

# Basic Detail Report

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## Alto Saxophone, E-flat

### Date

1950 ca.

### Primary Maker

John E. Dallas & Sons Ltd.

### Description

Body made of injection-molded, ivory-white acrylic plastic, with orange-gold-lacquered brass neck and keywork. Clear acrylic guards and mother-of-pearl touchpieces. Unique keywork mechanism with 22 touchpieces and non-standard coiled spring system. Low keys on same side of bell. Single-touch automatic octave key. Front high F key, bis B-flat key, side B-flat and side C keys, and forked F-sharp key. Original ivory-white Dearman mouthpiece. The iconic "Grafton" saxophone was designed in 1945 by

Italian musician and engineer, Ettore (Hector) Sommaruga (1904-1989), who was partially influenced by war-related restrictions on metal and awareness of new manufacturing materials, like acrylic thermoplastics. He applied for and was granted British Patents No. 604,407 (focused on body parts and manufacture), and No. 604,418 (focused on keywork mechanism), both accepted on July 2, 1948. The saxophone was named after Grafton Way near Tottenham Court Road in London, the location of Sommaruga's first premises. Manufacture was licensed to John E. Dallas & Sons Ltd. (Dallas Musical Instruments Ltd.) and commercial production began in 1950. Although the "Graftons" were developed as plastic alternatives to the scarce metal, and sold at half-prices than regular saxophones (sold at 58GBP), production hindered over the years because it was not sustainable. It only lasted ten years, approximately, and only about 3,000 instruments were made. The Grafton model was played by jazz musicians Ornette Coleman and Charlie Parker, and was also the first musical instrument owned by David Bowie. In the British jazz scene, a young John Dankworth was Grafton's most valuable supporter.

### Dimensions

- Footprint (HxWxD): 650 x 125 x 315mm - Total neck to bottom height: 650mm - Bell diameter: 125mm - Bore at neck tenon: 22.5mm - Initial bore at neck receiver: 12mm - Sounding length: 1030mm - neck (excludes tenon): 170mm - body: 470mm - lower bow and bell tube (single-piece): 390mm