fayetteville*

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## Recommended Citation

Maruri, Alfredo Alexander, "How Classical Saxophone Music influenced by Jazz" (2015). *Music Undergraduate Honors Theses*. 3.  
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**Darius Milhaud (September 4, 1892 – June 22, 1974) – Scaramouche for Saxophone and Woodwind Quintet, Opus 165c (1937)**

Darius Milhaud was a French composer and teacher. He was a member of Les Six and is one of the most prolific composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His compositions were influenced by jazz and polytonality. Milhaud was born in Marseilles to a Jewish family. He studied at the Paris Conservatory. Milhaud's teachers included Charles Widor, André Gedalge, and Vincent d'Indy. Milhaud's involvement in *Les Six*, helps to explain his obsession with foreign concepts. The group was founded on their shared interest in exoticism. They flocked to the foreign sounds of exotic music, especially that of Africa, the Orient and Central and South America. From 1917 to 1919, he was the secretary to Paul Claudel, a famous poet, dramatist, and French ambassador to Brazil. Milhaud set music to many of Claudel's poems and plays. While in Brazil, they collaborated on a ballet, *L'Homme et son désir*. When Milhaud returned to France, he composed works influenced by the music he had heard in Brazil. In 1922, Milhaud travelled to the United States, where he heard "authentic" jazz on the streets of Harlem. This experience left a huge impact on his musical outlook. In 1923, he completed *La creation du monde* (The Creation of the World). The composition incorporated ideas and idioms from jazz as cast in a ballet in six continuous dance scenes. The rise of the Nazi regime forced Milhaud and his family to emigrate from France to the United States in 1940. He became a teacher at Mills College in Oakland, California. While at Mills College, Milhaud taught the famous jazz pianist and composer Dave Brubeck in the late 1940's. In 2010, Brubeck said he attended Mills College specifically to study with Milhaud. Brubeck said "Milhaud was an enormously gifted classical composer and teacher who loved jazz and incorporated it into his work." From 1947 to 1971, he taught alternate years at Mills College and the Paris Conservatory, until poor health forced him to retire. Milhaud died in Geneva at the age of 81 and was buried in the Saint-Pierre Cemetery in Aix-en-Provence.

Milhaud's *Scaramouche* is one of his most famous works. Each movement of the piece covers many facets of Milhaud's compositional techniques. The name comes from the Theater for which the work was originally written. The original, Opus 165a, did not include the second movement and was written to accompany a Moliere production of *Medecin Volant* (*The Flying Doctor*) at the Scaramouche Theater. Milhaud later wrote Opus 165b and added the *Modéré*, creating the piece known today. In 1939, Milhaud arranged Opus 165c for saxophone and orchestra (with piano reduction). Don Stewart took Milhaud's Opus 165c and expanded the piano reduction for woodwind quintet, leaving the saxophone part untouched. Milhaud's final arrangement of his work, Opus 165d, is for clarinet and orchestra (with piano reduction). The first movement of *Scaramouche* is a "restless, French-style opening." In it, Milhaud incorporates the use of polytonality. The origin of the name of the piece explains the playful nature of the first movement. *Scaramouche* is translated as "cowardly buffoon" or "scamp" in reference to the young people for whom the theater was intended. The second movement is a reserved and melancholy incidental piece. The second movement is meant as a "break" from the "fun" of the first and third movements of the *Scaramouche*. Milhaud originally wrote it for his grand opera *Bolivar*. The final score, however, did not include any of the themes. The piece is a somber sound in ABA form. It serves to show off Milhaud's writing of folk song-like themes that balance the other two movements. The final movement, *Brazileira*, demonstrates the sound with which Milhaud fell in love with when he visited Brazil. Milhaud wrote the movement as a samba, a Brazilian dance prominently heard during Carnival. Milhaud follows the typical samba form using a duple meter and a piano accompaniment that includes syncopated rhythms. The piece shows Milhaud's spectacular knowledge of different styles and techniques and his ability to use and incorporate them into his music.

**Astor Piazzolla (March 11, 1921 – July 4, 1992) – Histoire du Tango (1986)**

Astor Pantaleón Piazzolla was an Argentine tango composer and bandoneon player and arranger. His works revolutionized the traditional tango into a new style, named *nuevo tango*, that included elements of jazz and classical music. Piazzolla's teachers included Bela Wilda, a Hungarian classical piano student of Rachmaninoff, Alberto Ginastera, an Argentine composer of classical music, Raúl Spivak, and Nadia Boulanger. Piazzolla was born in Mar del Plata, Argentina. He was the only child of Italian immigrant parents Vicente "Nonino" Piazzolla and Asunta Manetti. Piazzolla and his family moved to the violent Greenwich Village in New York City, in 1925. Piazzolla's parents worked long hours so he would pass the time at home listening to his father's records of the tango orchestras of Carlos Gardel and Julio de Caro. He was also exposed to jazz and classical music, including

Bach, at an early age. In 1929, Piazzolla began playing the bandoneon that his father found in a New York pawn shop. In 1932, he wrote his first tango, *La catinga*. In 1934, Piazzolla met Carlos Gardel and played a paper boy in his movie *El día que me quieras*. In 1936, Piazzolla's family moved back to Mar del Plata and he began playing in a variety of tango orchestras. At the age of 17, Piazzolla moved to Buenos Aires, where he realized a dream and joined the orchestra of bandoneonist Anibal Troilo. Piazzolla also became Troilo's arranger and would occasionally play the piano for him. In 1941, Piazzolla began his studies with Alberto Ginastera. Under Ginastera, Piazzolla studied the scores of Stravinsky, Bartók, Ravel, and others. Piazzolla woke early each morning to listen to the Teatro Colón orchestra rehearse and performed a grueling performing schedule in the tango clubs each night. In 1943, he wrote his first classical works, *Preludio No. 1* for Violin and Piano and *Suite* for Strings and Harp. In 1944, Piazzolla left Troilo and his orchestra and joined the orchestra of Francisco Fiorentino. With Fiorentino, Piazzolla would make his first two instrumental tangos, *La chiflada* and *Color de rosa*. In 1946, Piazzolla left Fiorentino's orchestra and formed Orquesta Típica. This group allowed Piazzolla the ability to experiment with his own approach to the orchestration and musical content of tango. During the same year, he composed *El Desbande*, his first formal tango. Between 1950 and 1954, Piazzolla disbanded his orchestra, dropped the bandoneon and devoted his time to developing his own unique style. This period saw the composition of *Para lucirse*, *Tanguango*, *Prepárense*, *Contrabajando*, *Triunfal* and *Lo que vendrá*. In 1953, Piazzolla won a grant from the French to study under Nadia Boulanger at the Fontainebleau conservatory. Under Boulanger, Piazzolla tried to hide his tango compositions to move towards a career in composing pieces with classical influence. It was not until he played his tango *Triunfal* that Boulanger encouraged him to pursue a career in tango. While he was with Boulanger, he studied classical compositions, including counterpoint, which would play a key role in his later tango compositions. Back in Argentina, Piazzolla formed a String Orchestra and his Octeto Buenos Aires that broke the mold of the traditional orchestra of the time. His orchestra created a new sound that included jazz-like improvisations and no singer. In 1958, he disbanded both of his groups and moved to New York City where he struggled to make a living as a musician and arranger. Between 1960 and 1990, Piazzolla wrote numerous pieces for many different ensembles. He travelled extensively and spent time in New York City, Buenos Aires, Milan and Rome. He won many different prizes including the Konex Award in 1995 as the most important musician of the decade in Argentina. In 1990, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, which left him in a coma until his death in 1992.

Piazzolla's *Histoire du Tango* is one of his most famous compositions. It was originally composed for flute and guitar in 1986. It is often played by different combinations of instruments, including violin, saxophone, harp, and marimba. The *Histoire du Tango* is Piazzolla's only composition for flute and guitar. The piece attempts to convey the history and evolution of the tango. The first movement, *Bordel 1900*, originated in Buenos Aires in 1882. "This music is full of grace and liveliness. It paints a picture of the good natured chatter of the French, Italian, and Spanish women...who teased the policemen, thieves, sailors, and riffraff who came to see them." It is a high-spirited tango. *Café 1930* represents another age of the tango. During this period people stopped dancing as they did in the 1900s and preferred to listen to the music. The tango became slower and used new and often melancholy harmonies. *Night Club 1960* presents a time of rapidly expanding international exchange. The tango evolved as Brazil and Argentina came together, using the same beat in the bossa nova and the new tango. *Concert D'aujourd'hui (Modern-Day Concert)* presents the tango of today and of the future. The concept is that the tango has become intertwined with modern music.

### **Erwin Schulhoff (June 8, 1894 – August 18, 1942) – Hot Sonate (Jazz-Sonate) (1930)**

Erwin Schulhoff was a Czech composer and pianist. He was one of a number of successful European composers whose life came to a premature end, due to the Nazi Regime. Schulhoff was born in Prague to a Jewish-German family. Antonín Dvořák encouraged Schulhoff's early musical studies at the Prague Conservatory. Schulhoff studied piano and composition in Prague, Vienna, Leipzig, and Cologne. His teachers included Claude Debussy, Max Reger, Fritz Steinbach, and Willi Thern. In 1913, he won the Mendelssohn Prize for piano and won it again in 1918 for composition. During World War I, Schulhoff served the Austro-Hungarian army, on the Russian front. When the war ended, he was a wounded prisoner-of-war in an Italian camp. After the war, he lived in Germany and returned to Prague in 1923. In 1929, Schulhoff joined the Prague Conservatory faculty. He toured Germany, France, and England performing his own music, contemporary classical compositions, and jazz. In the 1930's, Schulhoff faced growing personal and professional difficulties. The Nazi regime labelled him as a

degenerate and blacklisted him because of his Jewish heritage and radical politics. He was no longer allowed to schedule recitals or perform publicly in Germany. His views on Communism also brought him trouble in Czechoslovakia. Schulhoff sought refuge in Prague where he found a job as a radio pianist. The job's poor pay barely earned him enough to cover the cost of the essentials. When Czechoslovakia was invaded in 1939, he was forced to perform under a pseudonym. In 1941 Schulhoff's petition for citizenship was approved by the Soviet Union. Before he could leave Czechoslovakia, he was arrested and imprisoned. Schulhoff was deported to the Wülzburg concentration camp where he died on August 18, 1942, from tuberculosis.

Schulhoff was one of the first generation of classical composers to be inspired by jazz music's rhythms. Schulhoff's first compositional period exhibited the influence of Debussy, Scriabin, and Strauss. After World War I, he embraced the avant-garde influence of Dadaism. Dada was an informal international movement in Europe and North America. It was a protest in response to the outbreak of World War I. Dadaists believed bourgeoisie nationalists and colonialists were the cause of the war. Dada was also against the conformity, culturally and intellectually, in art and in society. "According to Hans Richter, Dada was not art: it was 'anti-art.'" During his Dadaist phase he wrote multiple pieces with absurdist elements. Part of his *Fünf Pittoresken* for piano is a silent piece composed of only rests that anticipates John Cage's 4'33" by over thirty years. His third period was 1923 to 1932. The pieces he composed during this decade are his most prolific and most frequently performed. They include the String Quartet No. 1 and Five Pieces for String Quartet. These pieces include modernist vocabulary, neoclassical elements, jazz, and dance rhythms. He looked at jazz as a dance idiom and in a 1924 essay said that no one has been able to successfully blend jazz and art music, including Stravinsky and Auric. People that have played Schulhoff's Sonata for Violin and Piano No. (1927) have said it "draws liberally on the composer's interests and abilities as a bona fide jazzman." The last period of Schulhoff's career was devoted to socialist realism with Communist ideology. In 1932, he composed a musical version of *The Communist Manifesto*.

Schulhoff's Hot-Sonate for Alto Saxophone and Piano was first premiered in 1930. Schulhoff performed the piano part while the saxophone part was played by American saxophonist Billy Barton. The piece was originally written in response to a commission from Berlin Radio. The Hot-Sonate reflects the turbulent time which Schulhoff lived through. The piece is shaped by his horrific experience in the Austrian army as a conscripted soldier during World War I. This experience led Schulhoff to deviate from mainstream styles to more radical music. He experimented with atonal expressionism and jazz-tinged surrealism that was favored in Paris (e.g. Milhaud and Poulenc), Vienna, and Berlin (e.g. Weill and Krenek). His exploration in jazz led him to become an expert jazz pianist and a composer that positively reveled in blending popular and classical styles. He succeeded in giving jazz-flavored compositions a convincing improve feeling. The first movement is moderate in tempo but sassy and freewheeling in spirit. The second movement is a peppy tune that belongs on the dance floor of a smoke-filled 1930's nightclub. The third movement is a slow and expressive blues that well defines his life during the 1920's. In a 1921 letter to his friend, Alban Berg, Schulhoff states "I am boundlessly fond of nightclub dancing, so much so that I have periods during which I spend whole nights dancing with one hostess or another...out of pure enjoyment of the rhythm and with my subconscious filled with sensual delight.... [T]hereby I acquire phenomenal inspiration for my work, as my conscious mind is incredibly earthly, even animal as it were." The beginning of the third movement marked *lamentuoso ma molto grottesco* (lament but very grotesque) helps the piece to easily depict the kind of environment where Schulhoff spent his nights. The last movement is a driving finale that incorporates themes from the previous three movements. The end of the piece is abrupt and lacks resolution. This ending portrays his untimely death, at the age of 48, in a Nazi concentration camp.

### **Maurice Whitney (1909 – 1984) – Rumba (1949)**

Maurice C. Whitney studied at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York, the City University of New York (CUNY) in New York City, the Teachers College at Columbia University in New York City, the Westminster Choir College at Rider University in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, and the New England Conservatory in Boston, Massachusetts. Whitney worked as a soloist, conductor, and composer in New York City and Sun City, Florida. He was also a choirmaster and organist at churches and taught in public schools and colleges. As a composer, he wrote for theater, dance groups, instrumental ensembles, and choirs. Whitney received many rewards, including New York State Teacher of the Year and an appointment as an honorary doctor at Elmira College in Elmira, New York.

The Rumba is an energetic dance that includes a smooth combination of music, dance and poetry. It is a family of percussive rhythms, song, and dance that originated in Cuba as a combination of various musical traditions. The name is derived from the Cuban Spanish word *rumbo* which means "party". It was originally used by people of African descent in Havana and Matanzas that can be traced to two secular dances of Bantu origin: "yuka" and "makuta". Olavo Alén stated that over time, "rumba ceased to be simply another word for party and took on the meaning both of a defined Cuban musical genre and also of a very specific form of dance." Rumba combines music, dance, and vocals, where all three elements interact with rhythmic improvisation. It uses syncopated rhythms and call-and-response singing, of African origin. The song framework is largely based on the musical traditions from Spain. The various styles of rumba derive their melodies, patterns and instrumentation from *seguidillas*, *copla*, *peteneras*, *jotas*, *soleares*, *malagueñas*, *isas*, *folías* and their related dances. A Cuban rumba often begins with the soloist singing meaningless syllables, called *diana*. The male dancer and singer will then proceed to improvise lyrics stating the reason for holding the present rumba or tunes into a more or less fixed song. Cuban rumba is played in both triple-pulse and duple-pulse. The three main forms of rumba today are *yambú*, *guaguancó*, and *Columbia*. The differences between them are in the choreography and the pace. In *yambú* and *guaguancó* duple-pulse is mainly used, while in *Columbia*, triple pulse is the primary structure. *Guaguancó* is a couple's dance of sexual competition between the male and female. The term *guaguancó* originally referred to a narrative song style which emerged from the *coros de claves* of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Rogelio Martínez Furé states: "[The] old folks contend that strictly speaking, the *guaguancó* is the narrative." *Yambú* is a couple dance like *guaguancó* but much slower. *Columbia* is a fast and highly acrobatic solo male dance. Whitney's *Rumba* mimics some of the patterns of this Afro-Cuban style of dance. It begins with a syncopated piano introduction with the saxophone coming in with triplet runs. The saxophone triplets are similar to the *diana* used at the beginning of many rumbas. The saxophone plays the main melody multiple time throughout the piece. The melody can be broken down into two parts, like the call-and-response section of the piece. It is in a duple meter and is quick and energetic like the *guaguancó*.

### **Michael Markowski (b. 1986) – Unfamiliar Territory: 3 Sketches for Saxophone and Piano (2012)**

Michael Markowski is an American composer. Markowski graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film from Arizona State University in 2010. He has studied privately under Jon Gomez and Dr. Karl Schindler. He has also continued his education by participating in a number of programs, including "the art of orchestration" with television and film orchestrator Steven Scott Smalley. In 2008, Markowski was invited to be a part of the National Band Association's Young Composer and Conductor Mentorship program. In 2006, Markowski won first prize in the Frank Ticheli Composition Contest, with his work *Shadow Rituals*. Markowski's pieces have been performed all over the United States, by high school bands, like Poteet High School, colleges, like Arizona State University, the University of North Texas, and the Rutgers University, and Professional Ensembles, like The Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, the US Air Force Band of the Golden West, and the US Air Force Band of Mid-America. He also received commissions from many organizations, including CBDNA, The Consortium for the Advancement of Wind Band Literature, and The Lesbian and Gay Band Association. Markowski has composed music for film/television, theater, concert music, chamber music, and discography.

Markowski's *Unfamiliar Territory: 3 Sketches for Saxophone and Piano* was premiered in 2012 by Christopher Charbonneau on saxophone and Liz Ames on piano. It is a programmatic piece that "is a bit of a film-noir spin on George Gershwin's *An American in Paris*." Both pieces are about an American tourist in another country. While Gershwin's piece took place in Paris, Markowski's piece is set across the southern border in Mexico. Markowski's use of syncopation to begin many of the motives, his use of pitch bends, falls, and growls all give hints to the influence of the jazz idiom.

"The United States-Mexico border is only a dusty four-hour drive from Phoenix, and for some reason it took me 24 years to cross it. People often escape the Arizona heat and head south to their condos in the intimate resort town of Puerto Peñasco—or as Americans better know it: Rocky Point. The beaches are gorgeous and the tides recede hundreds of feet every night, as if by magic, revealing the ocean's hidden treasures. The weather is perfectly mild—never too hot, never too cold—and refreshing, tropical-themed drinks are always nearby.

On the other side of the tall resort walls is a different side of Mexico. Many of the roads are unpaved and some of the locals' homes have roofs made from corrugated tin. On the corner is the neighborhood restaurant, a

local favorite, with meals served up by a pleasant woman named Rosie. I order the pancakes, and although delicious, they have a surprising carne asada flavor as almost everything here is cooked on the same little grill.

As night falls, the local spirits emerge and the town comes alive. The moon hangs low, peeking out around buildings, always just out of sight, as if to keep an eye on us without our knowing it. Taxi drivers take wild shortcuts through dark side streets, narrowly avoiding packs of stray dogs on these roads “less traveled,” if we may actually call them “roads.” Our ears have been badly beaten by someone named Mr. Saxobeat, courtesy of our driver, who just wants us to have a good time. Somehow, we are still able to make out the low meditative hum of neon lights, buzzing quietly like mosquitoes. It doesn’t take long to fall under the city’s spell.

The ghosts of this unfamiliar territory swirl all around us, dizzying our senses, growing more and more vocal as we enter somewhere we perhaps weren’t invited to. Outside, our taxi driver waits for us, watching us. This is either super creepy or maybe he has been appointed our guardian angel for the night—this is still unclear. But we continue on into the night, if for no other reason than because we have no idea where we are or how to get back home.”

### **Work Cited**

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<http://www.michaelmarkowski.com/music/unfamiliar-territory/>

### **BIOGRAPHY**

#### **Alfredo Maruri, saxophone**

Alfredo Maruri is a student of Professor Stan Morris. This recital is in partial fulfillment for the Bachelor’s of Music Education degree and the Honors Thesis Project.

**We hope you enjoy tonight’s performance.**

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