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# The History of the Saxophone



Pictured: Alto Saxophone. Saxophone by Matt Caddie is licensed under CC-BY.

History of the saxophone



*Adolphe Sax*  
Born - 6 Nov. 1814

[1]

Photo of Adolphe Sax is public domain.

- Adolphe Sax
- Born 6 Nov. 1814 | Dinant, Belgium
- Died 4 Feb. 1894 | Paris, France
- Son of Charles-Joseph Sax
- First started working with musical instruments in his father's workshop.
- Student at the Brussels Conservatory, developed musical skills that helped him design instruments.
- Moved to Paris in 1842 to continue his career after rejecting offers located in London and St. Petersburg.



Invented around 1840.

First played in public in  
December 1844.

Patented in March 1846.



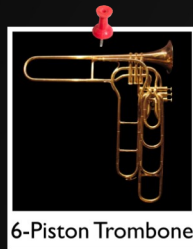
[2]

Pictured: Engraving of the instrument originally patented by Adolphe Sax. Image unattributed from Grove Music Online. Image used under Fair Dealing.

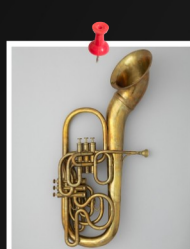
- Image: Engraving of original patent image.
- Invented around 1840.
- First performed publicly 1 Dec. 1844 in the première of Kastner's opera *Le dernier roi de Juda*.

“Le dernie-ey rwa de Zhuda”

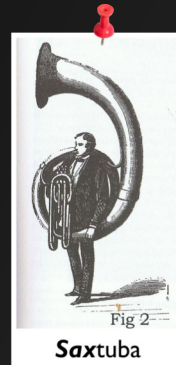
- 21 March 1846 - Sax finally applied for a French patent for ‘a new system of wind instruments, called the saxophone’.
- Now they are produced by companies such as:
  - Weril (Brazil)
  - Yamaha (JP)
  - Yanagisawa (JP)



6-Piston Trombone

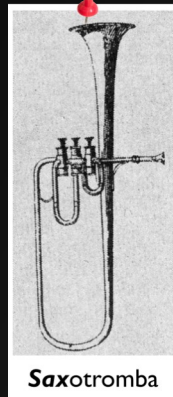


Bass **Sax**horn



**Sax**tuba

**Adolphe Sax's  
Other Musical Instruments**



**Sax**otromba



**Sax**horn

[3]

Saxhorn photo by the Minnesota Historical Society (CC-BY-SA). 6-Piston Trombone photo by Wikipedia user Rama (CC-BY-SA). All other photos are public domain.

- Other Instruments
  - 6-Piston Trombone
  - Saxotromba
  - Saxtuba
  - Saxhorn & Bass Saxhorn

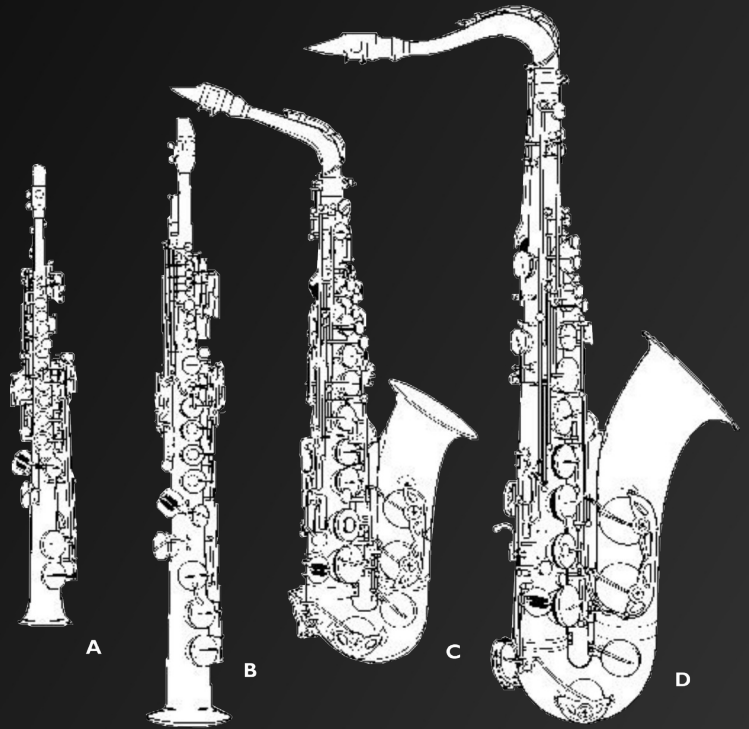


A) Sopranino in E  $\flat$

B) Soprano in B  $\flat$

C) Alto in E  $\flat$

D) Tenor in B  $\flat$



[2]

Image unattributed from Grove Music Online.

## Some Types of Saxophones:

A) Sopranino in Eb

B) Soprano in Bb

C) Alto in Eb

D) Tenor in Bb

## All Saxes:

(**Bold** = Listed)

1	Sopranissimo	B $\flat$
2	<b>Sopranino</b>	E $\flat$
3	<b>Soprano</b>	B $\flat$
4	<b>Alto</b>	E $\flat$
5	<b>Tenor</b>	B $\flat$
6	Baritone	E $\flat$
7	Bass	B $\flat$
8	Contrabass	E $\flat$
9	Subcontrabass	B $\flat$



Mouthpiece {



[2]

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- Mouthpiece
- Holds a reed (wider than that of a clarinet)
- Usually made from **ebonite**, **wood**, **metal**, **plastic** or even **glass**.



Neck



Saxophone by Matt Caddie is licensed under CC-BY.

- Neck
- Connects mouthpiece and body





Body

[2]

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- Body
- Metals used for the body and the ligature include **brass, bronze, copper, steel, silver** and sometimes **aluminium**;
- **Wood** and **glass** are also used but are less common.



*Adolphe Sax*  
Died – 4 Feb. 1894

[1], [3], [4]

Photo of Adolphe Sax is public domain.

- Adolphe Sax
- Sax suffered from lip cancer between 1853 and 1858 but made a full recovery.
- Died 4 Feb. 1894 | Paris, France from pneumonia in poverty (due to a number of lawsuits against him).



## Credits and Citations

[1] – **Philip Bate** and **Wally Horwood**. "Sax family." Grove Music Online. 2001; Accessed 20 Sep. 2021.

<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000024666>.

[2] – **Claus Raumberger** and **Karl Ventzke**. "Saxophone." Grove Music Online. 2001; Accessed 20 Sep. 2021.

<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000024670>.

[3] – **Wikipedia contributors**. "Adolphe Sax." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia; Accessed 20 Sep. 2021.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Adolphe\\_Sax&oldid=1039798100](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Adolphe_Sax&oldid=1039798100).

[4] – Adolphe Sax's Obituary in the **New-York Tribune**, 10 Feb. 1894; Accessed 20 Sep. 2021.

<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/3568998/adolphe-sax-obituary/>

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Produced by Oliver Kotla

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