



# Syncopating Saxophones

*Alfred V. Frankenstein*

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SYNCOPATING SAXOPHONES BY ALFRED V. FRANKENSTEIN CHICAGO, ROBERT O. BALLOU, 1925 To the memory of Joseph Schreurs for thirty years first clarinetist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, my first real teacher, and the man who opened my eyes to what music really is. INTRODUCTION IN THE beginning is the fact. After the fact come the theorists who explain that fact. The theory crystallizes into a law, and its expositors constitute themselves a court, demanding observance of that law. This is art. Meanwhile, there have come into being new facts. And they go over the process again, always well behind the fact and its application likewise there is the same insistence on the observance of the law. This, again, is art. Something is happening in music, said Alexander Russell, and the five words mean much. This something especially touches our American musical art. It is the spirit of today, of us. It is jazz. Who knows about it That man who is its high priest or its day laborer, as you like it's the same thing. It is the fact about which our theorists have no theory the musical lawyers, therefore, also wait. Only he who has squirted its mellifluous subtle ties from a wa-wa muted trumpet, or a gurgling sax, or sneaky tuba can tell you the truth and he rarely looks upon his feat as other than a part of the days ritual. Once in a while he has the gift of interpretation. When he says thus-and-so of the bass clarinet, it is not that tone color of exquisite quality, or a bored stick of wood with a temperamental reed of bamboo to be dandled like a babe with the colic which he recalls it is an art of making beauty, the mechanics so mastered as to be unconscious, the experience of giving and taking and of instant virtuosity become instinct. Syncopating Saxophones blossomed from the soil. Day after day, have I looked across the tops of the six dozen music stands of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, and there seen its author responsive and responsible, one eye on the printed page, the other eye on the conductor, and fingers busy on the bass clarinets silvered keys. By night your dancing, eating pleasure seekers have seen him in a small group, a unit among players just as expert, just as fervent in the practice of another art, an art, by the way, as exacting as that of his day time occupation. Hence, when Brother Frankenstein says The jazz orchestra of today is a perfect thing, as perfect in its field as a large symphony orchestra 13 he is not talking from the point of view of a man who has done a little singing, and a little piano playing, a little concert going and a little dancing 10 in cabarets. He has worked in both ensembles. He has read everything printed by the bigwigs of the western world. He has played the works of the French Six, whose debt to American ragtime in its Paris invasion of two decades ago sometime will be comprehended and explained. He has seen and talked with the Russian Stravinski in the workshop of actual symphony orchestra rehearsal. He is the doer who is become vocal. Eric Delamarter 11 PREFACE may be some mental comment on JL the part of the reader concerning my spelling of Russian names. The orthography I use is that worked out by Carl Van Vechten for his edition of Rimski-Korsakovs autobiography, with certain modifications of my own. It is the natural and logical way to spell Russian names in English, but to go into elaborate explanations of the reason for its existence is out of place here. Thanks are due to the editor of Pearsons Magazine for permission to reprint Igor Stravinski, Musician of the Machine Age and to the editor of The Etude for the use of The Musical Babel. The opinions expressed in these pages are subject to change without notice. 13 CONTENTS Introduction. By Eric Delamarter - - - 9 Preface -----13 Igor Stravinski. By Pablo Picasso - - - 17 Igor Stravinski, musician of the machine age 19 Paul Whiteman...

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