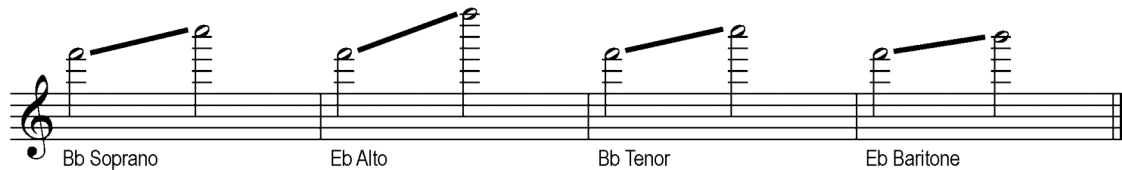


# Some Extended Techniques for Saxophone

## Altissimo

The saxophone altissimo, or extended range, is a technique that has become quite commonplace amongst advanced and professional level players. Below, you will find written altissimo range suggestions for each instrument:



## Timbre Variations:

The timber of a certain pitch can be varied through the use of alternate fingerings, or by opening and closing additional tone holes. For example, there are three ways to finger a middle Bb – each resulting in a difference of timbre and intonation. Middle A on the other hand has no alternate fingerings. Timber variation may be obtained through the opening and closing of additional tone holes.

## Quarter Tones:

The saxophone is an instrument that is capable of playing quarter tones. Quarter tones are obtained through the use of so-called ‘unconventional’ fingerings.

## Glissando and Portamento:

A glissando is characterized by rapid chromatic (sometimes diatonic) movement, while portamento is a sliding between two notes. These techniques became common of the saxophone during the 1920s Vaudeville Era, and have since made their way into contemporary literature. It is important to note that this technique is most effective in the upper register of the instrument.

## Slap Tonguing:

As a single reed instrument, the saxophone is capable of an effect commonly referred to as “slap tonguing.” It is an effect that creates a percussive articulation, along with resonance of the desired pitch. It is as a result of suction in the mouth, and the sound that the reed produces which is amplified as it travels through the horn. This is generally notated with a plus sign (+) over the pitch.

## Percussive Effects:

Key clicks occur when a saxophonist fingers a specific note and then quickly closes the keys, resulting in a clicking sound and a resonating pitch. When notating key clicks, it is important to keep in mind that the fingered pitch **is not always** the pitch that will sound when the key is depressed.

Also, a clicking sound can be produced when opening the keys, as well as closing them. (This sound is not inevitable and can be eliminated. It is, however, another option for creating percussive effects on the saxophone.)



Figure 1: *Dispersions* from *Paradigms I* for Alto Saxophone by Ronald L. Caravan

Notice in **Figure 1**, the composer has placed the note heads indicating the pitches he wants the performers to finger. This composer has also indicated the pitches that will *sound* as the key clicks resonate through the instrument. It is important to note that this is not common practice. It is also important to note that the resonating pitch is not always a minor third above the fingered pitch, though it would seem so from this example.