

February 6, 2019 meeting program

Featuring Tim Rose of the Smithsonian Mineral Sciences Department

Goodyear meets the Mad Hatter: Innovative composite saxophone mouthpieces of the 1920s and their effect on the growth of jazz

The invention of semi-synthetic and synthetic plastics has changed daily life around the world. In the early 20th century, these new materials combined with the electrification of America and good old American ingenuity. This study focuses on composite saxophone mouthpieces and the Great American Saxophone Craze of the 1920s. Analysis of mineral additives to the hard rubber of the mouthpieces reveals some very interesting, perhaps frightening facts. This is a very fun historical materials science talk that really does have some very important mineralogy in it.