

# Musical Creation and Performance Analysis of “Saxophone Concerto in E-Flat Major”

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**Abstract:** In order to fully understand the creative skills and playing techniques of Glazunov's classical saxophone Concerto in E Flat Major, the background materials of Glazunov's era are sought to fully grasp the composer's creative intention. To analyse the performance methods of the works, study the problems encountered in the performance process, find out the key points and difficulties, and put forward solutions, the complete practice methods are summarized, including: breath, performance state, overblowing and so on. According to the actual performance verification, this study is helpful for the improvement of musical emotion expression, basic ability and playing skills.

## 1. Introduction

The Saxophone Concerto in E Flat Major by Russian composer Alexandre Glazunov is one of the classical works of the classical saxophone. It is a concerto in the framework of a single movement sonata. The whole work is unified in style and presents a variety of emotions and emotion expression. It fully demonstrates the characteristics of classical saxophone music <sup>[1]</sup>, and in order to inherit his extremely high playing skills and comprehensive musical literacy, it is necessary to further study.

Domestic and foreign studies on Saxophone Concerto in E-flat Major focus on the musical structure and playing skills of the work, and most of the relevant reference materials available are the analysis of the overall style and musical form of the work <sup>[2-4]</sup>. However, there are few research materials on the detailed interpretation of the musical surface of the whole work and the basic factors required in the performance process. Most of them are focused on the performance skills, which are relatively one-sided, and are also worthy of in-depth analysis and study in the aspects of breath application <sup>[5-6]</sup>.

In this paper, the performance analysis of Glazunov's Saxophone Concerto in E Flat Major is the main research method, supplemented by the literature method of reading and collecting materials and the summary method of summarizing research results. To find more abundant background materials of Glazunov era to fully grasp the composer's creative intention, and then use performance analysis to analyze the whole piece in various directions, and finally summarize the difficulties and put forward solutions.

## 2. Musical analysis of composer's life and works

### 2.1. Glazunov's life and music creation

Alexandre Glazunov was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in August 1865. In the creation of music, he shows the characteristics of Russian national music, a large number of Slavic nations, as well as different eastern ethnic folk music elements, so that his music shows the characteristics of rich musical language, elegant music style, music form in the structure of rigorous.

At the age of 16, Balakirev, the leader of the five-member group of Russian folk music,

recognized Glazunov's talent and showed his work to Rimsky Korsakov, who lamented that "this is a crazy orchestral score, and his talent is undoubtedly obvious." Rimsky Korsakov then presented the work to Borodin and others, all of whom praised the work and its composer, the First Symphony, which was premiered in Western Europe in 1884. At the end of the 19th century, Glazunov composed six works, including symphonic string quartets and ballets. Under the influence of the Russian Five, after 1905, his musical style resembled Borodin's epic magnificence.

In his efforts, he not only continuously reduced the nationalism and cosmopolitanism in Russian music, but also absorbed the orchestral composing techniques of Rimsky Korsakov, the lyric style of Tchaikovsky and the contrapuntational composing techniques of Tanev. In 1928, Glazunov left Russia due to the war, and since then, he has visited Europe and the United States, during which time he completed the Saxophone Concerto in E-flat Major. His death on the banks of the Neina River in March 1936 marked the end of the romantic period of Russian music. Stravinsky said, "I admire the perfection of Glazunov's musical form, the elegance of his music and the ease and confidence with which he writes."

## **2.2. An overview of the Saxophone Concerto in E-flat Major**

Glazunov's Saxophone Concerto in E-flat Major was composed for saxophone in 1934 at the invitation of saxophonist Sigurd Raschel, and was the last work of his life. The work is most commonly performed in two forms: one with a solo alto saxophone and a symphony orchestra, and the other with a solo alto saxophone and piano accompaniment. In the earliest symphony orchestra performance form was presented by saxophonist Higeard Raschel, today's performance form is mostly alto saxophone solo, piano accompaniment.

This work was created by Glazuov in his later years under the dual torture of illness and exile from his hometown due to war. Therefore, a dark, depressed and sad color runs through the whole song, expressing the author's inner longing for liberation and longing for his hometown. With the progress of the music, negative factors gradually fade away, and the hope of fighting against them and looking forward to a better future gradually shows. It culminates in a climax. From the perspective of the overall score, the biggest highlight is the bold and novel creative technique. Glazuov fully plays the creative elements of the Russian national music school, and closely combines them with the rigorous sonata style. When the performer integrates his own heart into the author's thoughts and emotions, and then integrates them with the multi-color tone effect of saxophone, the music of this work is perfectly presented. The music language is rich, the style is elegant, the music form is rigorous structure.

## **3. Analysis of saxophone concerto performance**

### **3.1. The exposition part**

The music begins with a ten-bar prelude, and melancholy feelings are accompanied by a heavy atmosphere into the theme of the music. When entering the main melody, the rising do in the first note is particularly important, and the performer should follow the mood of the writer while making natural pronunciation.

The main part is divided into three phrases, the music ups and downs, just like a depressed, wronged person wants to cry, he tears, sobbing, emotional more and more excited, but always dare not cry aloud, and finally the mood calm down. So the performer should pay attention to the performance of the fingers, triplets and symbols, and the connection between sentences. The high note at the two large symbols in the last two bars of box 2, although it is an "f" to maintain the emotional excitement but not to release the sound completely. The connecting part is also three phrases, the emotional progression. This part focuses on the performance of staccato and grace notes, which should be skillful and continuous. Staccato is a breath break, but it is the same pronunciation position as the next grace note immediately, and the change of position will make the grace sound very abrupt. The secondary part consists of two paragraphs, the first paragraph, and three phrases. An octave of the opening sound si is played by the strength of "mf-p", the position of

the pronunciation point remains unchanged, the breath keeps up, and the bass is easy to appear unrestrained and the treble is ethereal. Each phrase is a "√" type of direction, the sound range from high to low to high, the breath is very important, and the dantian position should always be solid. The second paragraph is divided into two big phrases. The first big phrase is the last six bars of box 7, which mostly adopts the rhythm pattern of four sixteenth notes. The second largest phrase is the eight bars after box 8, and the opening sound si should pay attention to the connection with the previous sentence, although it is two phrases but belongs to a large whole.

### **3.2. Expansion part**

In the development, the composer seems to be telling another sad story through the saxophone. The first sentence begins with the musical term *Tranquillo*, which allows players to express their emotions according to their own understanding. The first sound is the treble drop Mi is particularly important, in the case of the pronunciation position is maintained, note that the sound can not be completely released, the breath position is always solid. The second sentence begins with the musical term "*Ral.poco*" (a little weakening), the mood continues to increase, and the breath position should always remain solid as the vocal range increases.

The second paragraph is composed of four phrases, the speed is faster than the previous paragraph, the rhythm is basically triplet form. There are a lot of musical terms in this passage, "*conmoto*" (slightly faster and lively), "*allarg*" (slow, broad), "*accel*" (fast), "*rit*" (slow), "*calando*" (agitated, uneasy), and according to these musical terms, The performer (fades and becomes quiet) and the "*agitato*" do a good job of handling emotions. Also pay special attention to the beginning of each small phrase is an incomplete rhythm, pay attention to the small time practice.

The third paragraph is faster than the previous two, so it gives a more fluid feeling. It is divided into six sentences, the first sentence plays the role of connecting with the previous paragraph, the first half of the sentence also starts with an incomplete rhythm type, the excessive rhythm type of triplet, and the emotion is gradually relaxed and quiet. The most important thing in this sentence is the connection of the last two notes of the first bar, with a slightly larger vocal range.

### **3.3. Expansion part 2**

The fourth paragraph, which is divided into four sentences, is immediately followed by the colorful part, the emotion is more exciting, and the rhythm pattern becomes more complicated. The first sentence is mostly triplet rhythm type, high and low bass rise and fall. Among them, the two tones with a large range span, such as treble Re - alto Fa, etc., the performer should pay special attention to the maintenance of the position of the pronunciation point. In the first two bars of the second sentence, the vocal range is also large, such as alto Fa to bass Fa, etc., under the premise of maintaining the position of the pronunciation point and the breath state, the laryngeal cavity should be more fully opened to ensure the coherence of the sentence.

The *cadenza* is the best part of the song. Beginning with the first musical term "*a piacere*" (free, casual), 76 is also slower and ranges from the low register to the high register. The next sentence is crucial, and the whole sentence is perfectly represented by the three musical terms "*accel*" (fast), "*Vivo*" (active), "*rall*" (slow), and the corresponding rhythmic pattern. The first point, because the speed is very fast, the performer needs to pay attention to the rhythm of the finger, here the quarter rest can not be empty for too long, and the performer needs to grasp the speed, and the "m" and the stress mark of the next sentence. The third sentence focuses on the two eight-point rest including the four-point rest of the sentence before the airbeat understanding. And then this is a tricky, fast line of sixteenth notes, and each little sentence has a stress mark on the first note, and a jump mark on the pronunciation. The performer needs to be careful not to focus on the pronunciation, apply the breath to dominate, the breath position is always solid, and let the breath push the note forward..

In this section between boxes 27 and 32, the player should first pay attention to the speed, the musical term "*piu moderato*" (slightly faster *andante*) and labeled speed 100, do not play too slowly. The long sentence between boxes 27-29, "*dolce cantabile*" (soft as a song), requires the player to always keep the body relaxed, naturally aspirated, as the range becomes higher without the breath

position moving up, the sound is crowded. In the triplet the player needs to pay more attention to the clear direction while maintaining the previous state. After the beat mark is changed to 12/8, the player should pay attention to the change of note time value caused by changing the beat mark. The last two notes fade, the mood to ease, quiet down. Box 29 The last two bars of small sentences, the musical term "espress" (expressive), pay attention to the weak, staccato, crescendo, crescendo, accent series of marks, make the sentence full of life.

### 3.4. Reproduction part

In boxes 33-37, the first two sentences are still "dolce cantabile" (soft singing), and as the range rises, the breath and the position of the articulation point should always be stable, especially in the high register. In the fourth bar after box 35, the beat number becomes 12/8. The performer needs to pay attention to the change of note time value caused by the change of beat number 12/8, which is more difficult. First of all, the performer should pay attention to the small beat and triple beat rhythm; In addition, the connection between the large span sounds, the position of the pronunciation point should be stable to ensure the coherence of the sentence; Third, when playing "tr", pay attention to the maintenance of the time value and breath, breath dominance, and be clear. It goes on to boxes 37-41, again in 12/8 time, with a triple beat throughout, four sentences, and a progressive mood.

In boxes 44-50, the musical term "piu mosso" (faster) has a speed of 132. Before box 46, the rhythm pattern is mostly two eighth notes, and the key notes are marked with staccato or stress, and more importantly, the sound of each small sentence is the second half of the beat. In the second half of the sentence, in order to better express the excitement of the composer, he used three different rhythmic types of chromatic scale down to finish the sentence. Box 46 four bars, is a sentence composed of two or eight rhythm pattern of octave hop chromatic scale down, most of the sounds are marked with hop mark, two small sentences end note has stress mark, although the notes are up and down, ups and downs, but in the case of the stability of the pronunciation point and the gradual intensity of the performance, The auditory effect should be like an arched line connecting the various sounds. Box 47 is the same four bars, the performer should pay attention to the position of the internal stress of each two lines while playing the strength and strength, and pay attention to the performance of the rhythm. Box 48-50, although the rhythm type is mostly quarter notes, but the mood does not weaken at all, with the musical term "cresc poco a poco" (gradually intensified bit by bit) and the rise of the vocal range, the mood is gradually brought to the climax.

The last part, box 50 to the end of the full song. The four bars of box 50, this sentence consists of four small sentences with the same sentence pattern and progressive mood, from low to high. The last four bars of box 51 are mostly composed of triplet rhythm, and the performer should pay attention to the position of the connection to ensure that the connection between the connection and the pronunciation is clear when playing. With box 52 four bars, the rhythmic type becomes dense again. Box 50-53 rhythm gradually denser, the vocal range gradually rises, pushing the mood to another higher level. In box 54, the performer should pay attention to the stress mark, the change of intensity and intensity, and the expression of "piu pesante" (more heavy), and pay attention to the dominant breath even if the emotion is excited. The "tr" of the final treble Mi connects the scale down to the bass do, and then to the alto do, and then to the alto saxophone overblow supertenor do, the whole sentence should be in one go, the force mark always makes the "F", the emotion is always maintained and pushed to the highest point until the whole zone is over..

### 3.5. The playing of the fugue

In the fugue part, there is no accompaniment in the first six bars, so the performer should pay attention to the long time of the hollow beat in the first bar, which will destroy the connection with the previous paragraph. For the first time, the 12/8 rhythm of the whole song appeared, and with the mark of the line position in the paragraph, the performer should pay attention to the change of the rhythm. The beginning of a paragraph is mostly the connection between long-span sounds and sounds, and the performer should always maintain the position of the pronunciation point to maintain the coherence and integrity of the sentence. The accompaniment part is added in the last

six bars, and the performer should pay attention to the counterpoint with the accompaniment part and the changes in rhythm caused by the change of the beat mark and the change of the connecting position.

#### **4. The difficulties of performance in the works and their solutions**

##### **4.1. The breath of the whole music performance and its practice method**

Breath plays a dominant role in our saxophone performance. The author summarizes the breath system of saxophone performance through the performance of this work and daily learning experience, which is mainly divided into three points: (from top to bottom) mouth, throat cavity and "dantian". These three points players can not master clearly, in the performance will appear a series of problems, such as not spitting fast, sound and sound connection is not smooth, super high pitch can not blow out.

In order to better perform this concerto, the author makes a summary of the three points of the breath system: the mouth refers to the muscles of the mouth and the position of the pronunciation point. Most players pay attention to their mouth shape when playing, but it is easy to have a stiff face and a stiff mouth. Our face and cheeks should be relaxed, only the upper and lower muscles around the mouth support the flute head and exert force. First breathe in before playing, abdominal breathing or chest and abdomen breathing can be, but in the moment of natural air, the breath sinks below the navel, which is often said "dantian". In the natural air, usually the players will pay attention to the state of "ah" like singing, the throat is open, but at this time the players are easy to pay attention to the throat, in the breath is sent out, the mouth intersection makes the whistle vibrate the pronunciation point will be in the back of the oral space, especially the high voice area obviously feel the sound is very sharp, and easy to break the sound. In the performance of the larynx open like singing, the state of "ah", in fact, in the performance does not need to be deliberately paid attention to, is solid in the breath position, maintain a positive natural air, the breath makes the whistle vibration resistance, this part of the resistance makes the larynx open, the shoulder and the chest will not be tense. In daily practice, the player can do more alto rise do practice, pay attention to the stability of the three points, natural gas, ten minutes before each practice, maintain practice, for the player's grasp of the instrument itself and the grasp of the sound is very helpful. These three points complement each other, the absence of any point will not exist, in the three points support each other to achieve balance, the sound and musical expression is the best..

##### **4.2. Fingering problems and practice methods**

The problem of motifs is a problem that every saxophonist faces when playing. In this concerto, there are a large number of fast rhythm patterns that are constantly changing and have long sentences with a combination of articulation. The author's understanding of the operation of the finger is that the palm joint of the finger rotates, according to the rhythm and speed of the mark, the finger is linked to the key. Most players count the second joint from the fingertip as the main linkage point, so that the uneven movement of fingers will occur when doing long phrases with fast rhythm patterns and complex changes. In the fast rhythm of complex long phrases, players can slow down the speed to practice, gradually speed up to the speed required by the work; Another way to practice, you can change the rhythm type, four sixteen rhythm types, can be converted into symbol points or former symbol points, the first eight after sixteen can be converted into the first sixteen after eight, first slow, then speed up, and then into the original rhythm type of the spectrum surface to play.

In the performance of the finger problem, the performer also need to pay attention to, do not pay attention to every note, so that it will focus on each tone of the key, so that the key is slow, pay more attention to the integrity of the sentence, pay more attention to the line of the sentence, fingers relax, it will be a lot easier.

### **4.3. The key points and practice methods of each tone playing**

In this concerto, there are many large spans, from the low register to the high register, from the middle register to the low register or the high register, etc., maintaining the stability of the breath system during performance will improve the flow of phrases a lot, but there are different key points in the performance of different registers.

When playing in the bass register, the amount of breath will be slightly larger, the breath position below the navel will be deeper than that in the middle register, the position of the pronunciation point will always be maintained, and the throat will be opened more fully under the action of the reaction force. When playing in the high register, the gas speed will be faster, the aspirated state will be more positive, the breath position below the navel will be deeper than the bass area, the mouth muscles will be more concentrated, the pronunciation point is stable, and the throat will be opened more fully. Usually when the player plays the high notes or to the high notes, there will be a feeling of standing on tiptoe upward, this feeling will make the body breath position involuntarily up, it will make the treble play "virtual", the breath position down, there is a feeling of sitting down, it will alleviate this situation. Practice method: Practice more than 24 major and minor scales, experience the relationship between three point changes and stability while constantly changing the vocal area, pay attention to the relaxation of shoulders and chest.

### **4.4. The playing of the words**

Articulation is the most commonly used and basic skill in the performance of saxophone. There are a lot of applications of articulation skills in this concerto, such as articulation and linking, jumping, stress and so on.

First of all, in the state of aspirated, the whistle vibrates and makes sound, and a point on the tongue touches the whistle for a moment to prevent the whistle from vibrating and making sound, and the resulting sound effect is the sound of the whistle. Secondly, the effect of the pronunciation is affected by the state of the tongue in the pronunciation, the state of the breath when playing the pronunciation, and the attention tendency of the performer when playing. During the performance, the tongue is kept relaxed in the mouth, flat on the lower jaw of the mouth, and the tip of the tongue lightly touches the whistle when the voice is uttered, and the tip of the tongue makes an elastic forward and backward movement. ① The state of breath when playing the pronunciation. The performer should maintain a positive aspirated breath state when playing the spit, and the elastic forward and backward movement of the tongue will be faster when combined with the flow of the breath, and the spit effect will be more granular. ② The attention of the performer is inclined. When playing a long phrase with a lot of pronunciation, the performer should pay more attention to the line and integrity of the phrase, which is conducive to positive ventilation, make the tongue muscles more relaxed and move forward and back, and make the clever combination of the two to better play the pronunciation.

### **4.5. Super high notes playing method**

Supertenor performance is one of the more difficult skills in saxophone performance. After playing this concerto and daily practice, the author thinks and summarizes a method of playing supertenor: Under the premise of ensuring that the breath position is firm and downward, the throat is fully opened, the position of the pronunciation point is stable, and the mouth muscles are more concentrated, the tongue tip in the mouth touches the tongue root, and slides along the lower jaw of the mouth and the tooth root. The tip of the tongue touches the root of the tongue, you can try to say "ku" to experience, slide along the lower part of the mouth until it touches the lower part of the tooth. in this interval of the tongue tip movement, each slide position is a position where the supertenor can be pronounced, and the supertenor So played by the middle saxophone has been moving upward, but as the range rises during playing, The breath position needs to always be below the navel, with a more downward feel, and the mouth muscles need to be more concentrated. At the beginning, you can only practice with the flute head, regardless of the thickness of the whistle, and the stability of the slightly sliding position of the tip of the tongue makes it easier to play the super

treble.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper takes Glazunov's works and the problems encountered in the process of performance as the research object, through the analysis of musical scores, to improve the understanding of Saxophone music and performance ability.

In order to improve the playing technique in the wind, it is necessary to breathe in the correct way. When practicing, players should pay attention to the posture of the body, stand with feet shoulder width apart, relax the whole body posture, and carry out breathing training and playing practice with correct mouth movements when playing, pay attention to the processing of emotions in music, and show the emotions in music to the full through the change of timbre.

Players should pay more attention to the daily accumulation of basic abilities, especially the use of breath. While strengthening the basic ability of saxophone playing and various playing techniques, I can fully apply it to this work and better interpret it.

This article focuses on the players from the perspective of practice, to provide players with some practice methods, practice ideas, hope that this article can be helpful to players.

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