

THE JASCHA GUREWICH STORY

By Olli-Pekka Tuomisalo

Jascha Gurewich (1896 – September 30, 1938, NY, Manhattan)

”Born in Russia, he emigrated to the USA and was solo saxophonist with the Sousa Band. He wrote many brilliant light solos”. (Yehudi Menuhin Music Guides / Saxophone. Paul Harvey, 1995)

”Gurewich (1896-1938), born in Russia, was the composer of a saxophone concerto, a sonata, and numerous lighter works. During Gurewich’s year as soloist with Sousa’s band (from 1920 to 1921), the famous conductor regarded the soloist’s abilities as exceptional. Gurewich’s Concerto, opus 102 (written about 1925), was dedicated to Sousa; it is still available from the Rubank Company. One of the earliest saxophonists to perform with different symphony orchestras, he was the first to give a recital of serious literature in New York City’s Aeolian Hall, on 31 January 1926. Hemke says, ”Gurewich was an exceptional artist and an American pioneer in concert saxophone performance.” --- ”After training as a violinist, Gurewich became a fine saxophonist and was a soloist with the Sousa Band for the 1920-21 season. On the back cover of the Aeolian Series of Saxophone Solos (George Sanders Co., 1926), Sousa is quoted:

I have heard all of the finest saxophone players of the last thirty years and the majority of them have played for me, but I have never heard anyone to equal you.

Known as the Heifetz of the alto saxophone, Gurewich was one of the first saxophonists to perform with eastern symphony orchestras and the first to give a saxophone recital of serious music. On 31 January 1926, Gurewich presented a concert at Aeolian Hall in New York featuring his Concerto, opus 102. The Concerto and his Sonata, opus 130, were the first large saxophone works published in America. He also composed and arranged numerous solos of lighter musical quality for George F. Sanders and other companies; many were published for alto, tenor, or C melody saxophones.” (Harry Gee: Saxophone Soloists and Their Music, 1844-1985. Indiana University Press, 1986)

”Jascha Gurewich (1896-1938), promoted as the ”Heifetz of the saxophone”, performed briefly with the Sousa Band and made his career with a number of symphony orchestras, as well as presenting the first recital of serious saxophone music in New York City’s Aeolian Hall in 1926.” (The Cambridge Companion to the Saxophone)

Not much has been written about this saxophone virtuoso from the golden age of this instrument and early radio stars. Even this small amount of material includes wrong information;

- 1) Gurewich did not write his Concerto in 1925 but a few years earlier. It was first *published* that year but he performed it already in 1923.
- 2) He gave the first recital of serious saxophone music at Carnegie Hall on December 9, 1923. His 1926 recital at the Aeolian Hall was his *3rd* important recital in New York City – with mostly the same program.
- 3) ”...one of the first saxophonists to perform with eastern symphony orchestras...”
”...made his career with a number of symphony orchestras...” Which orchestras? When? What did he play if these lines are based on reality.

Jascha Gurewich was born in Russia and he emigrated to the USA probably during 1910's. It is mentioned in the National Archives that Jacob (!) Gurewich was born on October 15, 1896 in Russia. Very little is known about his early years. It was mentioned in a couple of New York Times articles (December 9 & 10, 1923) that *he served with the American Army in the trenches in France.* The Musical Trade Review wrote before his 1923 Carnegie Hall concert the following:

Born of wealthy parents in a small Russian city, he had every advantage in early training. From earliest youth he evinced a decided preference for the wind instruments, despite the continual urgings of parents and teachers that he devote himself to the violin. For years he studied trumpet; then he trifled with the trombone. His parents were all but horrified at the thought of their prodigy developing into nothing more than a first trumpeter or first trombonist with a symphony orchestra. Young Jascha was obdurate, however, through early youth, when he migrated to America, settling in New York. In this country he encountered that instrument which was born in France but brought to perfection in America – the saxophone.

Before joining John Philip Sousa's Band Gurewich worked with Julius Lenzberg's orchestra at the Colonial Theatre in New York and after that played in Canada with Thaviu's band. After one season he heard that Sousa was looking for a saxophone player. Gurewich played for Sousa at an audition and he was immediately hired for the 1920 season beginning August 1. His solo debut was on August 15 1920 at Willow Grove when he performed his own composition *Juliana*. Two days later he played an arrangement of Fritz Kreisler's *Schön Rosmarin*. Three more solo performances followed during that short season; he played Rudy Wiedoeft's *Valse Erica* on August 22 and H. Benne Henton's *Laverne* on both August 22 and September 8, 1920. Sousa's 1921 season began on July 14 and Gurewich returned to the orchestra with five new solo works composed by himself; *Souvenir de Chamounix*, *Valse Caprice Helen*, *Laughing gas*, *Passing thought* and *Emily*. His other solo numbers were *Maritana* by Wallace-Garing, *Gypsy life* by La Thiere and *Souvenir Poetique* by Zdenko Fibich. During that summer he played 13 times as soloist with the Sousa Band – four times at Montreal's Dominion Park from July 16 through 25 and nine times at Willow Grove between August 7 and early September. His last solo performance was September 3, 1921 at the Willow Grove. Sousa was injured after he was thrown from a horse on September 6 and the rest of the September shows were cancelled.

Some sources have listed Gurewich as Sousa's soloist during the tour between November 1921 and March 1922 but researchers believe that he did not return after leaving on September. However, John (!) Gurewich is mentioned as saxophone soloist in December 24 & 26, 1921 numbers of Los Angeles Herald: *Twelve soloists will be heard with Sousa's band when it comes to Philharmonic auditorium, Jan. 2, 3 and 4 on the thirteenth transcontinental tour of the march king and his musicians.*

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AND HIS **BAND**

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA Conductor
Lieutenant Commander U.S.N.R.F.

13th TRANS-CONTINENTAL TOUR

Mon., Tues., Wednesday, Jan. 2, 3, 4.
Matinees and Evenings.

The Largest Band in the World With the Following Soloists:

Miss Mary Baker	Soprano
Miss Florence Hardeman	Violin
Miss Winifred Bambrick	Harp
Mr. John Dolan	Cornet
Mr. George J. Carey	Xylophone
Mr. William M. Kunkel	Piccolo
Mr. R. Meredith Willson	Flute
Mr. Joseph Norrito	Clarinet
Mr. John Gurewich	Saxophone
Mr. Joseph De Luca	Euphonium
Mr. William Pierce	Horn
Mr. J. P. Schueler	Trombone

Attractive Low Prices for the Most Expensive Musical
Organization in the World.

Prices 75c, \$1.00, \$1.50, \$2.00 (Plus 10% Tax)

Seats on Sale Tuesday, 9 to 5, at Auditorium Box Office

After leaving the Sousa Band Gurewich settled in New York. During summer 1922 he performed every afternoon and evening at the Steeplechase Ballroom in Coney Island, accompanied by a "house band" that had already played there for five years. His solo numbers included *La Jolei Anna* [Juliana] and *Souvenir de Chamounix*, both of which had been in his repertoire already with Sousa. "The Story of the Saxophone" published by Buescher Band Instrument Co in December 1923 includes a couple of interesting lines about Gurewich:

Mr. Gurewich has appeared as soloist with several leading Symphony Orchestras of New York... ---For three seasons Jascha Gurewich with his Eb Alto Buescher Saxophone was featured at the top of the roster of Sousa Soloists.

These of course raise a few questions: What did he play, with which orchestras and when? And again: did he continue with Sousa after September 1921? Many publications in 1920's mentioned him as Sousa soloist for three seasons, not two.

Gurewich used his reputation as a highly praised soloist with Sousa's Band when he began working on his solo career. In early 1923 he was already a hot name in the New York music scene. He became the musical director for the famous dancing Mosconi Family when they began performing at the Keith's Bushwick playhouse in

Brooklyn. The following review is from New York Clipper, December 20 1922: *The next to closing spot could not have held a better dance offering than Mosconi Brothers, with brother Willie and sister Verna, who exceeded expectations with a varied routine of original and difficult steps that have no competition in vaudeville. The show was stopped cold until Pa Mosconi came out for a bow. Jascha Gurewich was the musical director.*

Gurewich signed a contract already in 1920 with the Buescher Band Instrument Company that appeared to be very important for his career. He was still a soloist with the Sousa Band when The Music Trade Review published this article (December 25, 1920):

HAS SOLID GOLD SAXOPHONE

New York Band Instrument Co. Displays Costly Instrument Made Specially for Sousa Soloist by Buescher Co., of Elkhart, Ind.

The show window of the New York Band Instrument Co., Cooper square, contains the interesting exhibit of a beautiful solid gold saxophone manufactured by the Buescher Band Instrument Co., Elkhart, Ind. The instrument was made for J. Gurewich, the well-known saxophone soloist with Sousa's Band. Mr. Gurewich, who has made for himself a wonderful reputation among the country's leading artists on the saxophone, has long been a great admirer of the Buescher band instruments and praises them highly. The Buescher line is represented by the New York Band Instrument Co., which reports a great demand for Buescher goods among both the professional and amateur trade.

The Music Trade Review July 7, 1923 featured a huge article on this unique co-operation.

Nation-wide campaign put on by the Buescher Band Instrument Co., Elkhart, Ind., in co-operation with its local distributors, featuring Jascha Gurewich, the well-known saxophonist a striking example of using the artist to sell the instrument.

An excellent example of what the proper sort of publicity will do for music dealers is the nation-wide campaign being put on by the Buescher Band instrument Co., Elkhart, Ind., in combination with its dealers in many cities. The campaign embodies a series of local tie-ups with the appearances in each city of Jascha Gurewich, who is playing the Buescher saxophone on a coast-to-coast vaudeville tour.

This plan offers unlimited possibilities to music dealers everywhere for similar tie-ups with touring artists who feature certain musical instruments

and a link-up by means of advertisements, letters to prospects, concerts and other forms of advertising. The Buescher plan of booking Gurewich around the Buescher dealer circuit has brought in a great deal of extra business to these dealers and the modus operandi of the plan is well worth the consideration of dealers in general.

Gurewich has appeared in as many as twenty Buescher dealers' stores since the first of January. In each store he has given at least one recital and the dealers have done their part in giving splendid publicity to the recital. Some dealers report selling as many as twenty Buescher saxophones on the day of the Gurewich recital.

In the first place, Jascha Gurewich is a saxophone artist of the first rank. When he appears at a vaudeville house he never fails to give a striking demonstration of the artistic capabilities of the saxophone. This undoubtedly stimulates a lively interest in the saxophone and they are anxious to hear him again, so when the recital at the dealer's store is advertised they flock to the store.

At this recital he generally gives another demonstration of the saxophone as a real musical instrument and follows this up showing how easy it is for even a beginner to play a saxophone acceptably.

The chief value in the recital, however, is to get the prospective customers into the store. The wise dealer realizes that this is his chief problem, getting the prospects to come in where the salesmen can talk to them. Once inside, the salesman has better than a fifty-fifty chance of persuading the members of the audience to try the saxophone, for Mr. Gurewich generally puts over the initial selling arguments through the horn.

The dealer generally sees to it that there is a liberal supply of Buescher literature scattered promiscuously and conveniently throughout the store. This includes the many lithographed advertising signs and cut-out displays furnished by the Buescher Band Instrument Co. to its dealers. A copy of the famous Buescher Saxophone Booklet is placed on every chair in the recital hall and the audience is able to read all about the saxophone and how easy it is to play one. Usually they are delighted with the Buescher saxophone sales chart and become imbued with the desire to play one of the instruments. Naturally the work of the waiting salesman becomes much easier.

The Buescher Band Instrument Co. furnishes its dealers advertising materials for tying up with the local Gurewich appearance. This includes electrotypes and copy suggestions. In practically every case the dealers have made liberal use of this material and the results have more than justified the advertising expenditures. The accompanying illustration shows the way some of the Buescher dealers have treated the Gurewich recitals in their local advertising campaigns. These advertisements feature Gurewich's record as solo saxophonist with Sousa for three seasons and state that he plays the Buescher saxophone exclusively. The advertisements extend a cordial invitation to hear Gurewich in recital at a specified time at the store. Some of the advertisements feature a coupon to be sent in for complete information about Buescher saxophones.

Some of the stores that have already tied up with the Buescher-Gurewich campaign are the following: The H. C. Hanson Music House, 137 Powell Street, San Francisco; the Southern California Music Co, Los Angeles; G. A. Hausner, 23 ½ South Eight street, Minneapolis; the Tom Brown Music

Co, 17 West Lake street, Chicago; the Crawford-Rutan Co, 1013 Grand avenue, Kansas City, Mo.

This recital tour took Gurewich all around the United States. Here are just a few of the dates and places:

”Buescher Recital Tour 1923”

- April 13, 1923. G. A. Hausner, Minneapolis
- May 8, 1923. Hanson Music House, San Francisco
- May 22, 1923. Southern California Music Co, Los Angeles
- Crawford-Rutan Co, Kansas City
- June 18 – 23, 1923. Tom Brown Music Co., Chicago

Chicago Herald Examiner

Jascha Gurewich plays a saxophone as expertly and as melodiously as Heifetz fiddles.

Public Ledger, Philadelphia, Pa.

Jascha Gurewich demonstrates that the saxophone player may produce something besides jazz on this much maligned instrument.

Evening Journal, Wilmington, Delaware

Jascha Gurewich plays the saxophone with the dexterity and expression that Kreisler has with the violin.

Gurewich spent a few weeks in California while on this tour. He was a guest soloist of the Jinnistan Grotto Band in Los Angeles June 2, 1923.

Los Angeles Times June 3, 1923

An Instrumental Night by Jinnistan Grotto Band.

---The program was highly picturesque and musical. A feature was the saxophone ability of Jascha Gurewich, pronounced by such authorities as Sousa, Carl Edouarde and Chas D. Isacson to be the world's master of the saxophone. He was with Sousa for three years. He has recorded for the Edison and Victor companies and has booked solo engagements under the management of the Concert League of New York City.

Jascha Gurewich apparently exhausts the technical and melodic propensities of the saxophone. Last night he played his own compositions exclusively, delighting the Saturday-night audience of listeners. His first selection was "Ida-Ballet" called the most pretentious modern saxophone composition published for the saxophone. Other splendid numbers were "Kathryne", romance, dedicated to Kathryne E. Thompson of Los Angeles, who accompanied him, "Sunrise", "Emily", "Heartbreaking" and "Slaptonious", the last named being a jazz encore.

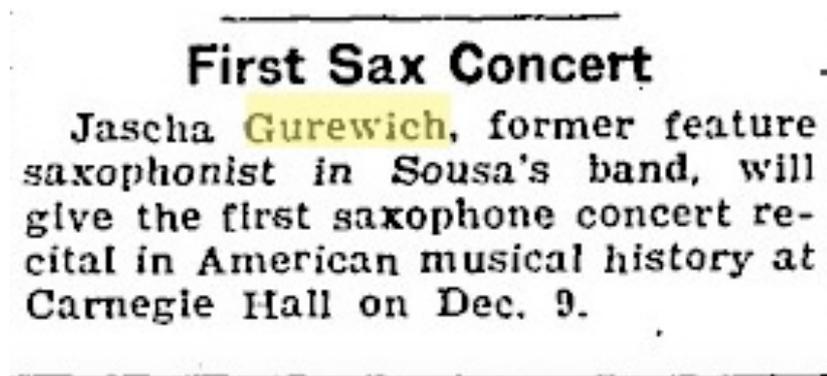
This tour soon led to his biggest success so far: A sold-out recital at the Carnegie Hall. His recital at the Aeolian Hall in January 1926 has long been considered as the first classical saxophone recital in the USA. This is probably because researchers have used his 1926 publications as their sources. These included only his latest reviews – this means reviews from the Aeolian Hall concert. Even his program was almost the

same. So because of the facts showed in this article the first serious saxophone recital in America was held by Jascha Gurewich December 9, 1923 at the Carnegie Hall, New York. Another mistake is that – probably because of the year it was published – it's always been thought that his own Saxophone Concerto was composed in 1925. The fact is that he composed it at least two years earlier. The whole work was performed already in December 1923 in his Carnegie Hall recital.

The Music Trade Review, October 6, 1923:

After several years of practice he appeared as featured soloist with Sousa's Band. For three seasons he dominated the roster of Sousa soloists. Next we hear of him as soloist at the Strand Theatre, New York, appearing in a program of his own compositions, accompanied by a symphony orchestra of nearly one hundred men.

Next, he was offered first chair in one of the leading symphony orchestras of New York, but refused, deciding to devote himself to solo performances. He was sought to play solo saxophone before Strauss himself, when Strauss visited New York recently.



December 9, 1923 Carnegie Hall, New York. Ida Gurewich, piano.

- Jascha Gurewich: Concerto in E minor
- Fritz Kreisler: Liebesfreud'
- Riccardo Drigo: Serenade
- Drigo: Valse bluettes
- Antonin Dvorak: Humoresque
- Felix Mendelssohn: Song without words
- Gurewich: Souvenir de Moscow
- Cesar Cui: Orientale
- Franz Drdla: Souvenir

The New York Times, Sunday December 9, 1923

Jascha Gurewich, who served with the American Army in France, gives a novel program for saxophone tonight at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall.

The New York Times, Monday December 10, 1923

Jascha Gurewich gave a recital for saxophone, said to be the first program of its kind, at the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall last evening. The player, a native of Russia, was formerly a member of Sousa's band, and he served with the American Army in the trenches in France.

The Music Trade Review, December 22, 1923

The First Saxophone Recital in History, given by Jascha Gurewich in the Carnegie Chamber Music Hall, New York, Sunday evening, December 9, was a decided success. The Chamber Music Hall was completely sold out and every seat was occupied as the artist and his accompanist appeared upon the stage.

The program was a diversified one, opening with the Gurewich Concerto of three movements and taking in transcriptions and airs varie of compositions by Dvorak, Drdla, Drigo, Cui, Kreisler, Mendelssohn, etc., etc.

Every style of composition was presented – melodic numbers pure and simple and more pretentious numbers followed each other with rapid succession. Kreisler's "Liebesfreud", gay and sprightly, gave the Buescher saxophone every opportunity to display its agility and fleetness of action, while Drigo's "Serenade" presented unlimited opportunities to the recitalist to show off the abilities of the Buescher alto saxophone in the rendition of altissimo passages usually taken by the violin.

In gay compositions like "Valse Bluettes" the saxophone scored an unqualified success, as was to be expected. In "Humoresque", a favorite violin number, the saxophone won unstinted applause and approbation. Many comments were heard in the audience as to the beauty of this composition played as a saxophone solo. "Souvenir de Moscow" and "Song Without Words", two compositions of widely divergent character and vein were both rendered beautifully.

The Gurewich recital proved one thing and proved it quite conclusively: That the saxophone can no longer be classed as an incomplete or imperfect instrument. It's bird-like upper register compares very favorably in intonation with the string instruments, and in quality of tone left nothing to be desired. There was a total absence of muffle. Every upper register tone came clear and free. The mezzo tones were rich and sonorous, and the lower register most effective.

Legato and stacatto were equally well performed. The reed was never noticeable – there was not one warble in the entire recital. The artist well merited his success and the artist's instrument, a Buescher E flat alto saxophone, won deserved credit.

Mme. Gurewich accompanied her husband on the piano and was the recipient of several handsome bouquets of regal roses, one sent stageward by the personal representative of F. A. Buescher, active head of the Buescher Band Instrument Co., Elkhart, Ind.

This landmark performance was very soon followed by another in the same city. March 6, 1924 saw him giving another recital, this time at the Aeolian Hall.

March 6, 1924 Aeolian Hall, New York. Ida Gurewich, piano.

- Jascha Gurewich: Concerto in E minor
- Cesar Cui: Orientale
- Jascha Gurewich: Kathryne
- Daniel Van Goens: Chanson sans paroles
- Fritz Kreisler: Scön Rosmarin
- Jascha Gurewich: Passion
- Felix Mendelssohn: Song without words
- Johannes Brahms: Hungarian dance 1
- Camille Saint-Saens: The Swan

Almost all critics were enthusiastic about Gurewich's performance:
The New York Tribune, March 7, 1924

The Saxophone, generally an alien in Aeolian Hall, had the whole of last evening to itself, in the skilful hands of Jascha Gurewich. His tone was clear and fluent even in the swiftest passages; display passages aroused great admiration for the technical brilliance displayed.

The New York American, March 7, 1924

The Saxophone, though it does not always travel in the best musical company these days, comes of respectable instrumental lineage and is a recognized member of the best orchestral families. --- The Gurewich performance was that of a virtuoso and it called forth enthusiastic response on the part of the audience.

The Evening World, March 7, 1924

...He played a concerto of his own in accurate style and in tones of pleasant texture. We concede Mr. Gurewich did a good job.

New York Herald, March 7, 1924

Mr. Gurewich's playing showed admirable technical ability and won for him much applause from the large audience.

Only the critics of Brooklyn Standard Union and The New York Telegram And Evening Mail were not very pleased with the concert or with the "classical" way that the saxophone was used.

Brooklyn Standard Union, March 7, 1924

Gurewich's saxophone recital

Paul Whiteman's Jazz Orchestra having made its social debut, with the polite approbation of the musical 400, it is not surprising that the saxophone, instrumental symbol of the new era, should likewise attempt combat with the critical lorgnette. Truly, it was not Jascha Gurewich's recital last night at Aeolian Hall Manhattan; it was the saxophone's. The attempt can hardly be said to have aroused the interest of so distinguished and diversified an audience as the earlier occasion – and justly so, if the saxophone is to be judged by Gurewich's performance.

The programme was opened by the performer's own concerto in E minor, leading one to hope that it would be a special indication of the possibilities of saxophone music, sure as they may be. It was disappointing for the reason that, apart from being rather a trite composition, it in no way indicated having been composed with the saxophone in mind. Cui's "Orientale", however, drew rather effectively upon the plaintiveness which is the instrument's outstanding feature. Gurewich's "Kathryne" was an obvious inconsequentiality and, like the remaining numbers on the programme, in no way indicated a genuine worth in the instrument. Kreisler's "Schone Rosmarin," Van Goens' "Chansons Sans Paroles" and Gurewich's "Passion" a concert tango, were successively futile. Mr. Gurewich also attempted pieces by Mendelssohn, Brahms and Saint-Saens, transcribed from other instrument originals.

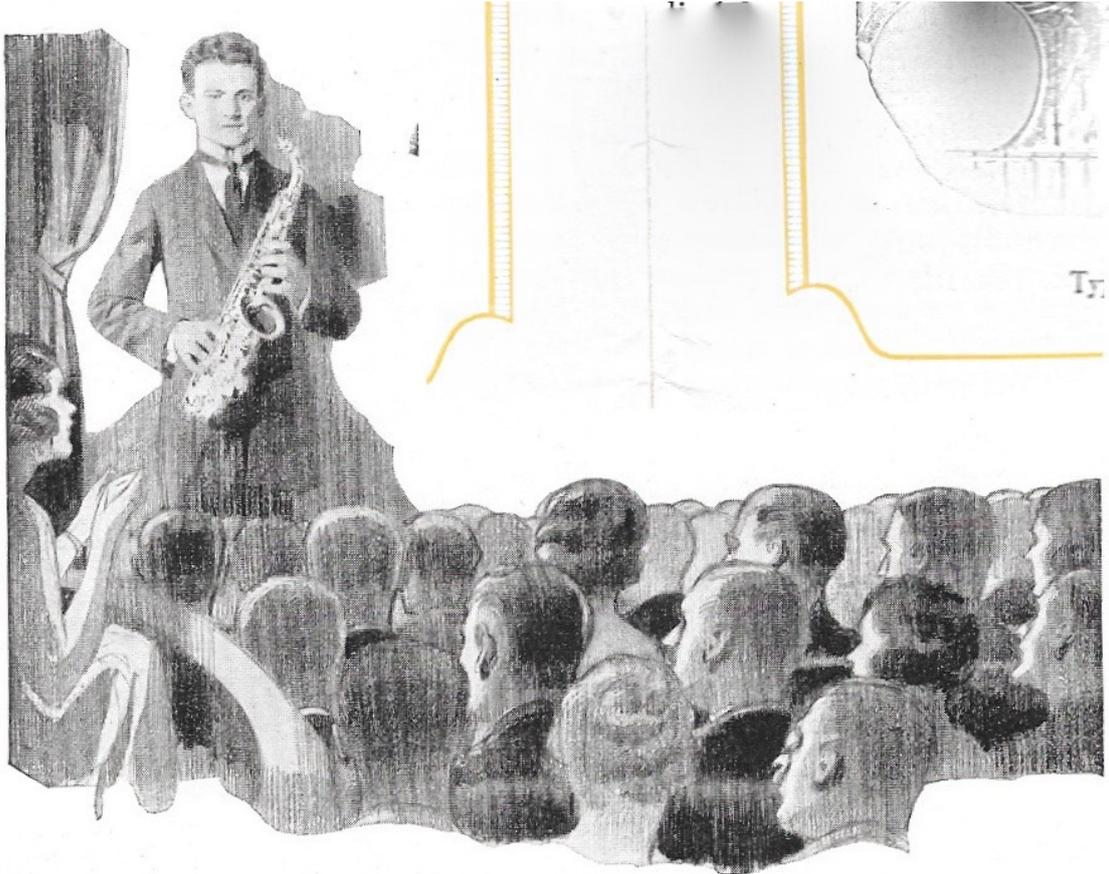
It would be unfair to sweepingly dismiss the saxophone as solo instrument. In its higher reaches, where Gurewich unfortunately seldom ventured, it displayed a sweet lyricism that was surprising, jazz orchestras having almost always indicated a preference for the lower harshness. If the instrument can be sufficiently improved to make this clarity uniform throughout the scale it will prove more interesting. A manifest limitation, of course, one confronting all wind instruments, is the impossibility of playing a chord.

The New York Telegram And Evening Mail March 7, 1924:

There is such a thing as taking music too seriously, and Jascha Gurewich, who gave a recital in Aeolian Hall last night is hampered by having too high artistic ideals. Unfortunately Mr. Gurewich plays the saxophone, and with all of its admirable qualities, the saxophone cannot really be taken seriously. It is not even accepted into the best symphonic society where the bassoon reigns supreme as the humorist. But it is the comedian of the "jazz" band. Where foxtrotting is unrestrained and "jazz" and musical "blues" are hilariously omnipresent, there the saxophone holds a position of great importance.

Mr. Gurewich is a good saxophonist. He plays swift runs with great agility. He phrases with the skill of a concert clarinetist. His tone is excellent. But last night he gave a straightforward recital of serious and quasi-serious music, playing his humorous saxophone as gravely and as earnestly as a kettle drummer beating out the awful accents of a funeral march. If Mr. Gurewich wants to be taken seriously, he must play more humorously.

In 1924 Jascha Gurewich was at the top of his game. The huge success of his New York recitals helped him to become one of the most popular radio soloists. He had contracts with New York based stations including WAAF, WJZ and especially WOR and his radio concerts were heard almost weekly.



Jascha Gurewicz as he appeared in a Saxophone Recital at Carnegie Hall, New York, featuring his own concerto in Eb for Saxophone.



1924 was not just glory for Gurewich. He married Ida Gurewich two years earlier when she was only 18 years old and during spring 1924 they were having serious trouble with their marriage. Ida had accompanied her husband for two years and they seemed to be living a happy life together. But for some reason there was a huge conflict after the March 1924 Aeolian Hall concert. Many New York newspapers were writing about their difficulties;

Brooklyn Standard Union, Wednesday, April 9, 1924

Gurewich's wife wants \$50 a week alimony: All he earns, he declares. Mrs. Ida Gurewich, 20 years old, asked Supreme Justice Carswell today to direct her husband, Jascha Gurewich, saxophone soloist, to pay her \$50 a week alimony, pending trial of her suit for separation.

Mrs. Gurewich said her husband gave recitals at Carnegie and Aeolian halls and played with Paul Whiteman's Band. She accompanied him at the piano at his concert recitals. He earned \$100 a week or more, she said, and she charged that on March 26, when she demanded money for the home, he assaulted her and drove her out. He constantly reminded her he preferred the company of women with "pep", she said.

Mrs. Gurewich studied piano with Ethel Leginska, according to the papers. --- Gurewich declared there was no foundation for his wife's charges. He said he earned about \$50 a week.

"How much money has he in bank?" asked Justice Carswell.

"About \$50," replied Gurewich's lawyer.

"Where does he keep his other property?" asked Justice Carswell.

"He hasn't any - all he's got is a saxophone," replied counsel.

Decision was reserved on the question of alimony.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Wednesday, April 9, 1924

Jascha a bear with the saxophone, but can't keep harmony in home... His temper, she said, is a lurid thing. He has also the wanderlust, she told the court and would rather blow his way 'round the world than stick on such engagements as are given him... Jascha told the court that his wife was a little dear and would be welcome and all that if she would only break away from her mother.

April 16, 1924

Jascha Gurewich, saxophone player, will land in the alimony dodgers' jail as soon as the sheriff catches him, for Justice Lewis in Supreme Court today signed an order for his arrest. Some days ago he was ordered by Justice Carswell to pay \$25 a week to his wife Mrs. Ida Gurewich pending trial of her suit for separation. ---She had just returned from the hospital with their new baby, she told Justice Lewis, when Gurewich entered their apartment at 1291 Eastern Parkway, packed his trunk and left, first telling her that she would not get one cent of alimony from him and that he would leave the State rather than pay. Fearing he will leave the jurisdiction, Mrs. Gurewich got the arrest order.



Gurewich did some solo work with various orchestras. In January 1925 he was touring with the Harry Yerkes Concert Orchestra.

Variety November 19, 1924

Yerkes enters concert field

Harry A. Yerkes, pioneer and veteran in the dance orchestra field, has succumbed to the concert tour lure that seems to have been started by Paul Whiteman. Yerkes will take out a concert orchestra early in January under the auspices of the Aeolian and Duo-Art companies.

A feature of Yerkes' concert program, strictly symphonic, will be the rendition of the first American Symphony ever composed, by Albert Chisferelli, former soloist of the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra.

Among the soloists will be Jascha Gurewich, maestro of the saxophone, who has given solo concerts at Carnegie and Aeolian halls... --- The first concert will be at Aeolian Hall with a tour to follow.

Aeolian Hall

Sunday Afternoon, December 6th

At 3 O'Clock

HARRY YERKES

and his famous

Syncopating Symphonists

A Program of Modernized Jazz featuring for the first time on any
program a new American Jazz Symphony by

ALBERT CHIAFFARELLI

SEATS: 50c. to \$2.00; BOXES: \$15.00
(Plus Tax)

Make your reservations now.

HARRY CYPHERS

Steinway Hall, 109 West 57th Street

Mrs. John W. Lyman, Personal Representative

A sensation in the musical novelties will be presented by WOR tonight when Jascha Gurewich and his saxophone sextette, picked from his own band, will make their radio debut. Those familiar with the artistic renown of Mr. Gurewich will anticipate the treat in store for them.

The sextet is the result of years of careful selection and training, and it is bound to find a permanent place in the repertoire of all music lovers, whether their tastes be classical or popular. (The New York Telegram and Evening Mail, January 7, 1925)

After performing solo concerts in the radio he became interested in leading bigger saxophone ensembles. In January 1925 he formed a saxophone sextet and already in February it was renamed *Jascha Gurewich Saxophone Ensemble*. By that time it consisted of 18 members, 16 of which were saxophonists. This ensemble became very popular and – just like his solo recitals a year before – it was heard once a week during 1925, mostly on WOR station. His co-operation with the Buescher company also got deeper. The New York Band Instrument Company had a weekly broadcast on the WJZ station called "Buescher Saxophone Hours".

---The latest of the series was the concert by Jascha Gurewich, one of America's best-known performers on the saxophone, with his twenty-piece concert saxophone band, which stressed the real importance of the saxophone as a real musical instrument capable of great things when played by artists of merit. ---Mr. Gurewich's program featured only Buescher instruments, this being the instrument that the conductor himself plays exclusively in all his work. He played a number of solos as well as the solo parts in all the orchestra numbers and it is believed that he has brought home to millions of radio fans the beauty of the saxophone not only as a solo instrument but as the backbone of the present-day dance orchestra. (The Music Trade Review, May 23, 1925)

The New York Telegram and Evening Mail (February 11, 1925) gave some insight to the style and material that Gurewich's ensemble was playing.

Wizards of the "Sax"

Jascha Gurewich, famous saxophone virtuoso, and his band will be on the air this evening broadcasting from station WOR. So tremendous was the ovation given the Jascha Gurewich saxophone ensemble on the occasion of their recent recital over the Jersey station that it was thought advisable to procure their services once more, in response to public demand.

The program tonight will open, as before, with the Pan-American overture by Victor Herbert, and will include several of the best jazz hits of the day, together with a novelty arrangement of "Charlie, My Boy" in a varied assortment of rhythms, Spanish, Jewish, Chinese and Dutch, and ending with straight American jazz.

Gurewich already had the next goal in his mind. He gave another sold-out recital at the Aeolian Hall. This time he got only positive reviews from the press.

January 31, 1926 Aeolian Hall, New York. Leon Frankel, piano.

- Jascha Gurewich: Concerto in E minor
- Jascha Gurewich: Hungarian Dance
- Felix Mendelssohn: Song without words
- Gurewich: Fantasy in F-minor
- Giacomo Puccini: Musetta waltz (from La Boheme)
- Fritz Kreisler: Liebesfreud'
- Christoph Willibald Gluck: Andante
- Gurewich: Seguidilla
- Gurewich: Caprice
- Puccini: In those soft silken curtains (from Manon Lescaut)
- Gurewich: Passion
- Mihail Glinka: The Lark

- Cadman: At dawning
- Kreisler: Schön Rosmarin
- Burleigh: Little mother of mine
- Isaac Albeniz: Cadiz

The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, New York, Sunday, January 31, 1926

The saxophone will figure in the day's music through the recital to be given this evening in Aeolian Hall by Jascha Gurewich.

The New York Sun, Monday, February 1, 1926

Jascha Gurewich Plays Own Saxophone Music

An entertaining variation of the various Jaschas, Saschas and Mischas now before the public appeared at Aeolian Hall last night in the person of Jascha Gurewich, self-styled saxophone virtuoso.

Mr. Gurewich's evening of music was a bright star of hope in the dull clouds of a depressing session of Sunday night concerts. The name of Gurewich was liberally sprinkled among a list of composers, including Glinka, Kreisler, Burleigh and others. Mr. Gurewich's own concerto in E minor (op. 102, by the way) opened the impressive proceedings. There were three movements, allegro con moto, Romanza and Presto. And the Presto was played presto.

Inevitably a prolonged session on the saxophone tends to become monotonous. But Mr. Gurewich, indubitably a master of his instrument, introduced a surprisingly wide range of color in his performance. There appeared to be no technical demand which he did not meet with ease, and most of his own music was well worth hearing. It was an interesting performance worth a repetition in the near future.

New York Herald Tribune, February 1, 1926

At Aeolian Hall last night, those who associate the saxophone only with jazz of Broadway were interested to discover that it can be made to present music of melodious and classic variety very pleasingly when played by Jascha Gurewich, virtuoso of that instrument. He knows the possibilities of his medium and his talents extend to complete mastery.

The New York Morning World, February 1, 1926

Mr. Gurewich plays the saxophone with all the fervor and all the feeling, all the color and the romance, all the virtuosity, all the dramatic power of a great violinist caressing his tenderest Stradivarius.

The New York American, February 1, 1926

At Aeolian Hall last evening, Jascha Gurewich proved that the saxophone is an instrument worthy of a special programme. Not only that, but he presented an original Concerto, an interesting and melodious work.

This concert was followed by another important one. February 10, 1926 he played as soloist with the 50-piece Boston Saxophone Orchestra at the Boston Symphony Hall. The orchestra was conducted by Abdon Laus, who had formed this orchestra in late 1924. As always, Buescher instruments got noticed because of the deal between Buescher and Gurewich.

There appears to be widespread interest in the forthcoming saxophone concert by Jascha Gurewich to be given in Symphony Hall, February 10. The instruments used are the Buescher True saxophones and Carl Fischer's warerooms in Boylston street, which handles this line of instruments, is widely advertising the concert. (The Music Trade Review, January 30, 1926)

Gurewich's solo numbers at the Boston concert:

- Jascha Gurewich: Concerto in E minor op. 102

With piano:

- Mihail Glinka: The Lark
- Fritz Kreisler: Liebesfreud
- Jascha Gurewich: Passion
- Ernst – Gurewich: Hungarian dance
- Gurewich: Fantasy in F minor
- Gurewich: Caprice
- Charles Cadman: At Dawning
- Fritz Kreisler: Schön Rosmarin

Boston Post, February 15, 1926

Mr. Gurewich is a most accomplished performer upon the saxophone. In so far as the instrument will yield, he draws from it a warm expressive tone. His technical dexterity is conspicuous. He phrases as a musician.

The Boston Globe, February 15, 1926

Mr. Gurewich plays the saxophone with great agility and a beautiful quality of tone.

Gurewich's concerto was published in a version for saxophone and piano. This however doesn't mean that there wasn't an orchestral version. It is very likely that he had orchestrated this work not only for a saxophone orchestra but also symphony orchestra.

SYMPHONY HALL
Wednesday Evening, February 10

JASCHA
GUREWICH

The Kreisler of the
Saxophone
AND

The Boston Saxophone Orchestra

ABDON LAUS, Conductor

A symphonic congregation of

50 *BUESCHER TRUE-TONE*
SAXOPHONES

FRITZ KREISLER COMPOSITIONS

Transcribed for Saxophone

By JASCHA GUREWICH

Published by

Carl Fischer INC. MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTS

NEW YORK CHICAGO BOSTON,



BACK 9000
DAY 9001

Jascha Gurewich had another great contract, this one with *Sam Fox Publishing Co.* for his original saxophone compositions and arrangements. Because of this deal he included some work published by Sam Fox in every recital he gave. Gurewich's cooperation with his publisher began with four of his own compositions: *Jazzima*, *Juliana*, *Twilight Romance* and *Valse Petite*, followed by a book of etudes called *Staccatos and Legatos*. During 1920's a huge amount of his works were published by Sam Fox, G. Schirmer, Carl Fischer, Jack Mills and other companies.

Gurewich was very active during 1927 – he is mentioned in the Pittsburgh Press on October 25: *There is a commendable stage program at the Grand this week. --- Second on the Bill is Jascha Gurewich, saxophone recitalist.* The Bridgeport Telegram featured an advertisement February 3 1927: *The Ritz – Jascha Gurewich and his famous orchestra. Dance & Concert.*

Gurewich continued to give also live recitals in the New York area. He performed at the Monticello Labor Lyceum July 24th, 1927. Accompanying Gurewich and assisting in his concert were Alma Miller, coloratura soprano; Elliott Goble, tenor; Leon Frankel, pianist. The article in *Monticello NY Republican Watchman* also mentioned that *Mr. Gurewich is under the management of I. A. Albert, of New York City.*

In January 1928 the *John Golden Theatre* was filled with enthusiastic audience when Gurewich gave his next public recital in New York City.

January 29, 1928 John Golden Theatre, New York

- Jascha Gurewich: Sonata (first performance)
- Gurewich: Jazzima; Twilight romance; Iloma (Hungarian dance)
- Brahms: Hungarian dance nr 1
- Georges Bizet: Entr'acte from Carmen
- De Filippi: (with composer at the piano)
- Coleridge-Taylor
- Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakoff
- Fritz Kreisler: The old refrain

New York Evening Post, Saturday, January 28, 1928

Tomorrow 8:30 John Gold Theatre, recital

Brahms: Hungarian dance nr 1. Gurewich: Sonata for saxophone. Kreisler: The old refrain. Bizet: Entr'acte. Etc

New York Evening Post Saturday January 28, 1928

Jascha Gurewich, saxophone, will give a recital tomorrow evening in the John Golden Theatre, his program including his own sonata, premiere and other numbers, with compositions of Coleridge-Taylor, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Bizet, De Filippi and others.

Gurewich's recital at the John Golden Theatre raised again huge interest, partly because he introduced his brand new Sonata to the public. The Music Trade Review wrote the following:

Jascha Gurewich, saxophone virtuoso, in his recital recently at the John Golden Theatre in New York, introduced for the first time his saxophone sonata, now published by Sam Fox Publishing Co., New York and Cleveland,

which has many of Mr. Gurewich's compositions in its catalog. The sonata was easily the most interesting of his varied program, due partly to the fact that it was the first time any such composition has been exclusively prepared for this instrument. It was in four movements, namely, allegro moderato, romanza, scherzo and rondo.

The balance of the Gurewich program was made up of Brahms, Bizet, Rimsky-Korsakoff, the rendition of his new "Iloma" (Hungarian Dance) and two offerings of popular, "Jazzima" and "Twilight Romance." The critics, as usual, were not only favorable but enthusiastic in reporting Mr. Gurewich's performance.

Soon after this recital Gurewich was heard in the same hall assisting in a concert that featured the famous American danseuse La Meri. The following article is from The New York Sun, April 28, 1928.

La Meri, danseuse, will make her debut on the New York concert platform at the John Golden Theater on Saturday afternoon, May 5, when she will offer twelve dances of completely different character and style. She will be assisted at the piano by Frederick Bristol, while Jascha Gurewich, saxophone virtuoso, and Teresa Guerini will assist as guest artists.

Not much is known about Jascha Gurewich's activities during the 1930's. It seems that he focused on teaching and performed occasionally in the radio and also live concerts. One of his students, Miss Bertha Jones, got noticed in a few New York newspapers when she played some concerts with Gurewich accompanying her at the piano. The New York Age (December 11, 1937) mentioned that *His pupils have attained high places as members of such celebrated dance orchestras as Rudy Vallee, George Olsen, Little Jack Little, Vincent Lopez and many others. He speaks in high praise of Miss Jones development, and gives her a ranking as one of his most promising pupils.*

Gurewich's last known recital in New York was given March 19, 1935 at the Barbizon-Plaza Concert Hall.

- March 19, 1935 Barbizon – Plaza, New York.
- Jascha Gurewich: Suite in E major (first performance)
- Works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Ravel, Gurewich

New York Post, Saturday March 16 1935

Tuesday March 19 1935 Jascha Gurewich, saxophone recital. Barbizon-Plaza, New York.

New York Post, Wednesday, March 20, 1935

The Barbizon-Plaza Concert Hall was the scene of a saxophone recital last night. Jascha Gurewich gave a classical program of Bach, Mendelssohn and Ravel transcriptions. He included three of his own pieces for his instrument, among the Suite in E major, which had its premiere performance.

Why did Jascha Gurewich not remain on the scene longer? He was a very accomplished player in the 1920's and he was a bit more "classical" musician than Rudy Wiedoeft. His live concerts and radio performances were hugely successful. The evolution of jazz was very fast and perhaps he was not interested in changing his sound and style towards a totally different concept. In a way he was becoming a

sound of the past. On the other hand, he composed much of his own repertoire and never asked other composers to write for him – which was something that Sigurd Raschèr did all around the world 10 years after Gurewich's most active time. The stock market crash of 1929 put countless musicians out of work and it must have affected also Gurewich's career – just like the rise of talking pictures during late 1920's eliminated much of musicians' work in the movie houses.

The only known solo recordings by Jascha Gurewich are on the Supreme Quality label no 11000. On this 78 recording he played his own compositions *Laughing gas* and *Emily*.

The last time Gurewich was mentioned in newspapers was March 28, 1938 (The Daily Argus): "There was dancing to the music of an orchestra led by Joshua [probably Jascha] Gurewich..."

Jascha Gurewich passed away September 30, 1938 in Manhattan, New York.

Sources:

Michael Eric Hester: *A study of the saxophone soloists performing with the John Philip Sousa Band, 1893-1930*. (The University of Arizona, 1995)

New York State Historical Photos & Newspapers.

<http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html>

Jukebox and music history. <http://www.arcade-museum.com/library/>

Jascha Gurewich's compositions:

Published by G. Schirmer:

- Capriccio, op. 120
- Czardas (Danse Hongroise)
- Habanera
- Jota (Danse Espagnole)
- Laughing hyena (A hot tune)
- Melodie d'Amour
- Suite Orientale

Published by Carl Fischer:

- Emily (Valse Fantasia)
- Laughing Gas (Jazz Encore)
- Maqueda (Jazz Encore)
- Passing thought
- Souvenir de Chamounix (A Dream of the Alps)

Published by Sam Fox:

- Carmelita (Tango)
- Jazzima

- Juliana
- One minute (Valse Petite)
- Twilight Romance
- Ilona (Hungarian Dance)
- Italian Serenade
- Spinning (Valse)
- Sonata for saxophone, op. 130

Published by Jack Mills:

- Sun rise
- Slaptonious
- Basheva
- Ida
- Heart Breaking

Published by Boston Music Company:

- Sax-Pasms

Published by G. Ricordi:

- Fantasy in F Minor

Published by Finder & Urbanek (also by Rubank):

- Concerto in E minor, op. 102

Jascha Gurewich's known radio performances:

December 25, 1923. WJY – Popular and classical music, by J. Gurewich

February 4, 1924. WEAJ - Jascha Gurewich, saxophone solos

Jascha Gurewich: A Ballet. Cesar Cui: Orientale. Gurewich: Kathyne. Van Goens: Chanson sans paroles. Gurewich: Passion (Mexican concert tango). Kreisler: Schön Rosmarin. Saint-Saens: The Swan.

February 8, 1924. WJZ - Jascha Gurewich, saxophone solos

February 22, 1924. WJZ - Jascha Gurewich, saxophone solos

March 19, 1924. WOR – J. Gurewich, saxophone. Ida Gurewich, piano.

Jascha Gurewich: Ida. Gurewich: Orientale. Fritz Kreisler: Schön Rosmarin. Daniel van Goens: Chanson sans paroles. Riccardo Drigo: Valse bluette. Gurewich: Sunrise. Gurewich: Passion. Camille Saint-Saens: The Swan. Johannes Brahms: Hungarian dance. Kreisler: Liebesfreud'. Gurewich: After a dream. Gurewich: Finale movement from Concerto in E minor.

August 18, 1924. WJZ - Jascha Gurewich, saxophone solos

August 21, 1924. WNCY - Jascha Gurewich, saxophone solos

August 28, 1924. WEAF - Jascha Gurewich, saxophone solos

September 4, 1924. WEAF – Jascha Gurewich, saxophone

September 16, 1924. WNAC – Jascha Gurewich, saxophone solos

October 15 1924. WOR – Jascha Gurewich, saxophone

November 12, 1924. WOR - Jascha Gurewich, saxophone virtuoso

November 24, 1924. WGBS – Jascha Gurewich, saxophone

January 7, 1925. WOR – Gurewich saxophone sextet

February 14, 1925. WOR - Jascha Gurewich Saxophone Virtuoso

February 28, 1925. WOR – Jascha Gurewich saxophone ensemble

March 6, 1925. WEAF – Jascha Gurewich, saxophone solos

March 14, 1925. WOR – Gurewich saxophone ensemble

April 1, 1925. WOR – Gurewich saxophone ensemble

April 15, 1925. WOR – Gurewich saxophone ensemble

April 29, 1925. WOR – Jascha Gurewich saxophone ensemble

May 13, 1925. WOR – Jascha Gurewich saxophone ensemble

May 26, 1925. WOR – Gurewich saxophone ensemble

June 10, 1925. WOR – Gurewich saxophone ensemble

June 17, 1925. WOR – Jasch Gurewich saxophone ensemble

June 23, 1925. WOR – Jascha Gurewich saxophone ensemble

June 24, 1925. WOR – Jascha Gurewich saxophone ensemble

July 1, 1925. WOR – Jascha Gurewich saxophone ensemble

July 8, 1925. WOR – Jascha Gurewich saxophone ensemble

July 15, 1925. WOR – Jascha Gurewich saxophone ensemble

July 22, 1925. WOR – Gurewich saxophone ensemble

July 29, 1925. WOR – Gurewich saxophone ensemble

August 5, 1925. WOR – Gurewich saxophone ensemble

November 14, 1925. WEAJ – Jascha Gurewich’s saxophone ensemble

April 26, 1926. WOR – Jascha Gurewich, saxophone

May 11, 1926. WGBS – Jascha Gurewich

September 11, 1926. WOR – Gurewich Orchestra (14 players)

September 13, 1926. WOR – Gurewich Saxophone Orchestra

September 18, 1926. WOR – Gurewich’s Orchestra

September 20, 1926. WOR – Gurewich’s Orchestra

September 26, 1926. WOR – Gurewich and his Symphonic Jazz Orchestra

September 27, 1926. WOR – Gurewich and his Symphonic Jazz Orchestra

December 24, 1926. WMCA – Gurewich Symphonic Jazz

August 1 1927. WCGU – Jascha Gurewich

August 21, 1927. WCGU – Jascha Gurewich

January 10, 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich ensemble

January 15, 1929. WOR – Gurewich ensemble

January 22, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich ensemble

February 7, 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich ensemble

February 15, 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich ensemble

February 22, 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich ensemble

February 23, 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich Ensemble

March 9, 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich Ensemble

March 16, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich ensemble

March 21, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Saxophone Band

March 30, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Ensemble

April 6, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Ensemble

April 8, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Saxophone Band

April 13, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Ensemble

May 4, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Ensemble

May 11, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Ensemble

May 25, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Ensemble

June 1, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Ensemble

June 8, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Dance Orchestra

June 15, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Dance Orchestra

June 22, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Ensemble

September 19, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Orchestra

October 3, 1929. WNYC – Gurewich Dance Admirals

October 10, 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich Dance Admirals

October 17 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich Dance Admirals

October 24 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich Dance Admirals

November 14, 1929. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich Dance Admirals

April 8, 1930. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich Orchestra

April 22, 1930. WNYC – Gurewich Orchestra

June 4, 1930. WNYC – Gurewich Orchestra

September 10, 1930. WNYC – Gurewich Orchestra

September 23, 1930. WNYC – Gurewich Orchestra

October 23, 1930. WNYC – Jascha Gurewich’s orchestra