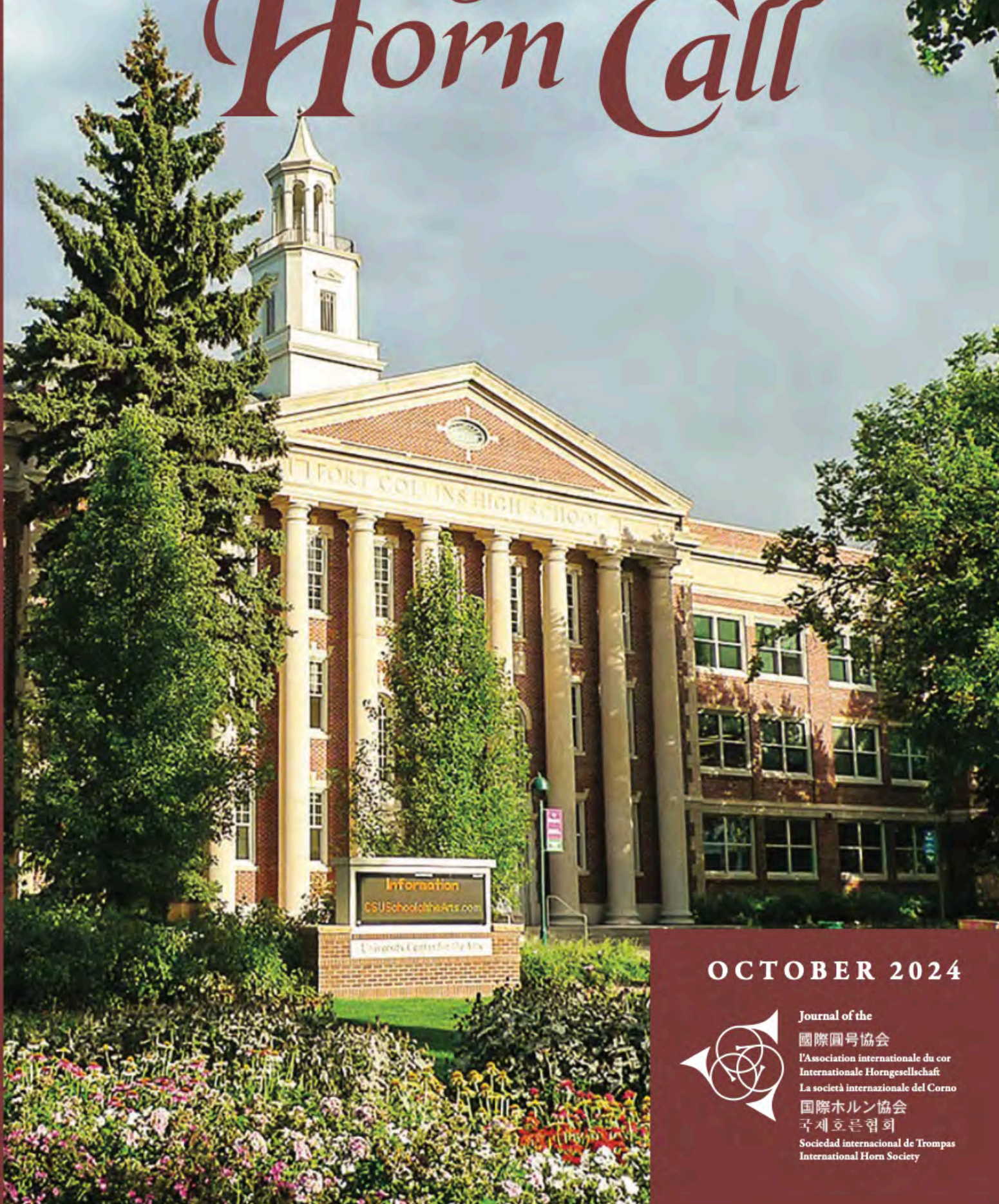


# The Horn Call



OCTOBER 2024



Journal of the  
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Internationale Horngesellschaft  
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# *The Horn Call*

**Journal of the International Horn Society**

**Volume LV, No. 1, October 2024**

**James Boldin, Editor**

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The International Horn Society recommends that HORN be recognized as the correct English label for our instrument.  
[From the Minutes of the First IHS General Meeting, June 15, 1971, Tallahassee, FL, USA]

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**On the Cover:**

University Center for the Arts at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado,  
site of the 56th International Horn Symposium. Image provided by John McGuire.

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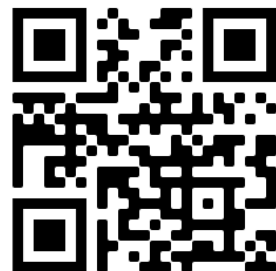


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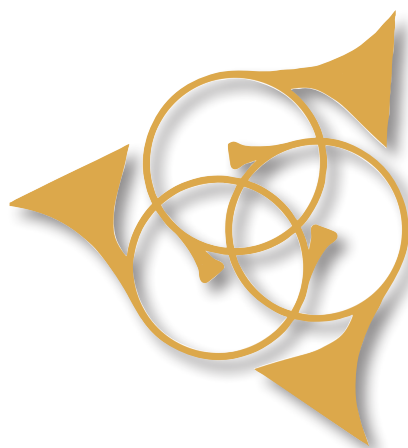


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International Horn Society

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## From the Editor

**James Boldin**

Dear Readers,

Welcome to a new publication year of *The Horn Call*! As with every October issue, we have lots of news, announcements, and kudos to share. Congratulations to this year's IHS Honorees, competition winners, and newly elected officers and members of the Advisory Council. See page two for a full listing of officers and Advisory Council Members. Here at *The Horn Call*, we also welcome the following members of our newly-formed Editorial Advisory Board: Nikolette LaBonte, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra; Joel Ockerman, Utah State University; Vidhurinda Samaraweera, Gustav Mahler Society of Colombo, Sri Lanka. In addition to reviewing potential articles, Nikki, Joel, and Vidhu will be providing feedback and suggestions for *The Horn Call*, and I am excited to hear their ideas.

As you read through the **News and Reports**, please take special note of the announcements and pictures submitted by Bernardo Silva on several major horn-related events in Europe. This news was inadvertently omitted from the May 2024 issue.

Please also take note of a few updates to the **Guidelines for Contributors** and **publication schedule** on page four. Effective with this issue, *The Horn Call* will be published tri-annually in October, January, and April, with submission deadlines of August 1, November 1, and February 1, respectively.

One other change concerns the **octave designation system**. We will now use **scientific pitch notation**, also known as American standard pitch notation and international pitch notation. For more information, see the Guidelines for Contributors on page 4. Thanks to Steve Eddins for suggesting this change in the Correspondence section of the February 2024 issue.

For those who attended IHS56: Horns on the Horizon at Colorado State University, you know how amazing and magical that week was! Bravo and Thank You to John McGuire and Colorado State University for hosting both the International Horn Competition of America and IHS56 immediately following, an unprecedented undertaking. If you were not able to attend, I hope you'll read the Symposium Report found in this issue and make plans to attend IHS57 from June 24-28, 2025 in Harrisonburg, Virginia, hosted by Ian Zook and James Madison University.

I'll close by sharing some information about *The Horn Call*. While we make every effort to publish articles and other submissions in their entirety, occasionally we must omit some material because of our page limits. However, authors have the option to publish additional material from the original submission at **hornsociety.org/publications/horn-call/extras**. If you haven't checked out this online resource – and the rest of the IHS website – I encourage you to do so.

Sincerely,

*James*



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### Guidelines for Contributors

*The Horn Call* is published tri-annually, with mailings as close as possible to October 1, January 1, and April 1. Submission deadlines for articles and News items are the first day of the month, two months prior to the issue (August 1, November 1, and February 1). Inquiries and materials intended for *The Horn Call* should be directed to the editor or appropriate contributing editor (see the list of editors to the left of this column).

The style manuals used by *The Horn Call* are *The Chicago Manual of Style*, and *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate Turabian. Refer to these texts or recent issues of *The Horn Call* for guidelines regarding usage, style, and formatting. The author's name, email address (or home/business address), photograph, and a brief biography should be included with all submissions. Authors are hereby advised that there may be editorial spelling/style/grammatical changes to articles in order to maintain the journal's format and professional integrity. In general, submissions should be approximately 1500 to 4000 words in length. Longer articles may be considered, but with the understanding that they may be edited for length and content, with the option to publish additional material from the original submission at [hornsociety.org/publications/horn-call/extras](http://hornsociety.org/publications/horn-call/extras).

*The Horn Call* is currently created with Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, and Acrobat. Prospective articles and accompanying materials (images, musical examples, etc.) should be submitted electronically to [editor@hornsociety.org](mailto:editor@hornsociety.org). For large files and/or a large number of files, a link to a file-sharing service such as Dropbox, Google Drive, etc., can be included. Footnotes (endnotes) should be numbered consecutively (no Roman numerals) and placed at the end of the text. Musical examples should be attached as pdf, jpg, or tiff files, or embedded in a Word document. For images, 300 dpi is the minimum resolution necessary for clear reproductions in *The Horn Call*. A [Horn Call article template](#) is available online.

The octave designation system used in *The Horn Call* is scientific pitch notation, also known as American standard pitch notation and international pitch notation.





# President's Message

*Peter Luff*

Dear friends,

It is with a sense of deep pride and excitement that I begin my term as president of the International Horn Society. My heartfelt thanks go to outgoing president Radegundis Feitosa for his incredible efforts, tireless service, and ongoing support of horn players all over the world. Radegundis leaves a legacy of commitment, understanding, and inclusivity that has inspired us all as we strive to maintain the values and ethos of the International Horn Society. I only hope I can continue in his footsteps and those of all the previous IHS presidents.

With orchestras disbanding and audiences dwindling in numbers worldwide, we are constantly being told that we face an uncertain future in the performing arts...I don't



accept this, the future is not written, and I for one intend to play my part in helping to create and maintain a bright future for horn players, music, and the arts. Every year I come to the IHS symposium, and I see nothing but excitement, optimism, and friendship, not to mention performances of an astonishingly high level.

So, as an outward facing international identity, it is incumbent on us to do our part in growing our organisation. I challenge you all to spread the word about the IHS, be active in your support and recruitment, look at the funding opportunities we provide for regional workshopping activities, have your students and colleagues enter one of the many competitions and events that we offer.

Our strength is in our numbers, and our numbers can only grow with your help and advocacy. We are all our own biggest fans...so shout it from the mountain tops! I love the horn, I love this society, and I know you love it too.

Let's work together in writing a chapter of the IHS that will make us proud whilst serving as a positive example to arts organizations and societies all over the world. Be vocal, be active, be passionate, and participate in the future and health of your International Horn Society.

*- Peter Luff*



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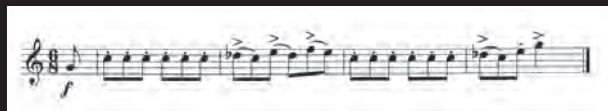
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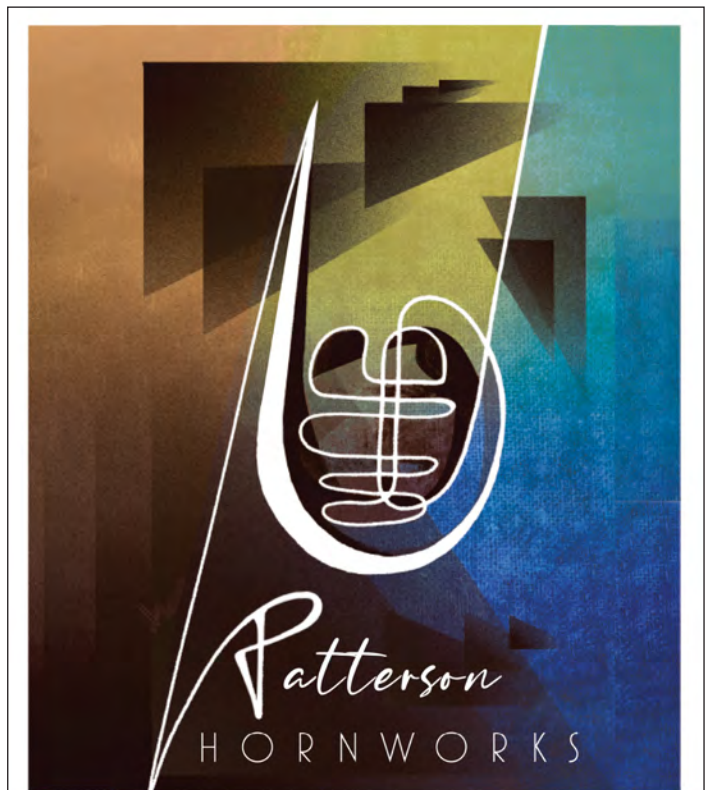
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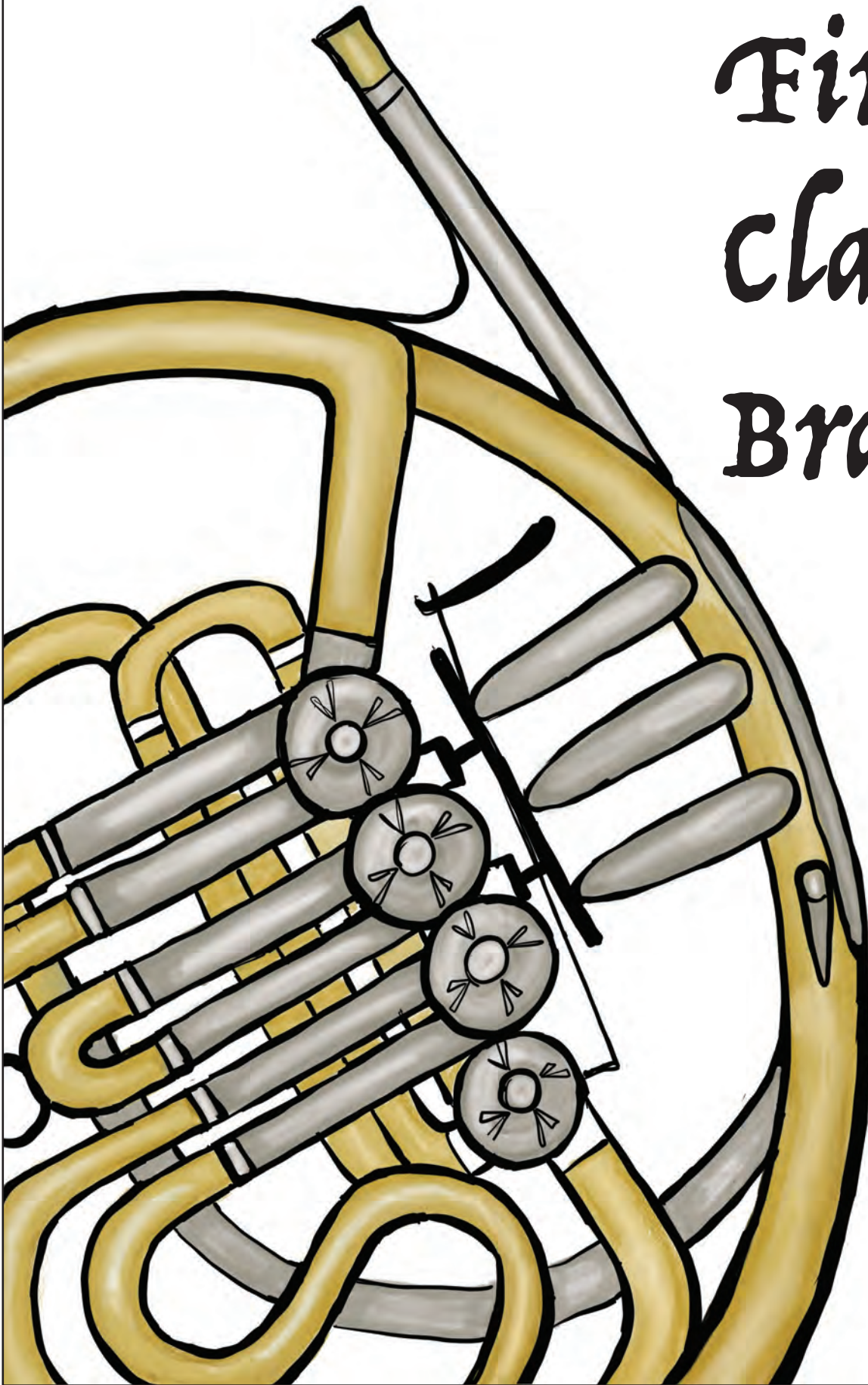


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**Virtuoso.** No difficulty limitation.

### INSTRUMENTATION

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**Virtuoso Division.** From one of the following categories.

- Solo horn with vocal ensemble
- Horn ensemble (two or more players, all horns)
- Horn with chamber ensemble of three or more performers (one horn part only). The chamber ensemble may include any combination of electronic instruments (live or pre-recorded), acoustic instruments (may include Wagner tuba), and/or voices.
- Solo horn featured with large ensemble. The large ensemble may include any group of electronic instruments (live or pre-recorded), acoustic instruments (may include Wagner tuba), and/or voices.

For more information, application rules, and electronic submission procedure, see Programs/Composition Projects/Composition Contest at the IHS website: [www.hornsociety.org/about-the-ihs/composition-projects/composition-contest](http://www.hornsociety.org/about-the-ihs/composition-projects/composition-contest) or Chapter 4: The IHS and New Music for Horn in *IHS: The First 50 Years*.

### DEADLINE

Entries must be received by December 1, 2024.

### QUESTIONS

Email to [re-faust@wiu.edu](mailto:re-faust@wiu.edu).

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# IHS News and Reports

*Brenda Luchsinger, Editor*

## From the Office

Hello everyone! I hope this finds you all well and well-recovered after the festivities at IHS 56 & IHCA; beginning of the new school year for educators and students alike; and beginning of a new season for those in orchestras, bands, and other performing groups.

First, my sincere gratitude to John McGuire who hosted an incredible and thought-provoking symposium in Fort Collins, Colorado this summer! I heard from many people who enjoyed the music and perspectives from people in all walks of life. Then, if you haven't heard already, IHS

57 will be held at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia from June 24-28, 2025 hosted by Ian Zook. Mark your calendars, and I can't wait to reunite with all of you for an exciting week at the other side of the US! Finally, please read below for more information on our newest Advisory Council members and about the process for nominations for the upcoming election.

If you have any questions or feedback, please feel free to email me at [exec-director@hornsociety.org](mailto:exec-director@hornsociety.org).

– **Allison DeMeulle**, Executive Director

---

## New Advisory Council Members

**Gabriella Ibarra** and **Marilyn Bone Kloss** were elected in April 2024 to a first three-year term by the general membership to the Advisory Council (AC). **Margaret Tung** was re-elected to a second three-year term by the general membership. The AC elected **Tommi Hyytinen** and **Benjamin Lieser** to complete the AC.

---

## Call for Nominations to the IHS Advisory Council

According to the IHS Bylaws, the Advisory Council (AC) is "responsible for carrying out the aims and purposes of the Society and for determining Society policy." Nine of the fifteen AC members are elected by the IHS membership; the AC elects the others. As you nominate and elect new AC members, remember that these individuals should represent a broad spectrum of international horn-related activities.

Nominations for election to the Advisory Council three-year term of office, beginning after the 2025 Symposium and ending after the 2028 Symposium, must be received by the Executive Director before November 1, 2024 for inclusion in the January 2024 *Horn Call*. Due to publication deadlines, any nominations that are received

between November 1 and the final deadline of December 1, 2024 will only be included on the website. Nominees must be members of the IHS and willing to accept the responsibilities of the position. Nominations must include the nominee's name, address, telephone number, email address, written consent, and a biographical sketch of not more than 150 words. Nominations by mail, fax, and email are acceptable; consent must originate from the nominee.

Terms of the following AC members expire in July 2025: **Ken Pope** and **Jeff Scott** are completing their first term and are eligible for nomination.

Send nominations to Allison DeMeulle, IHS Executive Director, PO Box 6691, Huntington Beach, CA USA; email [exec-director@hornsociety.org](mailto:exec-director@hornsociety.org)

---

## News Deadline

The next deadline for news submissions is November 1, 2024. If using email, send the text of your message in the body of the email to the News Editor, **Brenda Luchsinger**, at [news@hornsociety.org](mailto:news@hornsociety.org) or go to the IHS website, log in and click **Publications/The Horn Call/Member News Submission** to upload text and image files. Send exactly what should appear, not a link to a website or publicity

document. Submissions should be concise. Text documents should be uploaded in the following file types: .doc, .docx, .txt, .pages, .pdf. Images can be submitted in .jpg or .tiff format, but are not guaranteed for publication. If you choose to send a photo (one), include a caption in the text and attach the photo as a downloadable file; photos are not guaranteed for publication.

---

## IHS Major Commission Initiative

The IHS Advisory Council has created a fund for commissioning substantial works by renowned composers. Send contributions in any amount to Executive Director Allison DeMeulle.

---

## Job Information

Hornists with information about professional jobs should send the information to James Boldin at [editor@hornsociety.org](mailto:editor@hornsociety.org). James posts the information on the IHS website. To view the listing, look under **Networking -> Performance Jobs**.

---

## Assistantships

To see a listing of available assistantships, go to the IHS website and look under **Networking -> Assistantships**. To post an announcement, send the information to Dan Phillips at [manager@hornsociety.org](mailto:manager@hornsociety.org).

## IHS Composition Commissioning Opportunities

This fund was established by the Advisory Council of the International Horn Society in 1989. Meir Rimón (1946-1991) was Principal Horn of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and served three terms as Vice-President of the IHS. In memory of our esteemed colleague who had a positive effect on many performers, composers, and audiences around the world, the fund was renamed in his honor in 1992.

The Meir Rimón Commissioning Assistance Fund has assisted in the composition of numerous new works for the horn. IHS members are invited to request funds to support collaboration with a composer in the creation of

a new work featuring the horn. Rimón awards are typically for smaller works, and the IHS reserves the right to offer less or more than the requested amount, depending upon the nature and merit of the project.

The Meir Rimón Fund alternates with the Composition Competition; i.e., the Competition opens on even-numbered years and the Meir Rimón Fund on odd-numbered years. The next application deadline for the Meir Rimón Fund is March 1, 2025. See [hornsociety.org/about-the-ihs/composition-projects/commissions](https://hornsociety.org/about-the-ihs/composition-projects/commissions) or contact Randall E. Faust at RE-Faust@wiu.edu.

## Barbara Chinworth Project

This Project was created by an anonymous donation to provide resources to amateur horn players and enthusiasts in the memory of **Barbara Chinworth**, an IHS member who gathered hornists from all walks of life to play

together and support each other in their mutual love of the horn. Donate to the Project online under **Join/Donations** or by mail to the Executive Director; in either case, specify the Barbara Chinworth Project.

## IHS Website

IHS online includes more than 130 audio highlights from past symposiums – recitals, lectures, interviews, ensembles – from James Chambers interviewing his teacher, Anton Horner, at the 1969 workshop and Alan Civil's quartets from the 1970s to more recent events. On the Media menu, select Symposium Highlights.

– **Dan Phillips**, Webmaster

## Country/Area Representatives

The following Representatives have been appointed: Hanxuan Liang, China Country Representative; Josue Elias Siney - Guatemala Country Representative; Espen Selvik, Norway Country Representative; Jenna McBride Harris, Minnesota Area Representative (Midnorth Team); Albert Houde, West Virginia Area Representative (Southeast Team).

We also have a new Regional Coordinator for Central and South America, Joel Arias. We have several representative positions open, whether for country representatives

or US Area Representatives. All interested parties should consult the information on our web page:

[hornsociety.org/ihs-people/area-reps-other](https://hornsociety.org/ihs-people/area-reps-other) (Country Representatives) and [hornsociety.org/ihs-people/area-reps-us](https://hornsociety.org/ihs-people/area-reps-us) (US Area Representatives)

For additional information contact Vice-President and International Coordinator **Bernardo Silva** at [vice-president@hornsociety.org](mailto:vice-president@hornsociety.org) or USA Area Representative Coordinator **Jennifer Sholtis**, [jennifer.sholtis@tamuk.edu](mailto:jennifer.sholtis@tamuk.edu)

## Coming Events

The fifth **International Meeting of Horns in Chile** will take place October 1-5, 2024 in Santiago, Metropolitan Region, Chile, hosted by Eugenio Cáceres of the Santiago Philharmonic Orchestra. A competitive fund for training activities from the Ministry of Culture of Chile and the organization of the Executive Director of the project, the Academic of the Pontifical Catholic University, Universidad Mayor support the event, which will be held at the Music

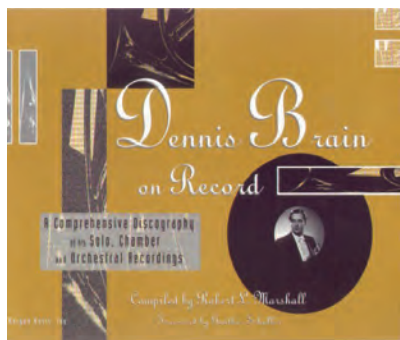
Institute of the Pontifical Catholic University, at the Conservatory of the Universidad Mayor, and will end with a concert at the Municipal Theater of Santiago, Chile's opera house. Featured artists include Lene Aadalen Skomedal (Norway), Paulo Muñoz Toledo (Chile/Switzerland), and Radegundis Tavares (Brazil). All activities are free for attendees.



*Final photo from the International Meeting of Horns in Chile, 2022.*



## Member News



**Robert Marshall** has donated his extensive collection of Dennis Brain recordings (over 1500 individual compositions ranging from brief opera arias to chamber and orchestral pieces to numerous concertos and other works for solo horn)

to the Library of the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. In 1996 he published *Dennis Brain on Record: A Comprehensive Discography of his Solo, Chamber and Orchestral Recordings* (with a foreword by Gunther Schuller). Although the volume is long since out of print, an updated and expanded "fourth edition," compiled in 2011, is available on-line ([dennisbrain.net/discography.html](http://dennisbrain.net/discography.html)). The collection is currently being digitized by the IU library.



Dinah Bianchi

**Dinah Bianchi** is principal horn of the International Symphony Orchestra, a member of the Jackson Symphony Orchestra, and a frequent guest of the Lansing Symphony horn section led by her former teacher, Corbin Wagner. As a composer, Bianchi's music has received numerous recognitions, performed in concert

halls both nationally and abroad, and this season's highlights include performances by the Michigan Philharmonic, the Royal Oak Symphony, the International Symphony Orchestra, and festivals such as ClickFest 2024. Bianchi released an album, *Dinah Bianchi: First Impressions*, which features Michigan-based artists.

**Maria Serkin** and horn students of the International Chamber Music Academy (ICMA) visited Neumann Alphorn and Wood Carving, a family-owned and operated shop in Eberhardzell, Germany. ICMA is a chamber music festival and horn intensive in Ochsenhausen, Germany, distinguished by its partnership with the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Horn students from all schools are welcome to apply. See [uncsa.edu/summer/music-summer-intensives/germany-program/index.aspx](http://uncsa.edu/summer/music-summer-intensives/germany-program/index.aspx)



L-R: Omar Mata, Chase Oncken, Justice Ratlis, Emily Sholar, Maria Serkin, Marlena DeStefano, Marjie Sharpe, Amanda Neumann, Alfons Neumann, Michael Neumann

**Brenda Luchsinger's** Suzuki Brass studios performed a series of recitals in April. Students from her Suzuki Brass for Children campus community program at Alabama State University and her home studio performed recitals on the campus and also participated in a virtual Suzuki Brass of the Americas recital, featuring students from the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and South Africa.



Suzuki Horn Pre-Twinkle student, Kristen



L-R: Benítez (principal horn, OSCA), Nay, Grabois, Stebleton, Fine, Renzo Soverina (OSCA), and Acosta (OSCA). OSCA hornists not in photo: Giulio Andreotti and Ramón Zaracho.

American hornists in Paraguay! **Daniel Grabois** (University of Wisconsin-Madison), **Michelle Stebleton** (Florida State University), **Emily Fine** (Doctor of Obstetrics, Hamden CT), and **Brianna Nay** (Troy University, AL) joined the Orquesta Sinfónica de la Ciudad de Asunción on July 4 for a rousing performance of the Schumann *Konzertstück*/arr. Turner. Daniel Grabois and Michelle Stebleton gave masterclasses at the National Conservatory of Music (**Arturo Benítez**, horn professor) and the National Police Band Academy (**Alcides Acosta**, horn professor), respectively.



**Nathaniel Wilson** and members of the US Navy Band horn section performed at the 20th World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE) international conference in South Korea.

**Seok Joon Keun** (South Korea) presented horn compositions with the theme of "Discovering New Sounds of the Horn." He explored new sounds such as that created by striking two horn mouthpieces, by tapping the outside of the bell with a fingernail, and by tapping the outside of the bell with the palm of the hand. Seok Joon Keun said, "I hope that the infinite possibilities of the horn will be known through these pieces." These pieces will be used by graduate students taught by him.

*The horn section representing the US Navy Band included (L-R) Master Chief Musician David Kolo, Senior Chief Musician Jason Ayoub, Musician 1st Class Alexander Kooling, Chief Musician Pamela Blakely, and Musician 1st Class Ava Conway.*



**Ricardo Matosinhos** led the Matosinhos International Competition online in May 2024, showcasing horn players from Australia, China, Japan, Germany, and Portugal. Participants aged 14 to 55 demonstrated a high level of performance. It was inspiring to see younger players embracing the challenging repertoire with enthusiasm, and the oldest participant proving that age is no barrier in the horn community. The jury, composed of professional brass players, praised all participants. The repertoire included a new book of etudes by Ricardo Matosinhos and six solo pieces. Special congratulations to the winners: **Katharina Hauf** (1st), **Pin-Hsuan Lee** (2nd), **Vasco Gonçalves** (3rd), and **Kyle Bartel** (best performance under age 18).

**Bernhard Scully** was named principal horn of the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra (ROCO) and appointed principal horn of the Saint Bart's Music Festival. He performed with his colleagues in the North Country Chamber Players throughout the year and was featured as a guest artist at the 2024 Northwest Horn Symposium at Washington State University. He was once again on faculty at the Isla Verde Bronces International Brass Festival in Córdoba, Argentina. His new co-edited book, *Consilience: Learning About Ourselves by Applying Indigenous Traditions to Western Music and Technology* was published in July 2024 by Springer-Nature Press. Bernhard has been invited to present about *Consilience* at the 2024 College Music Society Great Lakes Chapter Conference, 2024 South Central Chapter Conference, and 2024 National Conference in Washington DC. As artistic director of Cormont Music, he once again led a successful season of Horn Camp Connect and the Kendall Betts Horn Camp.



*Bernhard Scully*

**Michael Dixon** co-curates the Sydney MicroFest, a celebration of microtonal music. The festival in June 2024 premiered two of his pieces: *Shaker's Chorus* for soprano, recorder & horn and *Empowerment* for cello and horn with pre-recorded violas (6 parts) and horns (10 parts). Michael also performed improvisations in Amanda Cole's *Magical Chord Adventures* for lumatone, flute, and horn and in Michael Bakrnčev's *The Waiting Room* for cello and horn with pre-recorded synthesized sounds. The first three pieces are in extended just intonation, the fourth in Bohlen-Pierce tuning. The other work with horn was *Rhine Valley Expedition* for narrator, recorder, horn, trombone, and pre-recorded trumpet and percussion. The tuning for this is 19 equal divisions of the octave. A varied concert of tunings along with other instruments being performed included the use of mobile phones.

**Devin Cobleigh-Morrison**, assistant professor of horn at the University of Louisville, has been on the faculty at the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp and made appearances at the IHS Symposium in solo and with the NU Corno ensemble, for which he also arranged. He has been working with the Louisville Orchestra Horn Section and his studio on a combined event around the Alpine Symphony to take place on the university campus in January.



*Devin Cobleigh-Morrison*

**Sarah Willis's** new album, *Sarahbanda*, is coming out on September 6, 2024. This is the first time a horn has ever been on a Cuban band album (*Sarahbanda* has one track on each *Mozart y Mambo* album).

**Bruce and Jennifer Brummett** hosted the Spokane Horn Club performance at Street Music Week as part of a fundraiser for Second Harvest Food Bank. The club meets weekly during the summer months.





Spokane Horn Club

**Johnathan Bradley** reports that **John Jones** recently retired from the Huntington (West Virginia) Symphony Orchestra. John was principal horn for over 50 years.



The **Horns of Tucson** performed in June at Udall Park in Tucson as a prelude to the Arizona Symphonic Winds concert. Their performance included *Fanfare from St. Hubert's Mass*, Rondo from Mozart's 4th Horn Concerto, *Amazing Grace* with Alphorn and five horns, Gounod *At the Teddy Bears Picnic* (Leigh Martinet arrangement), and *Lullaby for a Naughty Girl* (Curtis Blake arrangement).

*Horns of Tucson* members pictured are Kathy Creath, director, Janelle Borg, Karl Broberg, David Eckert, Amy Janssen, John McDivitt, Mary Phillips, Steve Ralsten, Gail Schumacher, and Bill Winkelman.



DSO Horns (1-r) Bryan Kennedy, Mark Abbott, David Everson, Corbin Wagner

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra horn section returned for one last concert to honor the retirement of **Mark Abbott** and **Dave Everson**. **Corbin Wagner** and **Bryan Kennedy**, both already retired from the DSO, joined the fun. This section has played over 5,000 concerts together with total combined professional experience of over 170 years! These players started performing together as early as junior high. Bryan Kennedy is still teaching at the University of Michigan, and Corbin Wagner is still teaching at Michigan State University. This horn section turned into four loving brothers.

## Obituaries

**David Cripps**, who died in June 2024, was principal horn of the London Symphony Orchestra (1974-1983) and renowned for playing the famous horn motifs in the first two Star Wars movies (*A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*) and for playing on the *Superman* soundtrack. He was soloist with the orchestra in the Strauss and Mozart concertos and the Britten Serenade. He taught at the Guildhall School and the Royal Northern College of Music. He later moved to the US where he conducted orchestras in Arizona and taught at Eastman and Northern Arizona University.



## Event Reports

### International Horn Congress Guadassuar (CITGUAD), Pelotas Festival, 13th Catalan Horn Meeting, International Horn Congress, Castellón (CITCASTELLÓ)

Reported by J. Bernardo Silva

The International Horn Congress Guadassuar (CITGUAD) took place on December 28-30, 2023 at the IES Didín Puig in Valencia, Spain.



CITGUAD teachers and artists (L-R) Bernardo Silva, Manolo Pérez, María Rubio, Lorena Corma, Marie-Luise Neunecker, Elisa Andreu, Bruno Schneider, Judith Martín, Eduardo Redondo, Anna Sanz, Luis Delgado, Miguel Martínez, Alexandre Collard



All CITGUAD participants performing outdoors in an arrangement for 12 horns of the work "Wiener Philharmoniker Fanfare" by Richard Strauss, conducted by Samuel Pérez.

## Pelotas Festival



Participants at the Pelotas Festival with teachers Alma Liebrecht and Bernardo Silva

### 13. Trobada de Trompistes a Catalunya

The 13th Catalan Horn Meeting, organized by the Catalan Association of Horn Players, took place at the Conservatori Municipal de Música de Barcelona from April 26-28 in Barcelona, Spain. More information on event is available at online at [sites.google.com/site/acatrompista/associaci%C3%B3-catalana-de-trompistes?authuser=0](https://sites.google.com/site/acatrompista/associaci%C3%B3-catalana-de-trompistes?authuser=0)

### CITCASTELLÓ 2024

The Spanish Association of Horn Lovers held the International Horn Congress, CITCASTELLÓ 2024 on May 3-5 at the Conservatorio Superior de Música "Salvador Seguí" in Castellón, Spain. More information on event is available at online at [citcastello2024.com](https://citcastello2024.com)





Northwest Horn Symposium  
Reported by Martin King

*Northwest Horn Symposium participants*

The 2024 Northwest Horn Symposium was held in April at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington (its first time holding a regional symposium), hosted by Assistant Professor of Horn, **Martin D. King**. Featured artists were **Bernhard Scully**, **Charles "Skip" Snead**, and the **US Army Brass Quintet**. Over 100 participants attended, as well as eight vendors. The symposium featured a regional artist recital, presentations, a massed ensemble, and an after-concert jazz jam session coordinated by **Mike Simpson**. Competitions were university solo,

mock audition, and quartets. The WSU and Central Washington University horn ensembles performed.

The WSU Horn studio thanks everyone who contributed to the success of this event. The featured artists were wonderful in their performances, sessions, masterclasses, and all their interactions with everyone who attended. Thanks also to everyone who adjudicated, presented, performed, competed, exhibited, or otherwise contributed to the symposium. We hope to see all of you again soon!

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## International Horn Competition of America

Reported by Brenda Luchsinger

The International Horn Competition of America was successfully hosted at Colorado State University, July 27th through 29th, 2024. The competition drew many talented horn players, in both the professional and university divisions, from many of the 50 states in addition to countries around the world. The competition featured three rounds of performances in which semifinalists, finalists, and ultimately the prize winners were chosen.

The professional division was won by **Jhon Kevin Lopez Morales** of the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá. Second prize in the professional division went to **Nelson Yovera** of the Tuscon Symphony. Third prize in the professional division was awarded to **John Turman** of the Seattle Symphony. An additional prize, the Board of Directors Award, was presented to Jhon Kevin Lopez Morales for the best performance of "SCHerZOid" by Margaret Brouwer.

The university division was won by both **Braydon Ross** (Yale School of Music) and **Natalie Sweasy** (Cincinnati, Ohio). The Gretchen Snedeker Prize was awarded to semi-finalist, **Harrison Bruner** (University of Alabama) and the Vincent DeRosa Prize was awarded to finalist, **Joshua Wood** (University of Georgia).

All competitors were evaluated by a distinguished panel of internationally selected judges. In addition to serving on the respective university and professional juries, many jurors offered a series of lectures and presentations during the three-day event as well.

The International Horn Competition of America is one of the world's premier competitions for horn players and occurs once every two years. The next competition is anticipated in 2026.



*IHCA Professional Division Winners  
L-R: Nelson Yovera (2nd prize), Jhon Kevin Lopez Morales (1st prize and Board of Directors prize), and John Turman (3rd prize)*



*IHCA University Division Finalists and Winners  
L-R: Tyler Winningham (finalist), Natalie Sweasy (1st prize), Harrison Bruner (semi-finalist and Gretchen Snedeker prize), Braydon Ross (1st prize), Joshua Wood (finalist and Vincent DeRosa prize)*

Scan and Follow the IHS on Social Media:  
<https://linktr.ee/hornsociety>

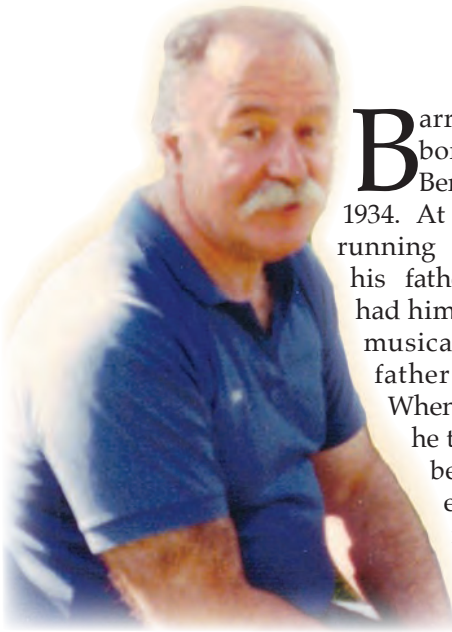




# Obituaries and Tributes

*Note: Biographies of the Honorary Members and Punto Award recipients appear on the IHS website.*

## Barry Benjamin (1934-2024) by Seth Benjamin



*Barry Benjamin in 1989.*

Barry Berse Benjamin was born to Alan and Sylvia Benjamin on August 19, 1934. At the age of 10, while running out to play baseball, his father stopped him and had him sit down to listen to a musical recording that his father particularly liked. When Barry heard the horn, he thought it was the most beautiful thing he had ever heard. At that moment, Barry made the decision to be a horn player. He had no backup plan. The horn was all there

was. He was a good baseball player, and even joined a semi-pro team, The Tars, where he did quite well. But there was always the horn.

After high school, he attended the Eastman School of Music where he met his first wife, Jean Douthiel, a violinist from Ohio. They fell in love and married. Barry joined the Coast Guard and played in the band. They had their first child, Lisa Rebecca Benjamin, in 1957, then Seth Douthiel Benjamin in 1960.

After the Coast Guard, Barry played with the Hartford Symphony and the family moved to Hazardville, Connecticut. Quickly, the jobs moved into New York City, and they moved again to Hollis, Queens. Barry found himself

playing for the New York City Ballet, then the New York Brass Quintet, then the Dorian Woodwind Quintet, all while teaching at Brooklyn and Hunter Colleges.

The Dorians were a brilliant collection of musicians who worked and played together beautifully. They played all over the world and Barry played with them for years. As the freelance music scene changed in NYC, Barry was offered the position of Professor of Music at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where he taught horn. Barry accepted, married his second wife, Deborah Lucchesi, and they moved to Shorewood, Wisconsin, each taking a son.

Barry lived and taught in Milwaukee for many years, making lifelong relationships with many students. When he retired, Barry and Deb moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Deborah succumbed to cancer in 2020, and Barry moved to Assisted Living in Pennsylvania. He rode out much of the Pandemic there, then moved to Fairfield, Connecticut to be near his son. He was very much loved at that home until he passed on June 15, 2024, just a couple of months short of his 90th birthday.

Barry was an exceptional man; smart, talented, funny, an amazing storyteller, grounded in common sense, kind and honest. He was a great father. He played music with love and expression. Music was his language. Even at the latter stage of life when words would escape him, music never did. He may not have been able to tell you about the music, but he would immediately burst into singing any piece of music requested; it was simply that much of him. If you were around Barry, he left you better than when you met. He is missed and always will be.

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## Barry Benjamin: In Remembrance

Barry Benjamin brought me to Milwaukee in 1989 and changed my life. I never thought I'd live in Wisconsin. At the time, I'd never been that far north, and didn't have any inclination to do so. But I was a bit at loose ends, living in Miami, and a friend introduced me to Barry's recordings and recommended him highly as a teacher. She'd just completed her master's degree with Barry, and spoke so highly of him that I reached out to him for information. I'll admit I had never heard of Barry before that. Times were so different; the recordings and players one knew were completely dependent on one's friends, teachers, and the local record store, and none of those had mentioned the landmark Dorian Wind Quintet recordings that so well demonstrate Barry's meticulous and heartfelt horn playing. I immediately fell in love with his playing, and when I visited, in June 1989, Barry and his wife Deb welcomed me so warmly that I knew Milwaukee was the next step for me.

Barry made sure that I knew everyone in the music department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he'd been teaching for many years. He quickly helped me win my first orchestral position. I felt at home there right away, largely because of Barry's generosity and encouragement. I remember him asking me, a few weeks in, if I was happy there, and I remember thinking that I was the poster child for Wisconsin's slogan at that time: "You're Among Friends." I was. I made friends there who are still important in my life decades later, including my husband.

Barry helped me to become a better musician and horn player, but I think his biggest contribution to my life was to shape me into a better person. Barry seemed to always do what was right, and encouraged his students and all those around him to do the same. He was honest and open about his feelings, be they joy or disappointment. He honored me with his trust, giving me access to his

office, his music library, and his horns that were kept at school. I still use practice parts that I copied from his library, and it makes me smile to see his "Blow Your Own Horn" stamp, along with his old address, at the bottom.

Later, he coached the wind quintet that I was a member of at UWM's Institute for Chamber Music. All of us from that ensemble remember him with love and deep respect. He taught us how to function as an ensemble, both musically and personally. I especially remember and use his method for conflict resolution: a simple vote. Can't agree on the phrasing? Try it both ways and then vote. Can't decide where to go to lunch? Vote! Barry believed in democracy and commitment, and I believe he transmitted that to all his students.

I could go on and on about Barry, and Deb, and perhaps I will in my own writing, but I'll close with a story I tell my own students regularly. I was at a performance where Barry was playing the Mozart K. 407 Quintet. He'd been playing beautifully of course, but when they started the third movement, there was water in his horn. I thought, "Oh no – there's nowhere to get rid of that!" I thought that it would derail the performance, but no. Barry continued to play beautifully throughout the entire movement, and seemed totally unfazed. I tell that story whenever a student uses water in their instrument as a reason to stop whatever they're playing. Barry Benjamin was a gem. I'm lucky to have known him, and I miss him.

–Ellie Jenkins

## David Duke (1938-2024)

David Duke, IHS 2015 Punto recipient, was highly sought after in Hollywood studios since the 1960s and played on many films and television shows, such as *Back to the Future*, *Jaws*, *Star Trek* films, *Die Hard*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, to name just a few. He played in the UCLA band in the 1950s, was a member of the Westwood Wind Quintet, and played with ensembles such as Henry Mancini, the Monterey Jazz Orchestra, Neil Norman, and the Abnuceals Emuukha Electric Orchestra (organized by Frank Zappa). David Duke will be remembered for his impact and contributions in film music and jazz.

David performed with countless artists and composers for over four decades, including Cannonball Adderley,



Teresa Brewer, Dizzy Gillespie, Randy Newman, Kenny Rogers, Arturo Sandoval, Doc Severinsen, John Williams, and Nancy Wilson. Artists he recorded with include The Beach Boys, The Carpenters, Natlie Cole, Judy Collins, Miles Davis, John Denver, Neil Diamond, Ella Fitzgerald, Quincy Jones, Johnny Mathis, Prince, and Frank Sinatra.

Movie soundtracks include *Agent Cody Banks*, *Along Came a Spider*, *Cats and Dogs*, *The Chronicles of Riddick*, *Collateral Damage*, *The Color Purple*, *Constantine*, *Dragonfly*, *Dreamcatcher*, *Elf*, *King Kong*, *The Legend of Zorro*, *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *Looney Tunes: Back in Action*, *Meet the Fockers*, *Panic Room*, *Paycheck*, *Peter Pan*, *Red Dawn*, *Rocky II*, *Star Trek: Nemesis*, *Under the Tuscan Sun*, and *War of the Worlds*.

## We never had a dull moment

David Duke was a giant in the recording industry, having performed on thousands of recording sessions beginning in the late 1950s and continuing until he retired in the mid-2010s. His first session was on the movie *Panic in the Year Zero*.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, David began his musical studies at the piano at age three. His piano proficiency continued throughout his life, even playing on some sessions when asked to fill in. His horn studies began in high school. He continued his education at UCLA, where he first studied chemistry. He was a member of the marching band and began to get called for gigs around town. His growing interest in playing began his decision to change his major to music. He started doing recording sessions while still a student.

His playing career incorporated many aspects of per-

formance, including chamber music, live gigs, being a part of the Air National Guard band, and as a record date player with the famous Wrecking Crew, playing on hundreds of record dates in the 1960s at all hours of the day and night. He was also credited – along with Tom Greer – for introducing the Wagner tuba into the recording world, most notably in the song "Classical Gas." He performed on the iconic LA Horn Club recordings and worked with every major film and television composer for over 50 years.

He was also an outstanding pilot, having flown many Angel's Flight missions for charitable causes. He was a devoted family man, an AYSO soccer referee, and a wonderful mentor for up-and-coming horn players like me. I sat next to him hundreds of times on recording dates. We never had a dull moment. I will miss him.

– Richard Todd



## George McCracken (1931-2024)

George Tate McCracken was a man of many talents and interests. He was an artist and musician and had a long career as a horn instrument designer and manufacturer. His passion for learning led him to be a scholar in various fields.

George was raised in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He started with instrumental music on clarinet but switched to horn by the time he was in high school, when he began doing simple repairs on his horn. He also took drafting class, which was later to be important to his career.

After graduation, George attended the Navy music school and served in the Navy for five years. He returned to Winston-Salem to work for a manufacturer of textile machines, learning how to design and operate machinery. He moved to Cleveland, Ohio in 1964 to work for H.N. White, a musical instrument manufacturer since 1893, which became King Instrument Company and is now a branch of United Musical Instruments. There he designed the Eroica and Fidelio horns and several trombone models. After 15 years at King, he founded his own company, GMC Brass, leading it for 43 years. He typically made about eight horns a year.

George is also responsible for founding the International Horn Competition of America (formerly the American Horn Competition and originally the Heldenleben International Horn Competition). He attended the IHS



symposium near Montréal in 1975 and observed a contrast between American horn soloists who sat and played from music and European soloists who stood and performed from memory. He helped create the solo horn competition to showcase American horn soloists and encourage the teaching of solo literature.

See "My Week with George McCracken" by Doug Hall in the February 2013 issue of *The Horn Call*.

### He has been my inspiration

George McCracken established his reputation by seemingly bending the rules to build unique and wonderful one-off instruments for players with specific requirements.

George developed the Eroica and Fidelio designs with acoustician Arthur Banade of Case Western University. Banade had spent time in India and witnessed manufacturing techniques, which helped him understand and work with George.

The first instrument developed was the Duo Gravis (double low) bass trombone with the most advanced scientific acoustic knowledge at the time. Alan Rath, a studio bass trombone player, said "I don't care about the science, I care about how it plays." Then they developed the Eroica. Ernie Angelucci, Michael Bloom, Verne Reynolds, and Bill Slocum all helped test the early Eroica models.

Kruspe sent Anton Horner a double horn with outrigger valves. Horner didn't like the mechanical linkage because it bound up, so he asked them to create a two-tiered change valve, which became the Horner model, upon which the 8D was modeled.

Anyone who knew George in his later years could appreciate his active mind, boundless imagination, and attention to detail. His knowledge was immense, and he knew and appreciated music, his features lighting up while he hummed and conducted along with whichever masterpiece came over his speaker system while in the middle of a project. He spoke clearly and well but often communicated his bigger ideas by meticulously diagramming on index cards as any proper old-school engineer might do. By his own admission, his ability to conceive instruments and problem solve for others was still what got him out of bed each morning. We last saw each other two years ago just after the pandemic officially ended and it felt safe to connect in person. The McCracken shop will continue under my management, his apprentice and friend.

George was a great man, and I believe the last of his kind – a proud veteran from the tail end of the greatest generation and a classicist but also a romantic and real-deal craftsman who truly loved the horn, his family, and friends.

—Doug Hall

# 2024 IHS Honorees

**IHS** Honorary Members, Punto Award recipients, and Service Medal of Honor recipients are voted on by the Advisory Council at each International Horn Symposium. See the IHS website ([hornsociety.org](http://hornsociety.org)) for biographies of past honorees.

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## Honorary Members

Honorary Membership in the International Horn Society recognizes living artists (or those who passed away within the year) who have made a major contribution at the international level to the art of horn playing. This contribution must extend beyond the individual's lifetime

and should exist in several areas, such as performance, teaching, research, or service to the IHS. Any IHS member can submit a nomination (with documentation); a nominating committee presents a slate of recommendations to the Advisory Council.

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### Martin Hackleman

Martin Hackleman began playing the horn at the age of 16, studying with Caesar LaMonaca in Houston. Other teachers have included Barry Tuckwell and Roland Berger of the Vienna Philharmonic. He studied at the University of Houston and at age 19 joined the Calgary Philharmonic as principal horn. After two seasons in Calgary, he joined the Vancouver Symphony as solo horn, where he played for the next nine years.

In 1983 Hackleman left Vancouver to join the world-renowned Canadian Brass. His three years with the group saw many outstanding achievements, including recordings for CBS Masterworks, extensive tours of the US, Canada, Europe, and the Far East, a Canadian JUNO award for "best classical record," the group's Hollywood Bowl premiere, and the release of their first video. Hackleman then joined the Empire Brass Quintet, whose moderate concert schedule allowed him time to pursue a solo career as well as specialty interests such as the Vienna horn and natural horn. He was a member of the EBQ for four years.

He returned to Vancouver in November of 1989, where he played principal horn in the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra once again and served as Adjunct Professor of Horn at the University of British Columbia. In 1990, Hackleman helped launch a nationally broadcast chamber music series on CBC Radio called "CURIO," featuring chamber music of forgotten composers.

For the 1999-2000 season, he was invited to play principal horn in the Montreal Symphony under Charles Dutoit. In 2000 he was appointed principal horn of the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC where he remained until 2012 when he left to join the faculty at the University of Missouri Kansas City.



He performed as guest principal with the Philadelphia Orchestra on two occasions while living in Washington, DC, and also played principal horn in the Chautauqua Orchestra at The Chautauqua Institute and at the Waterloo Festival in Princeton, New York.

Hackleman has made numerous recordings with the National Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, Montreal Symphony, Canadian Brass, Tidewater Brass, Washington Symphonic Brass, and the Empire Brass. In 1999 he recorded two solo albums; one entirely of his own arrangements for solo horn with piano and string accompaniment, and one of five lost Romantic concertos with the CBC Vancouver Orchestra. In addition, a recording of chamber music for two horns and bassoon was released in the spring of 1996. In November of 1998 a

Christmas recording with horn quartet was released. A disc of the Brahms Horn Trio with other chamber music was released in July of 2000.

Hackleman has made numerous contributions to horn pedagogy, including etudes and other materials published by Editions Bim and Legacy Horn Experience. He has served on the faculty at the University of Maryland, Boston University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Missouri Kansas City Conservatory of Music. For four years he coached the Asian Youth Orchestra and participated in their annual world tours. As a member of Summit Brass he has performed, recorded, and taught during the summers at the Rafael Méndez Brass Institute. For many years he was a design consultant with Yamaha. Over the years he has been invited to give master classes at Juilliard, the Manhattan School, Curtis Institute, and the University of California, Los Angeles.



## Bedřich Tylšar



Bedřich Tylšar, a Czech horn player and pedagogue, was a long-time member of the Czech Philharmonic and an exponent of the Czech tradition of horn playing. He and his brother, Zdeněk (1945-2006) often performed together as a duo. Double horn concertos (and horn concertos in general) were prevalent during the Baroque and Classical periods, and the brothers revived and carried on this tradition.

The inspiration came to Bedřich at a music shop in Brussels, Belgium in 1962 when he heard a recording of two horns and decided to follow up by exploring archives. "I realized that these instruments [two horns] go together perfectly thanks to the abundance of overtones," Bedřich recalls. The brothers' first performance together was a Rosetti double concerto in E-flat in Olomouc, Czech Republic in 1964. The brothers made two-horn works by Czech composers such as Rosetti, Fiala, Reicha, and Pokorný widely known, as well as double concertos by Vivaldi, Telemann, and Haydn and horn concertos by Vivaldi, Haydn, and Leopold Mozart.

After graduating from the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno, Bedřich Tylšar played in the Gottwald Philharmonic (now the Bohuslav Martinů Zlín Philharmonic), the Prague Symphony Orchestra (FOK), the Munich Philharmonic (1967-1969), and from 1973 until 2001 the Czech Philharmonic (with his brother as principal horn). He also performed as a soloist at home and abroad and recorded about twenty albums. He has been a judge for the Prague Spring competition and taught at the Prague Conservatory.

## Punto Award

Individuals selected for the Punto Award (named for Giovanni Punto, who lived from 1746-1803) have made a major contribution at the regional or national level in areas such as performance, teaching, research, or service to the IHS. The international workshop host or any Advisory Council member can nominate individuals for this honor, and selection will be by majority vote of the Advisory Council.

## André Cazalet

André Cazalet began studying music at an early age, and was awarded two first prizes from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris. After performing as a soloist for Pierre Boulez's Ensemble intercontemporain, he joined the Orchestre de Paris as solo horn in 1980, a position from which he recently retired. His active solo career has led to performances conducted by Christoph Eschenbach, Paavo Järvi, Semyon Bychkov, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Peter Eotvos, John Nelson, Michel Plasson, Antonio Papano, and Walter Weller.

A highly sought-after chamber musician, he has performed alongside Daniel Barenboim, the Talich Quartet, Pascal Rogé, Gérard Caussé, Maurice Bourgue, Katia et Marielle Labèque, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Emmanuel Pahud, Schlomo Mintz, Christoph Eschenbach, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Christian Tetzlaff, Boris Berezovsky, and Julian Rachlin.

His repertoire stretches from the 18th century to the present day, and he has collaborated with numerous contemporary composers. He is the dedicatee for several works for horn. Having taught at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris since 1985, he has been invited to teach at some of the world's greatest establishments: the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, the Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State Conservatory, universities in Vienna and Tokyo, Hamburg's Musikhochschule, in Freiburg, Munich, and beyond.

His discography includes concerti by Haydn and Leopold Mozart, while his album featuring trios by Brahms and Ligeti for piano, violin and horn was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque. Nominated for the Victoires de la Musique in 2011, André Cazalet is a Chevalier of the French Order of the Arts and Letters.



## Susan McCullough

Susan McCullough served for 22 years as principal/third horn in the Colorado Springs Symphony Orchestra and on the faculty of the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver (1996-2018) and is highly esteemed as both a performer and an educator.

McCullough earned a bachelor's degree in horn performance from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas in 1975. She was principal horn and soloist of the Air Force Academy Band in Colorado Springs (1975-1979). She was a member of the Aries Brass Quintet (1996-2008) and is a founding member of the Denver Brass (since the first concert in 1981). She toured the US as principal horn with the Swiss chamber orchestra Lucerne Festival Strings in 2003. She is on faculty of the Rafael Mendez Brass Institute (since 2007), the Lamont Academy (since 2008), and the Kendall Betts Horn Camp (since 2021).

McCullough performs with many of Colorado's ensembles and with operas and shows that tour to Denver, and is considered the number one freelance horn player in the region. She is a soloist and recording artist (often with her son, Jesse McCormick, second horn in the Cleveland Orchestra). She has been a featured soloist and clinician across the US and around the world, including in South African National Symposiums since 2007.

Her valuable contributions to the IHS include serving on the Advisory Council (2008-2014 and 2017-2024), as a featured artist at many symposiums, and as host of the 2008 IHS Symposium in Denver, which set attendance records.



## Service Medal of Honor

This honor is for individuals who have made a major contribution in service to the International Horn Society. Any IHS member can submit a nomination; nominations are considered at the next Advisory Council meeting.

### Julia Burtscher



A native of Toledo, Ohio, Julia Burtscher served as Executive Director of the International Horn Society from 2019-2023. In addition to her work with the IHS, Julia built her career with the North American railroad industry. Her diligence, attention to detail, and commitment to the "customer experience" translated directly into her role with the IHS. A self-described "horn convert," Julia started on trumpet at age 10 and decided to switch to the horn in junior high school. She went on to study with Mary Kihlsinger at the University of Toledo.

As Executive Director of the IHS, Julia worked tirelessly behind the scenes: paying bills, working with accountants for tax filing and financial reporting, scrubbing and sending mailing lists to the printer for *The Horn Call* mailing, facilitating Advisory Council elections, preparing materials for Advisory Council meetings, and a great deal more. During her time as Executive Director, she worked extensively with the IHS Advisory Council and Executive Committee to assess available tools and resources to implement the IHS's mission. Julia has said that her position as Executive Director allowed her to "work with truly amazing people who make me better just by knowing them," and the same can be said of her.

As an amateur player with a career completely outside of music, Julia epitomizes many of the ideals of the IHS – fostering a community and connecting with others over a shared love for the horn.

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# When I Played the Horn

by Martin Hackleman

**M**artin Hackleman was named an Honorary Member of The International Horn Society in 2024. His biography can be found in the "2024 IHS Honorees" section of this issue.

I am looking back, recently, on a decades-long career that now, inexorably, selfishly, ignites my visceral desire to know its matrix. I often think what quick, ephemeral moment ignited my passion to play my soul song up a fifth from the piano. A lot of time has passed now ... uncountable concerts and untold ears have witnessed my efforts. But now, it has been so long without me holding the horn, that you would have thought the amputated metal circles in F would have faded from my daily memory, steps, and breath. But that has not happened despite the dents and warm wells it left in my soul. Now I want to try to explain and understand, for myself and any fellow lovers of our horn, the real plane that still looms on in my aged library, and maybe in your current daily pantry. Love does not stop, it just becomes alone and a warm memory on a shelf.

Click ... open the case ... this spherical mass of organized tubes exuding a radiance of a lifetime view, looking up a steep hill, that I did not quite notice in all the starting intrigues, whispers, and passions. There is the intimacy of picking it up, with the innate required balanced two hands ... the wonderment of svelte metal circles, with its wide head of glory; the bell. Now bring the long, extruding lead pipe with its introductory, inviting inserted mouthpiece, to your lips. A cold metal kiss with thoughts of sonic passion explodes. ...

The very first, completely unfamiliar touch, as a novice, initiates an intimate request of the odd mouthpiece, leaving you wondering and breathless, "why am I here ... what in the world am I doing?" Now you galvanize your singing soul and try to say "hello" with the voice of a musical collaborator that you just met, unfamiliar at the least, you were intrigued, in the near past, with some resonant soul called the horn that you heard somewhere .... "can I sing like what I heard?"

You start on an open-ended quest to tame the unnatural execution, and dream to exude beauty in spite of all its pratfalls. The new adopted family of lip muscles talking to the dream sound in our head in a language of an air/muscle

discussion is not a predictable road, you quickly find out. We individual players/lovers, all have tempered dreams and an unlimited variation of challenges to sing the metal. Teeth, jaw, posture, and a natural resistance to some foreign musical machine that is now pressing on my face by beloved choice.

Each day, perseverance is the teacher. Each day, the stubborn dream of those bounteous harmonics lures us to the music stand in some solitary room. Overcoming unseen inadequacies and weakness; it takes pools of imagination and courage to keep taking it out of the case day by day, breathing the airs of dread and hope. We do it for the dream. We do it because, within our personal insatiable sonic lust, we are enticed to go on, with a Siren Song, fueled only with bare random patches of improvement and beauty that our stubbornness has let us experience. As we actually briefly revel and improve; within this sado-masochistic adopted family, we make unique, inspiring moments that, thankfully, touch our own souls and, magically, others in the near.

This visceral, sonic holy realm does not ever actually leave a musician. Just because there is no horn in my hand at this age, no challenge pressing on my lips, does not mean the horn does not still exist in my soul. It's like looking at a picture of family; it's like waking after a dream that you swear was in your clammy hands. But it's all good. There was a time in youth where I did not know of the horn, then, a time when its sonic light opened my eyes with wide love, hope, work, and satisfaction, being able to have the privilege to experience the joyful fisticuffs of the horn is an honor. Please treasure your instrument with work and love. When it leaves you one day, its shadow remains.

Decades of breathing the horn, in all its vicissitudes and joys, led me to thinking I had complete knowledge and control, just because I let my hot passion spill daily in front of a music stand. I actually could do anything the horn asked me to do, for a beautiful, generous time that left me breathless and humble, every day. Little did I know, that deep pool of expertise welded an insufficient armor against some of Mother Nature's mysterious weapons.

Beneath the bounteous garden I had cultivated of colorful growth, strength and fecund control, I learned that



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things can slowly shift sideways at the same time. Infrequently small momentary weeds started to appear in my playing, not causing anything other than query and a silent head turn ... odd. Then things started to catapult into unrecognizable episodes and spasms that had nothing to do with the catechism of knowledge that I knew and had unwaveringly supported me. Nothing related to the normal signs of not paying attention to the regular challenges of playing the horn, unrelatable sensations of my lip existence appeared that I had never felt in many daily decades of meditating and hugging my beloved horn.

I tried all the answers in my experience gut and then started to follow some medical and pedagogical suggestions. I came to find out that dystonia is a Hydra head of subtlety and shock. This led to a gradually narrow, dark dirt road that had me standing there being less of a player than I was when I started 50 years ago. I thought I knew everything about playing the horn. I dug deep for decades and pulled the gems that worked for me, and many others, but could not have planned for Mother Nature's slap of enlightenment called dystonia. No rules, no logic based on what I knew as the horn, your stalwart mysterious adversary now playing in a boxing ring with no gloves.

The innocent hubris I had bred within myself by sim-

ply cajoling and wrestling with the horn for decades, did not, even remotely, help me deal with the Armageddon of the nerves in my face suddenly not correctly hearing my screaming brain. Embouchure now short circuiting, in a Whack-a-Mole fashion, that had no points of reference to the natural cause and effect I had demanded and learned over my long career.

After exhausting all the pedagogical and medical perspectives, I was left standing in my home studio, one October morning, saying to my beloved horn, "I am sorry buddy, we are done. It was a great ride. Thank you, but we are finished."

The bandaged horn that had been my costume and shield in life was gone. It was not a normal attrition of age, fatigue, boredom, or any normal frailty. It was a nightmare that I could not wake up from with the horn in my hands. The only way to wake up was to put it in the case and never open it again. As painful as it was, the horn and I at least parted on compassionate, friendly terms knowing that it was neither of our faults. It was out of our hands.

Now I look back and thank the Fates that allowed me to play the horn, making it a significant part of my soul whether I am making sound or not.



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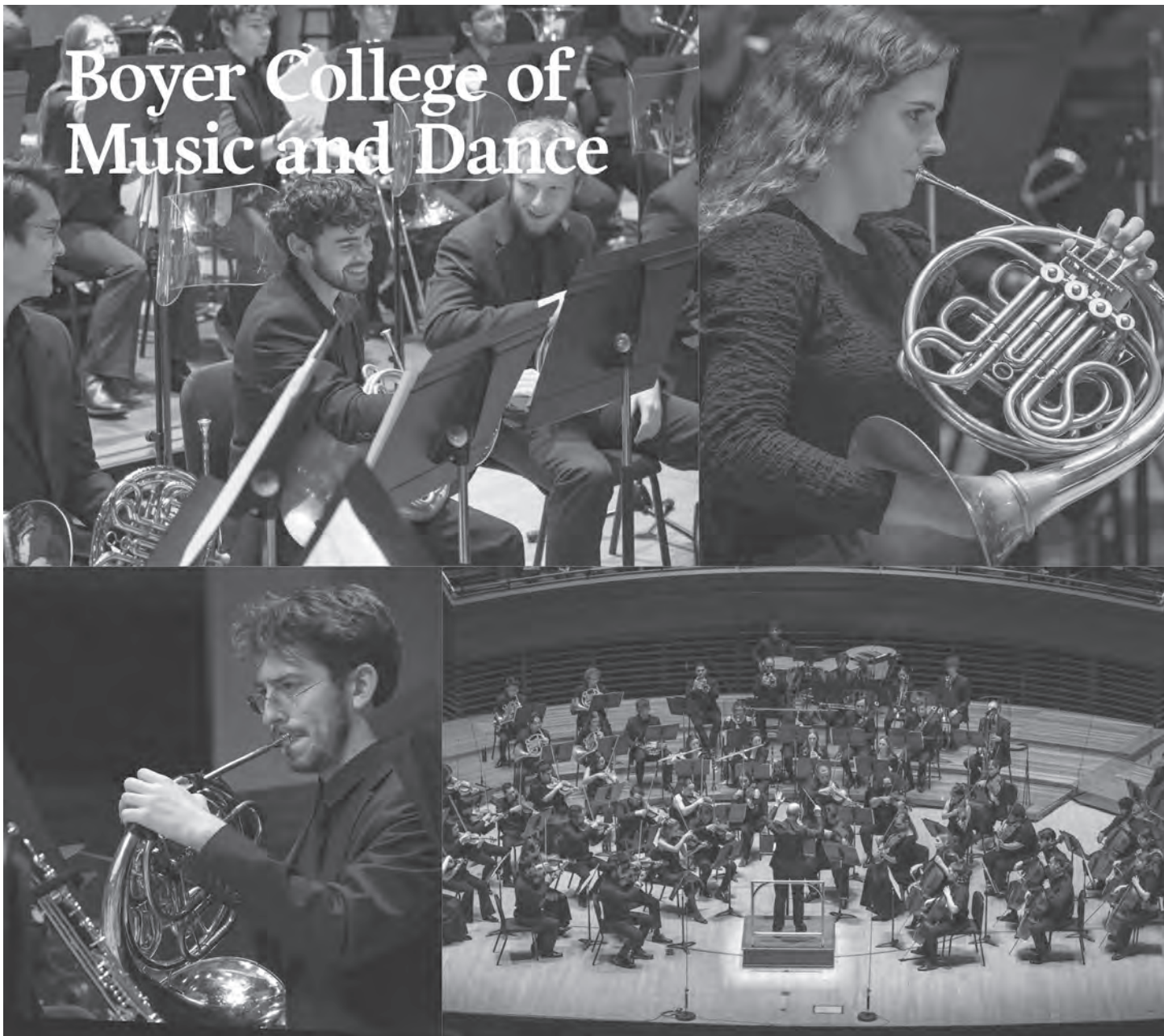
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# Symposium Report: IHS 56 – Horns on the Horizon

by James Boldin and Erik Svenson



Group Photo on the final day of IHS56, Photo by Allison

It's my pleasure to submit this symposium report on the 56th International Horn Symposium, hosted by John McGuire at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, July 29-August 2, 2024. The last time an IHS Symposium was held in Colorado was 2008, when Susan McCullough and Jesse McCormick hosted IHS40 at the University of Denver. IHS56 was a remarkable event for several reasons, not least of which is that it was held in conjunction with the International Horn Competition of America (IHCA). To my knowledge, this was an unprecedented occurrence, and John McGuire and his entire team

are to be heartily congratulated (and thanked!) for hosting not one, but two major international horn-related events.

As I arrived at Denver International Airport on the morning of July 28, the IHCA was already underway, having begun a few days earlier on July 26. Dozens of hornists traveled from far and wide to compete in the University and Professional Divisions, with the final rounds taking place on July 29, the first day of IHS56. While this report is not about the IHCA, per se, the prizewinners in each division are certainly worth mentioning.

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## **IHCA Professional Division Winners**

*First Prize:* Jhon Kevin Lopez Morales

*Second Prize:* Nelson Yovera

*Third Prize:* John Turman

*Board of Directors Award:* Jhon Kevin Lopez Morales

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## **IHCA University Division Winners**

*First Prize:* Braydon Ross & Natalie Sweasy (tie)

*Gretchen Snedeker Prize:* Harrison Bruner

*Vincent DeRosa Prize:* Joshua Wood

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Congratulations to these talented musicians, and I'm sure we'll be hearing more from them at future symposia and other events. Despite the logistical challenges inherent in such an undertaking, the IHCA provided a fitting prelude for the symposium. It's quite possible that the large attendance at IHS56 (ca. 650) was supplemented by attendees who came for both the IHCA and IHS56.

The CSU campus in Fort Collins is about a one-hour drive from Denver, and accessible by airport shuttle, taxi, and other ride-hailing services. Having never been to

Colorado, I was immediately struck by the immense vistas and natural beauty of the area. Fort Collins is located at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, at an average elevation of ca. 5000 feet. Being from a completely different environment (sea level, high humidity), I was concerned about adjusting to the altitude and arid climate in Fort Collins. Thankfully, the effects were minimal, although many of us were conspicuously consuming water and applying lip balm throughout the week. The Alexander Mountain Fire, located southwest of Fort Collins, caused some con-





*Group Photo on the final day of IHS56.  
Photo by Allison DeMeulle.*

cern in terms of air quality, but did not seem to adversely affect any of the events for IHS56. As of this writing, the fire has affected 9,600 acres, but is 75% contained and not showing any growth.

Most of the events for IHS56 were conveniently housed in the historic University Center for the Arts (pictured on the cover of this issue), making it easy to visit exhibitors, attend concerts and lectures, and engage in conversation. The University Center for the Arts had ample performance

space, and contained two main venues, Griffin Concert Hall and the Organ Recital Hall. Another notable feature of the venue was the lovely Flower Trial Gardens at CSU. These picturesque spaces made just walking into and out of the buildings a memorable experience. Excellent local restaurants with lots of variety were within a convenient 10-minute walk, which was much appreciated during the high daytime temperatures. For those staying in the on-campus dorms, the accommodations were more than

adequate, with excellent dining in the Ram's Horn cafeteria. I had several memorable conversations with colleagues both new and old over cafeteria breakfasts and dinners. The opportunity to experience dozens of seemingly innocuous yet ultimately meaningful conversations at meals, during car rides, and before and after concerts is one of the reasons I keep returning to IHS symposia year after year. Another perk of attending in-person events is getting to put faces with names. For many of us, IHS56 was our first chance to see and hear performers and lecturers we were only familiar with through recordings and social media. There's nothing like an IHS symposium!



*An Impromptu Horn Quartet at IHS56. Photo by Emma Brown.*



No International Horn Symposium would be complete without several competitions and their deserving winners. Congratulations to all these IHS and IHS56 competition winners.

### IHS Competitions

*Barry Tuckwell Award:* Max Robichaux

*Dorothy Frizelle High Horn:* Grace Doerr

*Premier Soloist Competition:* Harrison Bruner

### IHS56 Competitions

*Quartet Competition:* Oklahoma State University

*Octet Competition:* University of Alabama

*Jazz Horn Competition:* Matt Shevrin

Turning now to the various activities and attractions at IHS56, I thought it might be helpful to include a “by the numbers” section in this report. These numbers are approximate, as they do not account for any impromptu additions or last-minute cancellations. I should add that the IHS56 Program Book was beautiful – bravo to Mike Solo on the layout and design.

Participants: 650

Lectures/Presentations: 51

Exhibitors: 34

Concerts: 30

Masterclasses: 13

Featured Artists: 11

Competitions: 7



*Flower Trial Gardens at CSU.*

In addition, there were also several special events and performances:

- Opening Concert
- Mass Horn Choir Sessions
- Amateur/Enthusiast Sessions
- Morning Warmup Sessions
- Special Guest Recital: Michael Thornton
- US Air Force Academy Band in Concert
- IHS Composition Contest Concert
- Hermann Baumann Tribute Concert
- Concerts featuring the NU CORNO Ensemble and the Brazilian Horn Ensemble
- “After Hours” Panel Discussions, taking place 20 minutes or so after the evening concerts
- Closing Concert

Given so many events taking place over the course of just a few days, it was inevitable that multiple sessions and concerts would conflict. A first-time symposium attendee commented to me that they were not used to seeing audience members get up and leave in the middle of performances (but between performers). While this practice would normally be a breach of traditional concert etiquette,

it’s entirely understandable and a generally accepted practice at IHS symposia, and I can only assume at other similar events. Personally, it doesn’t bother me so long as the entering and exiting parties do so as quickly and quietly as possible. Audience members entering and exiting was particularly noticeable at the evening concerts, which did not have any intermissions indicated in the programs.



*After Hours Panel Discussion L-R: Katy Wooley, Anneke Scott, Shanyse Strickland, Lisa Ford, Haley Hoops, Leelanee Sterrett, Cara Kizer.*





Mass Horn Ensemble Conducted by Randall Faust. Photo by Allison DeMeulle.

While the Featured Artist concerts were of course stellar, it's also worth mentioning the sheer number and variety of lectures and presentations. Topics included physics and anatomy, horn history and pedagogy, social media and technology, repertoire of all shapes and sizes, mental health, and equipment, to name a few. Over the past several years of attending IHS symposia, I have come to the realization that I will never be able to attend all the sessions/concerts/presentations that interest me, but that *quality* takes precedence over *quantity*.

Two especially memorable moments for me were Radovan Vlatković's performance of *Phoenix* by Gregory Fritze with the United States Air Force Academy Band – which ends with the addition of 16 offstage horn players – and the Hermann Baumann Tribute Concert on the final evening performance. I had never heard Mr. Vlatković live, though I was very familiar with his recordings, and the live performance did not disappoint. For their part, the USAF Academy Band played an incredible concert which included the third movement of David Maslanka's *Sea Dreams* for two horns and band (MSgt Gerald Welker, TSgt Michael Hill, soloists) and the entire *Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber* by Paul

Hindemith. It was an incredible night, and I'm always impressed by the level of playing in military ensembles.

On a more somber, though no less musically fulfilling note, the Hermann Baumann Tribute Concert saw many of the Featured Artists and other performers from earlier in the week returning to share pieces in honor of the great horn soloist who passed in December 2023. In addition to these moving solo performances, the NU CORNO Ensemble also performed Kerry Turner's *Pro Memoria*, a work dedicated to the memory of Baumann, with whom the composer studied.

As I departed IHS56 on Friday, August 2, my heart and ears were full of another year's worth of musical inspiration. I'm already looking forward to IHS57, June 24-28, 2025 in Harrisonburg, Virginia, hosted by Ian Zook and James Madison University. The theme of IHS57 will be "Heritage Horns," celebrating unique regional and national styles of horn playing from across the globe. I hope to see you there, and hopefully we can share a meal or at least a fun conversation.

In closing, I would like to share the following words written by Paul Mansur, who served as Editor of *The Horn Call* for 17 years, from 1976 to 1993. This lovely quote can



Exhibit Room at IHS56.





be found in the October 1980 issue of *The Horn Call*, but I came across them in the book *International Horn Society: The First 50 Years* edited by Jeffrey Snedeker. They are as true now as they were 44 years ago when Mansur wrote them.

In the midst of international turmoil, distrust, and animosity the efforts of musicians toward fraternity and mutual acceptance of all mankind shine as beacons on a craggy shore to lost ships in the black of night. International workshops, symposia, and associations such as the International Horn Society have done much in the past ten years to foster mutual respect and understanding. The message to statesmen and politicians should now be clear: world

peace and brotherhood must be advanced upon the foundation of our shared values. The people and nations of the earth already have much in common. Diplomacy of the future should be based upon these common values and shared concerns. Upon this foundation we can learn to respect and honor our differences as we find they are not as formidable as we once thought. – Paul Mansur, Editor, *The Horn Call*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (October 1980), 34.



*Performing Kerry Turner's Pro Memoria.*

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*Radovan Radovan Vlatković performing with the United States Air Force Academy Band. Photo by Emma Brown.*

## Symposium Report Addendum

by Erik Svenson

It's been nearly 30 years since my last IHS symposium, so this trip felt new to me and I wanted to sample all IHS56 had to offer. As James described, it was impossible to attend everything; my goals were to learn as much as I could, listen to some great music from great musicians, and meet some new people.

As an amateur, and one who embraces the "amateur" status (amateur meaning "one who loves"), I was happy to participate in the daily amateur horn topics hosted by Marilyn Kloss and play in the group ensemble, which I don't get to do that often back home. The lecture part of the sessions I attended included a low horn deep dive (Randy Gardner), how to manage a horn choir (Arthur Adye), and hearing a new work for solo horn and electronics (Bill Scharnberg), written by Jewel Dirks.

Chris Brigham led the large horn ensemble and did so with kindness, great musicality, and crisp leadership. As a result, the performance at Friday's closing concert went well in my opinion. It was great to be surrounded by such a passionate group of players on the main stage for an enthusiastic crowd.

Beyond the amateur track, I attended as many of the lectures, performances, and masterclasses I could. Given the sheer number and variety of experiences, I summarized my overall impressions of what I learned and felt from it all. I took 12 pages of notes, so you get an idea of how much information there was to digest!

First, I was really moved by how caring, creative, and

patient everyone was who led a masterclass. Standouts for me were Anneke Scott (natural horn), Radovan Vlatković, and Katy Woolley who approached their teaching with innovation, humor, and a clear understanding of how to help the student performer get the most out of their own playing.

Second, I internalized the deep joy in making music that the performers and masterclass leaders demonstrated. I was profoundly moved by how they were able to communicate clear musical messages and remind me that that is what it's all about! I was particularly moved by the coaching mindset lecture led by Mr. Vlatković and Lisa Ford and the mental lecture led by Yu-Hui Chuang.

Finally, I learned so many ideas to help my technique. Standouts for me were Randy Gardner's session on how to achieve one's musical goals, a practical guide on how to use the Koprach Book 1 led by Martin King, coping strategies led by Don Greene, and Dylan Hart and Annie Bosler's session on physics and anatomy, which focused on breathing and embouchure production.

My head and my musical heart are filled with energy and sincere gratitude for everyone who put together this fantastic week. Bravo!



*Erik Svenson has been performing in various community ensembles in the Boston, Massachusetts area for over 30 years as well as performing as a soloist at his church in Lexington, MA. He is the founder of the Esprit de Cor horn ensemble and holds a major in mathematics and computer science as well as a minor in music from Oberlin College.*

# Native Languages Related to Brass Playing

by Yu-Hsuan Cheng

With the increasing number of students studying abroad, brass educators are challenged with teaching students who speak different native languages. This article investigates the relationship between the native language and brass playing for horn players who are either native English speakers or native Mandarin speakers.

## Differences in Playing

Having studied, performed, and taught the horn in both Taiwan and the United States, I have observed some notable differences in horn pedagogy and technique between the two countries. One significant contrast I found was in the challenges native English-speaking horn players face compared to my own struggles as a Taiwanese musician. For English speakers, playing melodies with smoothness and connectivity seemed to come more naturally, whereas I had to put focused effort into phrasing

expressively. On the other hand, techniques like rapid single-tonguing and precise front-end of notes were easier for me to execute. My American colleagues often found fast and clearly articulated passages more difficult.

This discovery piqued my curiosity about differences in horn playing across languages. Through attentive listening, I noticed hornists sharing the same first language exhibited similar traits in tone and articulation that differed from those with other native tongues.

## Rolled R

A while ago, I started learning a new language: Persian (Farsi). Farsi and English both belong to the Indo-European language family. While learning Farsi, my first difficulty was pronouncing the “rolled R.” To learn the sound of the rolled R, I had to force myself to become familiar with the vibration of the tongue and the force of the air, which I had never experienced while speaking in Mandarin. I gradually learned how to produce the rolled R sound.

After this success of producing the sound of the rolled

~~~~~  
**For English speakers, playing melodies with smoothness and connectivity seemed to come more naturally...**  
~~~~~

R, I thought of horn players and teachers who had told me that “if you know how to pronounce the rolled R, you would be able to play flutter tongue without effort.” With that thought, I started to practice the flutter tongue with the feeling of pronouncing rolled R. Suddenly, I

could execute the flutter tongue, which I had not been able to do before learning Persian. Even though my rolled R did not sound as natural as native speakers, creating a similar pronunciation helped me in speaking Persian and elevating the horn-playing technique of flutter tonguing.

## Experiments

Following this achievement, I put lyrics to some music for horn, the *Lied*, Op. 28, by Leone Sinigaglia. First, I wrote down two sets of lyrics: the English version and the Mandarin version. Second, I recorded singing in the two languages with the same melody. Then, I played it in front of various horn players and professors to listen carefully to my articulations, phrasing, and tone color. We agreed that the melody I played and sang in different languages made the music, phrasing, and tone colors sound different.

When singing with Mandarin lyrics, I tend to have a brighter tone. Also, it is more challenging for me to sing the melodies without separating the notes. However, when I sang in English, the voice became darker and the melodies did not have severe chunkiness.

Then I recorded myself playing the melody on the horn two times. The first time, I played the melody while thinking of the Mandarin lyrics in my head, and the second time, I played the melody while thinking of the English lyrics in my head. It turned out that the articulations were more direct but clear when I was singing

the Mandarin lyrics. However, the phrases were noticeably chunkier. I sounded smoother on the recording while thinking of the English lyrics, but the articulations were more blurred.

With this experiment, I felt the strong connections between native languages and horn playing. Also, I felt the ease of learning new techniques and practicing music from the angle of languages. I had tried to learn the flutter tongue for more than six years without success and developed an aversion to learning it. However, after learning the vibration and the mechanism from the Persian language, I felt less stressed about trying and learning the flutter tongue technique.

The experiments inspired me to research the relationship between native language and horn playing. I focused on native English speakers and native Mandarin speakers. Before collecting data, I started with understanding the differences in the linguistic perspectives between English and Mandarin, then proposing hypotheses based on the differences.



## English Versus Mandarin

First, English is a stress accent language. The stress or accent is the emphasis that adds to a particular syllable in a word or important informational words within a sentence. More importantly, the stress neither changes the meaning of the word nor affects the steady airstream. Mandarin is a tonal language, which means the tones determine the meaning of the words even when words share the same pronunciation. Speakers must be able to identify and address the four tones:

1. flat
2. upward
3. downward then upward
4. downward

The speed, direction, and tension of the airstream are consistently changing word by word. With these frequent changes, I hypothesize that speaking with various speeds, directions, and tensions of the airstream would increase the difficulty level of playing with straight tones and smooth legato phrases for native Mandarin speakers.

Second, English is a multi-syllabic language, which helps to build a habit of speaking with a continuous air-

stream. For example, in the three-syllable word “beautiful,” people would pronounce the word without breaking up or pausing between the syllables. In Mandarin, all words exist as single-syllable words. The crucial difference between Mandarin and English is that the pause between words is deliberate when speaking in Mandarin. Therefore, I hypothesized that multi-syllable words language (English) would help build the habit of producing a consistent and non-stopped airstream, increasing the comfort level of blowing with continuous and steady airstream.

Third, English is a stress-timed language, meaning the syllables’ durations are not identical. Depending on the pronunciation, emphasis, and importance of the syllables, they could be stretched or shortened. Mandarin is a syllable-timed language. The duration of all syllables is almost identical. In other words, the speech time would be more predictable when speakers speak in Mandarin than English. With this difference, I hypothesize that the trait of equal duration (in Mandarin) would be beneficial to have a more accurate sense of pulse. However, this may be a double-edged sword. The equal duration might also become a barrier to sustaining and playing various lengths of notes comfortably.

## Survey

Along with different traits and hypotheses between English and Mandarin, I designed a survey to understand whether horn players from diverse native language backgrounds perform and play differently from each other. The survey comprised three sections of questions:

- 1) personal information
- 2) self-evaluation on horn playing
- 3) study experiences

In the personal information, I collected data such as the number of years the participant has studied/ played the horn, the age of the participant, the material(s) of the horn which the participant is currently using, and the current studying/career status, etc. In the self-evaluation section, the questions included asking participants to rank the difficulty levels of each listed technique and describing their general tone quality and articulation styles. In the study experiences section, I gathered information about participants’ experiences interacting with players from different native language backgrounds, experiences studying the horn in a country that did not use their native language, and opinions about the relationship between native language and brass playing.

In the analysis, I organized the participants (65 native English speakers and 50 native Mandarin speakers) into four groups:

The average number of years of studying/playing the horn among the participants is 20.

Group	Language	Years of studying/playing
1	English	3-19
2	English	20 or more
3	Mandarin	3-19
4	Mandarin	20 or more

After analyzing the data and comparisons between groups, the results showed that there were significant differences between the native English speakers and the native Mandarin speakers in terms of their general articulation styles and their perceived difficulty levels with some techniques. Specifically, native English speakers found the following techniques to be easier to perform: consistent sound quality through a phrase, rhythmic precision and stable pulse, gentle front ends of notes (softer attacks), light-connected articulations in articulated scale passages, clearly separated staccato articulation in scale passages, and flutter tongue. The majority of the native Mandarin speakers described that they have a softer and more mellow articulation style versus most of the native English speakers, who described that they have a brighter and more heavily articulated style.

However, these differences were found only in the more experienced group; those who had studied/played the horn for 20 years or more. No significant differences were found between the native English speakers and native Mandarin speakers in the less-experienced group who had studied/played the horn between 3 and 19 years.

## Students can think deeper about phrasing and the meaning of the music by adding lyrics from different languages.

### Teaching

These findings indicate the need for developing teaching methods and exercises to help horn players overcome the barriers created by their native language and leverage the strengths brought with their native language. I have designed four teaching methods.

**Singing without note name.** This exercise benefits people who have difficulty playing with consistent sound quality. Solfege has a unique name for each note. Whether using fixed or moveable Do, the main issue of singing with the Solfege system is the inconsistent inner mouth shapes. However, singing and playing the horn while changing your inner mouth shape increases the possibility of having inconsistent sound quality. According to the survey, for native Mandarin speakers, it is harder to play and maintain a consistent sound. In this case, teachers could train students to focus on thinking and singing the music with a fixed note name and avoid dramatic mouth movements. However, the fixed names should not be randomly chosen. The selected consonants and vowels should help players create a natural articulation for horn playing. Syllables like La, Lee, Lo, Da, Dee, Do, Ta, Tee, and To are effective for this exercise.

**Flutter Tongue.** Flutter tongue can be a problematic technique to teach and learn. If a student cannot pronounce the rolled Rs, they will likely not be able to produce a flutter tongue. Focusing on learning rolled Rs without the horn is more effective and productive than approaching the technique of flutter tonguing directly. It not only simplifies the task but also reduces the stress level for students while learning new techniques.

**Adding lyrics from different languages.** Students can think deeper about phrasing and the meaning of the music by adding lyrics from different languages. It is also an engaging, interesting, and innovative method. Students should read about the composer and understand the background of the piece. The lyrics should be based on the story behind the music, giving students a better idea of how to interpret it. Different languages could help to break down old habits of playing the horn and refresh the use of tongue and phrasing. As the survey results suggested, native English speakers find it easier to produce smoother phrases, so players who wish to play more smoothly might add English lyrics. However, it is important to mimic the accents and fluency of native speakers. For instance, if Mandarin native speakers want to apply English lyrics, they should first try to speak like English native speakers. It does not mean that they have to sound like a native speaker completely, but it is essential to mimic how natives speak and reproduce the sounds they make, which would help to get the most out of this method. In addition to adding the lyrics and singing the lyrics before playing, students could try to mimic the tone and the

fluency of the language through videos, movies, and TV shows. It is a highly accessible and relaxing learning method. After building the habits, they are easily applied to horn playing.

**New mindset while practicing the horn.** In traditional horn education, instructors use various teaching approaches and methods to keep students engaged and active during lessons and masterclasses. However, most approaches focus on improving technique, producing a good tone and correct notes, or interpreting the music; it is detailed and direct instruction on how to produce the music. These approaches are effective but may not be suitable for all students. For example, detailed instructions may not work well for students who tend to overthink their horn playing and performing; these students might easily stress themselves and make the movements of playing/producing the music too artificial to deliver the musical interpretation correctly. Multiple failures can affect students' confidence level and create fear and a barrier toward playing the horn.

Teaching students with the angle of languages brings several benefits. First, playing the horn by thinking about the connections between language and playing can reduce stress levels because they are not focusing on producing the notes but on speaking. Second, it redirects students' focus from thinking about their previous failures to concentrating on simply being able to play the notes and convey the music. Shifting their thoughts and conquering their fears would take a while, but it is doable. Third, speaking is one of the most comfortable and relaxing activities for humans, which allows student horn players to play the horn more naturally and comfortably. Fourth, after successes, students feel more confident and less stressed from learning from the perspective of languages. Moreover, the approach of learning from the angle of languages not only helps students who are less confident with their playing but also prevents and reduces the possibility of experiencing massive breakdowns by facing too many failures.

There are various ways of applying the concept of learning from the angle of languages to horn teaching. Before using the concept to teach, understanding and knowing more about the mechanisms of your and your students' native languages are necessary. It is not required for instructors and students to speak multiple languages fluently. However, it is required to know the mechanisms of the languages that the teacher and student are using. The structure of the phrase, accents of the language, and the inner mouth shapes of the language would be useful information. For more details, see "The Relationship between Native Language and Brass Playing," (Cheng, 2023).



## Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to investigate the potential relationship between native language and brass instrument technique to further understanding of connections between speech patterns and brass playing. Additionally, I aim to inspire musicians and educators to

consider integrating these language-technique links into their own performance and pedagogy. Ultimately, exploring this concept may enrich the brass community's approach to sound production and musicality across diverse cultural backgrounds.

## Reference

Cheng, Yu-Hsuan. 2023. "The Relationship between Native Language and Brass Playing." Doctor of Music dissertation, Indiana University. [hdl.handle.net/2022/29043](https://hdl.handle.net/2022/29043).



*Yu-Hsuan Cheng is a Taiwanese horn player. She has been a horn instructor in Taiwan and the US since 2012, currently teaching at schools in the Dallas area. With the experience of teaching students with different native languages and cultural backgrounds, her teaching empowers students to overcome language barriers and access the universal spirit of music. She focuses on training students' self-guided learning abilities through interactive and dialogue-based approach.*

*While committed to nurturing the next generation, Yu-Hsuan remains a passionate chamber music player to communicate her beliefs and musical thoughts. She has contributed to recording two albums on Naxos and performed with orchestras and bands in US and Taiwan. Through horn playing and culturally conscious instruction, she continues utilizing music to unite people and cultures.*



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# Horn Pedagogy: An Interview with Jack Covert

by Kristine Coreil

*I interviewed Ithaca's Horn Professor Emeritus Jack Covert (1937-2024) in the summer of 1996 as part of my dissertation research. I had heard so many fond stories about his teaching style from hornists throughout the US – especially Gail Williams, who studied with Professor Covert during her undergraduate years – that I wanted to hear what he had to say regarding his pedagogical philosophy. He was a true elder statesman of American horn professors!*

[Editor's Note: An obituary and tribute to Professor Covert can be found in the May 2024 issue of *The Horn Call*.]

**Kristine Coreil (KC):** Can you summarize your career?

**Jack Covert (JC):** I received my bachelor's and master's degrees at Eastman in music education. I studied first with Fred Bradley, who was second horn of the Rochester Philharmonic. He passed away at the end of my freshman year. The remaining years, I studied with Milan Yancich, who was the third horn and has now retired from the orchestra after 45 years. He was a good teacher, and he taught the basics and fundamentals. There wasn't anything dramatic about it, just, "Go and practice, and do this and do that," and that's what I did.

When I graduated, I took a job teaching music in an elementary school. I taught everything, including vocal music and general music to little kids. It was the best year! Fifth and sixth graders are fun to work with.

I played in the Rochester Philharmonic for three years – second horn and then third horn. After that, I taught at Memphis State University and played principal horn with the Memphis Symphony. Then I came to Ithaca, and I've been here for 29 years. I've played in the Syracuse Symphony, and I take trips to South Africa every couple of years to play there.

**KC:** Did you have a problem recruiting people because Ithaca is remote?

**JC:** No, the recruiting was done for me by former students. I got students from Texas. Greg Hustis would send me students, for instance. I also got students from the Midwest [Gail Williams, in Chicago, is a former student]. New York state kids could go to the state university system for a lot less money, so I was getting out-of-state students.

**KC:** Did Milan Yancich's teaching style influence the way you taught? Did you try to pattern yourself after him?

**JC:** No, I never patterned my teaching after him. But if you have a teacher who doesn't put up with anything, and who you like personally and who you trust, then you work for them. This is where students might get off on the wrong foot with me – they didn't want to practice. They



John Merrill (Jack) Covert

wanted the benefits, but they didn't want to practice that hard. They would say, "I want to be a performance major," and I'd say, "Okay, you can be a probationary performance major, and after one year, we'll see." Almost fifty percent of the kids who entered as performance majors would be out of the degree after one year. That was part of what I got from Yancich – he was a music education person. But I didn't go into music education because of him. At that time, ninety percent of the students at Eastman were music education students. Now, it's the opposite. And, no one ever told me, "If you're a music education student, you can't ever play the horn." So, I never had that stigma. He gave me ideas, things to think about – some of them I rejected, and some I used. He's really the only teacher I had.

**KC:** Did he ever do anything that you didn't like, that you thought, "I'll never teach that way"?

**JC:** Yes. Partly because of his orchestral background, he's a hard articulator, a lot of "T" in everything. At that time, nobody played solos. The year Dennis Brain died [1957], he was scheduled to come to Rochester on tour, and we were all looking forward to that. I had a 78 recording of him playing Mozart's Fourth Concerto. That's the only thing I'd ever heard. I never heard a horn played professionally all through high school.

**KC:** That's different than today!

**JC:** Yes, today you go buy a CD of anything you want to hear. The first thing I said to my students when I started teaching at Eastman [last year] was, "I won't teach you excerpts." "Ah! Oh! Why not?!" "Because, you've got a whole Sibley library of CDs and scores. What do you want me to tell you – how to play Beethoven Five, when you can go listen to twenty recordings of it?" So, it's very different. I had no recordings, I didn't know what the horn sounded like, literally, except eventually for my teachers. I had to take a bus into Rochester, I lived in a small town near there, and I had to go in on Saturdays.



**KC:** What was your studio was like at Ithaca?

**JC:** I had an average of about 20 students. One year, it got up to thirty-something, and that was ridiculous. Ithaca went crazy with degree programs other than performance and music education. You could be a music major with an outside field. All but one student I taught – and that guy plays in the Indianapolis Symphony now – who were performance majors had enough free electives that they could minor outside of music. They could get a computer science minor, for instance.

**KC:** Did you encourage them to do that?

**JC:** I made them! I would just say, “You want to be in my studio? This is what you will do.”

**KC:** Did they think that you didn’t trust that they’d get a job?

**JC:** What could you say about the job market five or six years from now? And, what could you say about them? Are they going to be ready in four years? Probably not.

**KC:** What is the process when you audition entering freshmen or transfer students?

**JC:** If they were auditioning for a performance degree, they had to be heard by at least two or three brass faculty. All the rest, only I would hear. Usually, it was the same audition. They’d have a prepared piece, and they’d play that first. My philosophy with any student, the first time [I hear them], is that I don’t look at them. I just listen. Then, after maybe five minutes, I’ll look. If I like what I hear, but I don’t like what I see, then I’ll ask them to do other things – mostly to see if they have a full register, without breaks. If they have a serious break, then I won’t accept them. Not that I don’t think I could fix it, but it would require that when the student enrolled, my first words to them would be, “Everything you’ve been taught is wrong.” If I don’t do that, and let them keep going for one or two semesters, and *then* say everything is wrong, it’s too late. I’ll tell them what I think they need to do without being critical of their teacher. But, if it looks like it’s going to work, then fine.

**KC:** How important it was to you that incoming freshman can transpose, for example in E-flat and E?

**JC:** Most of them could play in E-flat. I would have them sightread in E-flat, just to see. But they usually couldn’t do it in E. Most of them were not orchestrally thinking.

**KC:** Is that something you would tackle right away?

**JC:** No. It would depend. In the syllabus, I think transposition started officially in their second year, but it could start at any time.

**KC:** What about extreme high register, high B or C? And the low register?

**JC:** It depended on the embouchure. If they’d get to written G on the top of the treble clef staff, and that was as far as they could go, and their embouchure wasn’t going to let

them do anything differently, then I probably wouldn’t take them. Most could play in the high register. The low register was not as good. It never is, because there’s no music for it. I would want to see if they could get down to written low C without any contortions. If they could do that, then fine.

**KC:** What about lip trills?

**JC:** Not many students came in able to play lip trills. I’d introduce a series of exercises, written out, so that they didn’t look like trills – not the usual method. I would teach them to play a slur from A to B using valves. They’d play four quarter notes using valves, and then four quarter notes without the valves. Pretty soon, the feeling in the embouchure was about the same, and then we’d speed it up. We’d do eighth notes, and triplets, and sixteenths. When they got up to sixteenth notes at [a metronome marking of quarter note equals] 144, they’d be trilling. It’s controllable that way. I couldn’t lip trill when I played in the Rochester Philharmonic, and we were playing Mahler. Verne Reynolds was sitting next to me. We had a chain of trills, and the conductor wanted them lip trilled, and I couldn’t do that. So, I went home and learned quickly how to do it with the valves. Survival!

**KC:** Did your entering students usually have a command of alternate fingerings?

**JC:** No. I’d give them the whole harmonic series written out, and I said, “If you will look at this, you’ll figure out all of your trill problems and your fingering problems, once you know which harmonics are in and out of tune. I’d do this in clinics. I’d write a second line G trill to A-flat. How do you do that? You can finger open to second/third valve, or on the B-flat horn, you can finger first to second/third valve. But, if you know your harmonic series, you could play it as the seventh harmonic on the A horn, then just raise your second valve. The seventh harmonic is flat, but this is a sharp fingering. So the G played with first and second valve is in tune, and then to get the A flat, all you’ve got to do is raise that second valve. It’s like stopping the instrument. When you get above G, you can stop a half step higher. Why does that work? Because you’re using the seventh partial.

**KC:** How proficient were students with stopped horn when they came to you?

**JC:** Not very. I taught long tones with stopped horn, because I knew that they wouldn’t do it otherwise, so if I could get them to play four or five notes – play an open note and then stop it and duplicate the crescendo or whatever – if they are playing stopped horn, then their embouchure has to work harder. You get quicker results using stopped horn for some techniques. But they didn’t know how to do it. They don’t know how to half-stop, and now you see a lot of music with half-stopping. You didn’t when I was growing up.

**KC:** Were there other factors you looked for in students besides their playing ability?

**JC:** I would have a meeting before the audition with the families – parents and kids. The administration hated it, because that's when I would give all the horror stories. I would tell them that they probably won't get jobs; that they are going to have to practice and practice and practice; that I'll control their life; they won't do things outside my studio that I don't know about. I'd tell them that if they don't want to practice, then they won't stay my student. (Parents would look at you strangely.) But, over the years, I've had about a dozen parents say that I was the only one who ever told them the truth. That's the pattern I went with, and if it turned off somebody, fine. I'd rather turn them off at the outset than after they've spent thousands of dollars. Also, at Ithaca we had a philosophy that we wouldn't let them get too far. We had a sophomore proficiency jury, and if they couldn't pass it, they were out of school, because we didn't feel that at the prices we were charging, we could just let them go on.

**KC:** In your syllabus, do you have different standards for each level?

**JC:** I wrote out what techniques they would cover. Everybody played out of the *Grand Theoretical and Practical Method for the Valve Horn* by Schantl. It goes page by page with interval studies. Every student had the same assignment each week, freshman through graduate student. Then, in our studio class, we would play through those. I would watch and see who could play them and who couldn't. The exercises would show up in their lessons, or they would show up on juries. I kept records so that I knew every semester what they had played in that book, so I could follow it for four years. You go to Gail Williams's house and look on her music stand, and what do you see? The Schantl book. I say to the students, "If you would only play this book, you could play just about anything," because it goes into the low register, and it's mostly legato, and it has moderate to wide interval playing. It doesn't tax you in the high register. It goes through most keys, in different meters. You have to be selective, the way you use it. I preach that book. I did a session at the Horn Workshop in June [IHS 28 at the University of Oregon, Eugene OR] on warming up, and I mentioned that book, and the only people who knew of it were my former students.

It looks awful and boring. But, if you get students using it, and they have it on the music stand, they will open it up at some point and start to play out of it. I would make them go through the whole book on their own, and make a list of the etudes they had trouble with, and then they would focus on only those.

I only changed one embouchure in my whole career. I made adjustments with embouchure, but most of them had to do with playing posture, which is the biggest problem. So if you see a horn player standing with his hand jammed up the bell [without holding on with the left hand], most likely he studied with me, because that's the way I teach people to hold the horn, standing or sitting.

**KC:** That's going to be their hand position?

**JC:** No, this is just the gimmick. I say to them, "You're going to rest the horn on your right arm." And they say, "Hey, who are you kidding? I've got to do this!" [Adjusts horn into left hand, with right hand still in the bell.] Yes, but you don't have to do this [holds horn with only the left hand in place]. You should support it with the right hand, and then just let it rest on the left hand. What I'm not going to do is hold it with the left hand, and then find a right-hand position, and then just plop it on my leg. That's what you see done all the time. So, if you stand up, you have the horn in this position, with your elbow close to your body. If you bring your elbow up, you create tension in the shoulder. What you're trying to do is relieve all this [tension in the chest] and get this left arm relaxed, and then bring the horn up to your lips and sit down. That's the way I hold the horn.

**KC:** When someone is not doing that, how does it manifest itself in their playing?

**JC:** Like this [sits hunched over the horn and off-center, leaning to the right].

**KC:** If you weren't looking at them, what would you hear?

**JC:** I might not hear anything wrong. But stand right in front of me. [JC holds horn in a playing position.] Now, take the horn and walk back, so the camera can see my body. Does this look right to you?

**KC:** You're leaning over.

**JC:** If I were going to sit now for 30 minutes, do you think I want to sit like this? No! So, this is the first thing I do with students. I say, "[Stay still, and] let me have your horn." They say, "Oh, this doesn't feel right!" Or sometimes it's this. [Sits leaning over to the right with horn bell on leg.] You get muscle tension in the shoulders. It usually starts in some of the weaker muscles. You could try holding the horn [with just the left hand gripping the horn and see how long it takes before you can't talk anymore. When you are seated, if you can get the horn balanced as much as you can in your right arm, and let it rest in your left arm, that's about as natural as you can hold this instrument. The weight distribution is inherently wrong. That's why it feels so wonderful to pick up the hand horn, because you lose three or four pounds of weight. Nonetheless, you can learn this balancing act, as I call it.

I didn't care if students put the horn on their leg. Now all the players play off the leg. It's like Geyer horns. When I was a student, people looked down on Geyers; you had to have an Alexander or a Conn. Today you don't see as many posture problems as you used to, because people stand more and they are more conscious of this.

**KC:** When they performed solo recitals, did you advocate standing or sitting?

**JC:** They'd stand, unless they couldn't. I had a few students with back problems who sat. Other than that, they all stood for solo recitals.



**KC:** What about embouchures?

**JC:** I've never had any real problem with them. The criteria of the embouchure is to anchor the edge of the rim into where the red of the lip and the skin meet, and then tip it up, and the inside edge has to clear the rut of your upper lip; if it doesn't, then you probably won't ever have any high register.

**KC:** What about breathing?

**JC:** That's easy to teach. You bend over at the waist, exhale, take a breath, and then straighten up. Your chest is in a different position than it ever was, up here. Now, when you take a breath in this position, you naturally expand below the waist. So, you don't have to talk about abdominal breathing, you just naturally fill it all up.

**KC:** Do you have a specific approach to teaching tone production?

**JC:** I don't. The only thing I would say is that there should be a little ring to the sound. But the trend has been toward a lighter sound now. When I was a student, it was the other way – you had to have a Conn 8D, with a muffled sound. Everybody played with the bell into their body, and they all wanted to sound like Mason Jones.

**KC:** When you were a student, did you play that way?

**JC:** No. I was the weird one. I didn't study with the right teacher, either, I studied with the "other" teacher. But, when I graduated, I was the only one who got a symphony job, so there was some justice in the end. Now, it's brass horns, lighter sounds. A lot of it has been helped by the Europeans, which we had never heard before. The recordings are now available. The generation of horn players in orchestras now have played solos, and that didn't happen before. Farkas may have played a concerto with the Chicago Symphony, but I don't know if he ever went out and played solo recitals. A lot in the business dictates tone production. If your goal in life is to get a job in the New York Philharmonic, then you go study with Phil Myers, and he'll tell you what horn to play, probably, and what tone to have. That's realistic, because that's what they want in the section – that's okay. But, to be versatile, to go out and freelance, you need to be flexible.

**KC:** Did you have to correct problems with articulation?

**JC:** Yes. I was taught to tongue hard and I switched to almost completely a soft articulation. I put a "D" on everything. Unless it's called for in the music, I don't see a reason to tongue hard. You can't if you're going to play solos.

**KC:** Is this something you found you had to fix in students?

**JC:** Yes, unless they had a good horn teacher. I always used a softer approach. Also, if you want to tongue rapidly you have to use a softer tongue. I never taught anybody multiple tonguing, ever! Gail Williams told me last year that she finally had to learn to triple tongue. So, she got a lot of mileage out of single tonguing. I never could multiple tongue. I couldn't keep my tongue rigid and move it fast.

You've got to keep the tongue relaxed and use a soft consonant. I'd have exercises for them to work on, and most of these exercises were to get them into the modern school of playing and out of the 19th century.

Now we're almost into the 21st century, and we're still teaching Kopprasch. It's a lot easier to use Kopprasch, because it's all so patterned. I used Maxime-Alphonse, and some other French books, and then got into the Reynolds etudes. I'd use Barboteu, and also the cornet repertoire, the Characteristic Studies in the back of the Arban book. But, not in the modern edition, which is edited. You want to look at the old edition without crescendi marked in.

**KC:** What musical problems have your students had over the years, and how have you approached teaching them?

**JC:** For some of them, there wasn't any fixing, except for imitation. I'd say, "Go listen to this and do what you're hearing." Most of the time, I would insist that they go to other recitals and come back with a critique. They'd say, "I didn't like that" and I'd ask, "Why?" "Oh, I don't know." I'd say, "That's not good enough. The next time you don't like something, I want you to figure out why." Pretty soon, they'd develop tastes. I also encouraged competition. I was never mean-spirited, but the students were competitive. They'd critique each other. That's basically how I'd teach musicianship – I didn't spend a lot of time on that. It's a maturing problem, as well.

**KC:** What would happen in a typical lesson?

**JC:** The first thing I'd say is, "Did you practice?" If they said no, then that was the lesson. That would usually only happen once. It was usually almost always etude-based. I preached lots of etudes, because they are problem solving.

**KC:** Did you have specific etude books that everybody used?

**JC:** Yes. A little Kopprasch, then Alphonse. I used the Schantl book all the time. *Preparatory Melodies to Solo Work* by Pottag – it's a book with short tunes, with waltzes and polkas. Major and minor scales, and a pattern of lip slurs. If they were music education students, they only got half-hour lessons. Most of my students were in a four-and-a-half-year degree that combined performance and music education. Most of my students' lessons were one hour long. Some of the best talents I ever taught, like Gail Williams, were music education students. We only had thirty-minute lessons, and you can't get through everything you want to. But the key is that you never tell them what they are going to do. You give them an assignment that will take two hours to play, and then when they come in, you choose.

That's why I never taught excerpts. We'd do mock auditions. The routine was: You go into your practice room with your tape recorder. Here are your lists, and you play ten minutes into the tape recorder, and you listen to it. You do this again and again. And, then I'd say, "Get up at three in the morning and go into the practice room and do that." They'd say, "What?! I can't do that!" I'd say, "What

are you going to do if you cross the country on a bus, and you get off the bus and race to the hall, and you're the first person to play?" One student I had played an audition in Buffalo, New York. When she got to the hall, it was locked, and she stood outside for an hour with other people in the snow, and then walked in and was the first person to play. How do you prepare for that? The psychological preparation is just as important as anything else.

I had the students comment on the mock auditions. We'd set the room up with a huge screen, and students would come in and play. When they were all done, the rest of the class would talk to them about their performance. It was almost always the same things, like rhythm.

**KC:** You didn't take lesson time for that?

**JC:** No, because unless they can hear it themselves, what's the point? If I say, "That's not very rhythmic," and you didn't know it... Can you immediately go back and think, "Yeah, I didn't play that very rhythmically"? No, it doesn't work that way. That's why the tape recorder is so important.

**KC:** What about literature?

**JC:** I must have had over 2,000 solos, plus chamber music. My library was enormous! I owned every book in the King catalog. So, I knew all the bad solos and etudes that were ever written. Sometimes, you go to horn workshops, and you hear bad music being played. And, then you realize that we have limited good music written for us. You have to focus on what is decent. Unfortunately, that turns out to be a very few pieces. That's where you start. A lot is dictated by the student. You've still got to play the Dukas *Villanelle*. There was that body of repertoire that we all know.

When Gail Williams first played in the Chicago Symphony, she played assistant. I told her, "You're going to lose your mind if you don't go out and do other stuff." That's when she got into chamber music playing, which is what I prefer to do, and what I push students to do. If I had my choice, that's what I'd be pushing at the horn workshops. I'd say, "Why don't you devote a whole day to bringing out the best of the chamber music repertoire? Play it for these students, because they never get to hear this music."

**KC:** When you were giving lessons, did you play your horn often for students? In what circumstances?

**JC:** Yes, but not with students. I'd play sometimes if I thought I could get the point across quicker. I might say, "Stop, let me show you something." But, not much. I never felt that was needed.

**KC:** What about intonation?

**JC:** I was convinced that I had to get the student to hear half steps. Then, you had to relate it to different temperaments in tuning. I'd say, "You're playing with piano, and their major thirds are going to be a different width than your major thirds." Sometimes, you had to get into acoustics. I would always make them practice chromatic scales.

**KC:** Did your lesson style change as students went through from freshmen to seniors?

**JC:** No, just covering different literature. By the time they got to be juniors and seniors, if they were performance majors, they'd have recitals. We would pick out the music the previous semester, and sometimes that could take up the whole lesson. That was one of the reasons why I didn't like the degree. For almost two years, we only worry about that one hour on the stage. For what? In that period, there's tons of music they won't cover. They also had the sophomore proficiency exam.

**KC:** What was the jury like?

**JC:** Each teacher would set their own requirements. Students would usually play a piece, sight read etudes, play scales. That was graded. If they failed it, they got an incomplete. If they failed a second time, they were out. That got to be a little tricky, but we did fail sophomores.

**KC:** Did you keep a file on your students?

**JC:** Yes, I'd keep a record of every lesson. I'd write down what they played, and I graded them. At the end of the semester, I just averaged out the grades, and that's the grade they got. I gave mostly Bs, and an occasional A.

**KC:** How did you go about assigning performance literature to students?

**JC:** They did have a Mozart day, where they'd all play Mozart in studio class. I'd make them write cadenzas, and do some research on Mozart and the pieces. Then, I'd make them play Mozart in their senior year, and they'd say, "Wow! What a difference!" I never had anything specific, besides the Mozart. I wanted them to cover the basics, like Strauss and Dukas. I used a lot of the French repertoire.

The college library owned a lot of music. I'd say to the graduate students, "If you want to go out and teach, see all that solo literature? You don't know one-tenth of it. Why don't you go get a box, and look through it and make notes, and see if you think it's of any value to you." I'd also make them read the books on the horn. I'd tell them, "If you go out into a community and say, 'I'm the horn player,' and somebody comes up to you and says, 'Tell me about the history of your instrument.' You say, 'I don't know anything about the history of my instrument. Wait, I'll go read up on it.'" That's not professional.

I studied one semester with Horace Fitzpatrick, and I could probably recite his book in those days. I learned a lot about the history of the instrument. In the process of learning, you stumble on certain things. For instance, I own the whole library of England's most famous horn player, Giovanni Puzzi. He was overshadowed by Punto and others. I had all of his hand horn library, which documented his career from about 1812 to 1860. It included all his cadenzas. I got it from a dealer in London, and I just happened on it. In it, you could see what a real hand horn player could do by seeing his cadenzas. Things were possible on the hand horn that I had previously thought were not possible. I started studying the players; they played



until they died. That set off some more bells, and I thought, "What did they do differently? How come we're all washed up when we're 60? What could they have done with their bodies and embouchures that we don't do?" There's a lot in there that most horn players and teachers don't consider.

If students now would study the players, they would realize that the horn players were the prima donnas of that century. Not the trumpet players, trombone, flute, or clarinet, but the horn players were making a living as soloists or duettists. If that had not been the case, what little music we have for the horn would probably never have been written.

**KC:** Did you bring any other materials into the lesson, such as metronome, tuner, or breathing devices?

**JC:** Just the metronome, which was important. I also had a device that's no longer made. Conn was at the forefront of research back in the 1940s. They developed the strobe tuner, called a DynaLevel, which wasn't developed as a musical tuner, but as a measurement for gear rotations. It looked like a little Christmas tree with a column of lights. You'd play, and as you'd get louder, the column of lights would go up. It was a meter of dynamics. You'd think you were playing a phrase at one dynamic, and you wouldn't be. Or, you'd slur between notes and think it was beautiful, but unfortunately, the lights would blink as you go from one note to another so you would discover that it's not legato. I didn't use the tuner much, because it's set to equal temperament.

**KC:** Did you play recordings in lessons?

**JC:** No, I didn't have time. Occasionally, I'd play a tape. I have a tape of Anton Horner playing the Siegfried Long Call on F horn – it's beautiful! I would play that for the student and say, "That's the way horn playing was when these people immigrated to the United States. That's what the first horn player in the Philadelphia Orchestra sounded like. He wasn't blowing the bell off all the time." I sat in a masterclass with Horner at the first horn workshop, and he kept telling the students, "Shh! Too loud!"

**KC:** Did you have a studio class?

**JC:** Yes, it would meet once a week. First, they would play through all the Schantl exercises that I gave them. That would take about ten minutes. Then, sometimes they would perform solos. I would assign them quartets. They would break into groups of four and prepare them on their own to perform them in studio class. I started the first university horn ensemble in 1966. I had a huge horn ensemble. At the beginning of the semester, I'd use a lot of time for that, because it was the quickest way to get a homogeneous sound from them. About every other year, we'd do a horn ensemble concert. I would take that group to MENC conventions. I had original music written for the group, and I was able to get most of the music from the LA Horn Club library.

**KC:** What about vibrato?

**JC:** I never taught it, but I use it myself. I've had students use it, only if they can shut it on and off. You hear it all the time now. If I were in an orchestra audition, I wouldn't use it. I think it's appropriate in some solo playing. But I wouldn't know how to teach it.

**KC:** Do you advocate a specific type of horn, such as silver or brass, large or small?

**JC:** No, they come to school, usually, having just bought a horn. If after a semester or so, I won't change anything if I don't hear a problem – even the mouthpiece. The mouthpiece might go first.

**KC:** If they came to you and said, "I need a horn. What should I buy?" what would your advice be?

**JC:** We'd get as many different makes as we could, go into an auditorium, and listen to the sound only. I'll turn my back, and I might say, "I like this one" or "I like these couple." Sometimes, it turns out that it's the one they had when they came to school!

**KC:** Have you perceived that students' attitudes have changed over the past thirty years?

**JC:** When I started there was a market for teachers. You could pretty much say, "You're going to get a job." Then that dried up. The orchestra thing has never been productive. But, no, I used to get upset with students who wanted to be performance majors. Then, in the last ten years or so, I decided that I'm not going to be. If this is what they want to do, as long as they can minor in something else, maybe it will lead them to a job. I don't worry about them anymore.

**KC:** Do you think that students are more willing to practice more now than in the past?

**JC:** No, they never want to practice, and it's always been that way. There are some situations where you go in, pay your money, and the teacher says, "This, this, this, and this are all wrong. Come back next week." You walk away and you think, "Well, what's life worth?" I tried to do only one thing at a time. Usually, if you work on one thing, the student will figure out two or three others that they can fix on their own. Also, they'll share the problems they are working on with others. My studio became self-teaching.

**KC:** Do you think that students' abilities have gotten better or worse throughout the years?

**JC:** I think they have better orientation toward music, because they have access to it now. They have better equipment. But it is surprising that they'll come and still not know the symphonic repertoire, because they won't listen to it. I'll ask every year, "How many of you have a solo horn recording?" Maybe half of them will. The standards are going down all over the country.

**KC:** What is your role in your students' musical careers?

**JC:** It would be better to ask my students! To someone like Gail Williams, I was more of a mentor. In a school like this,

you're very close to the students, and they come to you for everything, because you're there all the time. In some cases, I was the bearer of bad news to them.

**KC:** Do you try to be a role model?

**JC:** Yes, you have to do that. I went through the crazy period of the 1970s, when the students were going to burn the buildings down. You had to be consistent. The one thing that drives students out of their minds is when they don't know what you're going to do next. When I would have failings, it would be in that area.

**KC:** What motivated you to be a university horn teacher?

**JC:** At the time, I was offered the first horn job in the New Orleans Symphony. I could have gone to New Orleans and played first horn for less money than as third horn in Rochester. I wasn't going to do that. I went to the Lutton Agency, that everybody went to for teaching jobs. I must have had a hundred cards with jobs. I had two schools that I never applied to call me and offer me a teaching job. Now, you would kill for any one of those jobs.

And I didn't like playing in the symphony. It's boring. There was tension through the orchestra, nobody spoke to each other, and we had lousy conductors. I was making \$130 a week for a thirty-week contract. Here were these university jobs paying four times that, where I could basically do whatever I wanted to do. When I went to Memphis, I taught theory, music appreciation, brass methods, I conducted a brass choir, I taught trombone, I taught horn, and played in the Memphis Symphony. I love it all! When I came here [to Ithaca], I supervised student teachers and developed courses that I taught. Now, of course, I can't supervise student teachers or teach graduate courses because I don't have a doctorate.

**KC:** I have three years of teaching experience, with a long career ahead of me as a university horn teacher. Do you have any advice?

**JC:** Yes. Don't set your sights on just the studio – that's the kiss of death. It's boring. You will say the same things over and over and over until you're going to lose your mind. I never realized that. When I went to Memphis State, I went to my [previous] music education advisor, and I said, "They want me to teach theory! I don't know how!" He said to me, "You're a good musician." That's all he said! If you can find some flexibility and not get hung up on teaching just a studio, or just playing, you'll do better.



*Kristine Coreil is third horn with the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra and a retired Professor of Music at Northwestern State University of Louisiana. She currently resides in the north Dallas TX area, teaching high school English classes, AP Literature, rhetoric, AP Music Theory, and private lessons. This interview is part of her dissertation "The Pedagogical Styles and Practices of American University Horn Professors," published in 1999 and found in the IHS Lending Library.*

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# Improvements in Tone Quality with Alexandrian-Based Instructions and an ERGObrass System

by Daniel Nebel

**T**his research was conducted as part of a larger postural and electromyography study that is published as Chapter IV of the author's dissertation. The project received financial support from the Graduate Student Association at the University of Northern Colorado. Additional recognition goes to Jouko Antere, the inventor of ERGObrass, for the use of one of his products for this research. Thank you to the ten participants in this study.

Sara Wings advised on the design, implementation, and analysis of data for the study. Melissa Malde provided excellent guidance on Body Mapping and Alexander Technique concepts and vocabulary. Randall Faust, Robert Faust, Jeffrey Fowler, Susan McCullough, and Jeb Wallace served as judges of tone quality.

[Editor's Note: For a guide to the statistical terms used in this article, refer to [statisticsshowto.com](http://statisticsshowto.com).]

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## List of Abbreviations

ABI	Alexandrian-based instructions	EB	ERGObrass™
AT	Alexander Technique	NP	natural posture
BM	Body Mapping	sEMG	surface electromyography
Cal	calibration trial		

## Methodology

The Surface Electromyography (sEMG) of the Low Back in Horn Players study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Northern Colorado (Protocol Number: 2104025563). Ten participants, both professional and student hornists from Colorado, were recruited for the study at the University of Northern Colorado Biomechanics Laboratory. After completing the Playing-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders in Horn Players Survey, participants provided written consent to participate in the study.

At the beginning of data collection, five-second calibration trials were taken of participants both standing and seated without their instruments. Then the participants were instructed to perform a one-octave C major scale up and down in half notes (metronome at 80 beats per minute) while in six different situations; five iterative trials were taken of each situation for a total of 32 trials (including calibration). The six different situations were: seated in natural posture (NP), standing in NP, seated using an ERGObrass (EB) support, standing using an EB support, seated with postural Alexandrian-based instructions (ABI), and standing with ABI (instructions reproduced at end of article). Postural instructions were drawn from the practice of Alexander Technique (AT) and were not identical between participants; they were chosen based on body misalignments observed by the researcher. Instructions for most participants did not progress beyond the basic seated and standing posture instructions.

For the calibration trials, participants were told to adopt the stance or seated position they would normally use during rests in a performance. Participants were

encouraged to move and relax between trials and to strive to play their most beautiful C Major scales to simulate a more natural and realistic playing experience. To control for order bias, participants progressed through the six playing situations in different orders. Odd numbered participants started seated and then alternated between seated and standing through the trials; even numbered participants started standing and then alternated with seated situations. All participants began with their NP (seated and standing); Participants 1-5 then used an EB (seated and standing) before receiving ABI, while Participants 6-10 received ABI prior to using an EB.

The data collection process was audio-recorded for comparison of tone quality. Five professional hornists rated the tone quality of each trial on a scale of one to ten, one being poor and ten being excellent. Judges were instructed to score each participant in one sitting; comparisons between trials of the same participant were considered the relevant data. Judges were instructed to go with their gut reactions; they were told that several different situations that were being compared but were not told the details of those situations. Trials were listened to by the judges in the same order for each participant, which was not the same order as they were performed, so data trends likely did not occur due to playing order bias. The 25 scores for the six situations for each participant were averaged; ABI and EB trials were then compared to NP trials and shown as a percentage of change. Finally, the 250 scores for each situation across all participants were averaged, and ABI and EB trials were then compared to NP averages and shown as a percentage of change.

## Alexandrian-Based Instructions Used in Research

As these instructions were given, the researcher physically demonstrated the positions so that participants had a visual representation. The goal was to first ensure the spine, especially in the lumbar region, remained close to neutral. Participants were first given basic position instruc-

tions, such as: "take a staggered stance with your left foot forward of your right. Release your hips and knees, as if you were about to catch a ball." If the participant's posture was close to the basic positions, further instructions based on observations were also given.

### Basic Sitting Position

1. Place your feet flat on the floor and wide enough to create a tripod effect between your feet and your seat.
2. Balance on your sitting bones. Have participants find and identify their sitting bones by sitting on their hands or by rocking the pelvis forward and back. If they are balanced on the back of the thighs, have them tuck the pelvis a bit and release the lower back. If they are on the tailbone have them sit more forward.
3. Balance the head on top of the spine by locating

the joint under the ears and nodding the head yes to find the balance point. Then demonstrate singing to find the best head position for resonance and have them try it.

4. Once you have found this balanced position, bring your horn up to your face; avoid bringing your face to your horn.
5. Help adjust right- and left-hand positions to play with the horn off the leg if players are not used to doing so already.

### Basic Standing Position

1. Stand with your feet flat on the floor parallel to each other, adopt a slightly staggered stance with your left foot forward.
2. Release your knees and hips by pretending you are about to catch a ball, or by pretending to be a monkey.<sup>5</sup>
3. Balance the head on top of the spine by locating the joint under the ears and nodding the head yes to find the balance point. Then demonstrate singing to find the best head position for resonance and have them try it.
4. Once you have found this balanced position bring your horn up to your face; avoid bringing your face to your horn.
5. Help adjust right and left-hand positions to play standing if players are not used to doing so already.

*If a player is already set up in the above positions, the following guidelines will be addressed.*

1. Ensure the left wrist is straight and the fingers are all curved and close together (avoid using the

pinkie hook; a strap or duck foot on the horn might be necessary to make that happen)

2. Balance the weight of the horn primarily on the right thumb and proximal knuckle of the right hand. The right wrist should also be neutral or slightly flexed.
3. Allow the elbows to float down and away from each other, creating more space under the armpits for expansion of the ribs when inhaling.
4. Allow the front side of the body to be equally as wide as the back side of the body by letting your collarbone curve back to meet your shoulder blade.
5. Draw diagonals across the back between the right hip and left shoulder and between the left hip and right shoulder. Allow equal lengthening along both diagonals (there is a tendency to allow the right shoulder/left hip diagonal to shorten because of how the horn is held).
6. Draw diagonals across the front of the torso between the right hip and left shoulder and between the left hip and right shoulder. Allow equal lengthening along both diagonals.





## Participant Demographics

Tables 1-3 show relevant participant demographic information.

Table 1. Participant Basic Demographic Information

Participant	Age Range	Biological Sex	Years Playing Horn	Years of Lessons
1	55 - 64	Female	40 +	15 +
2	35 - 44	Female	32	14
3	18 - 24	Female	10	3
4	18 - 24	Female	11	4
5	18 - 24	Male	8	7
6	25 - 34	Female	15	9
7	25 - 34	Female	6	6
8	25 - 34	Female	22	12
9	25 - 34	Female	17	11
10	18 - 24	Female	3	< 1

Table 2. Participant Practicing Habit Information

Participant	Hours Playing Horn per Week	Practice Sit and Stand	Perform Sit and Stand	Bell On Leg
1	10-19 hours	Sit all of the time	Mostly sit	All of the time
2	20 hours or more	Mostly sit	Mostly sit	Never
3	10-19 hours	Mostly stand	Mostly sit	Never
4	10-19 hours	About equal amounts	Mostly stand	About half of the time
5	10-19 hours	Mostly sit	Mostly sit	Never
6	5-9 hours	Mostly sit	Mostly sit	Never
7	20 hours or more	Mostly sit	Mostly sit	Never
8	Less than 5 hours	Mostly sit	Mostly sit	Most of the time
9	20 hours or more	Mostly sit	Mostly sit	Sometimes
10	5-9 hours	Mostly sit	Mostly sit	Sometimes

Table 3. Participant Experience with ERObrass, Alexander Technique, and Body Mapping

Participant	Experience with EB	Experience with AT/BM
1	None	Group AT Class
2	None	Limited
3	None	Limited
4	None	None
5	None	None
6	Used Regularly Sitting	BM Course, and AT Masterclass
7	None	Limited Private Lessons
8	None, Used Plexiglass Bell Prop	BM Course
9	Regularly for past 6 weeks	BM Course, AT Class, Private AT lessons
10	None	None

Results

Figures 1 and 2 show the percentage of change of tone quality scores from natural posture (NP) to ERGObrass™ (EB) and Alexandrian-based instructions (ABI) interventions for each participant. Changes in tone quality with ABI were mostly improvements (17 of 20 trials) with statistically significant average increases of 12.1% while seated and 10.48% while standing. Changes in tone quality using an EB were more mixed (14 of 20 trials improved); seated

with EB had an average of 9.4% tone quality improvement; standing with EB had an average of 4.78% tone quality improvement. ABI were often a better intervention than EB. Although the ABI focused on improving primarily spinal alignment and never mentions breath support, several participants reported an increased awareness of and improvement in their breathing mechanism.

Figure 1. Percentage of change in tone quality from Natural Position to ERGObrass.]

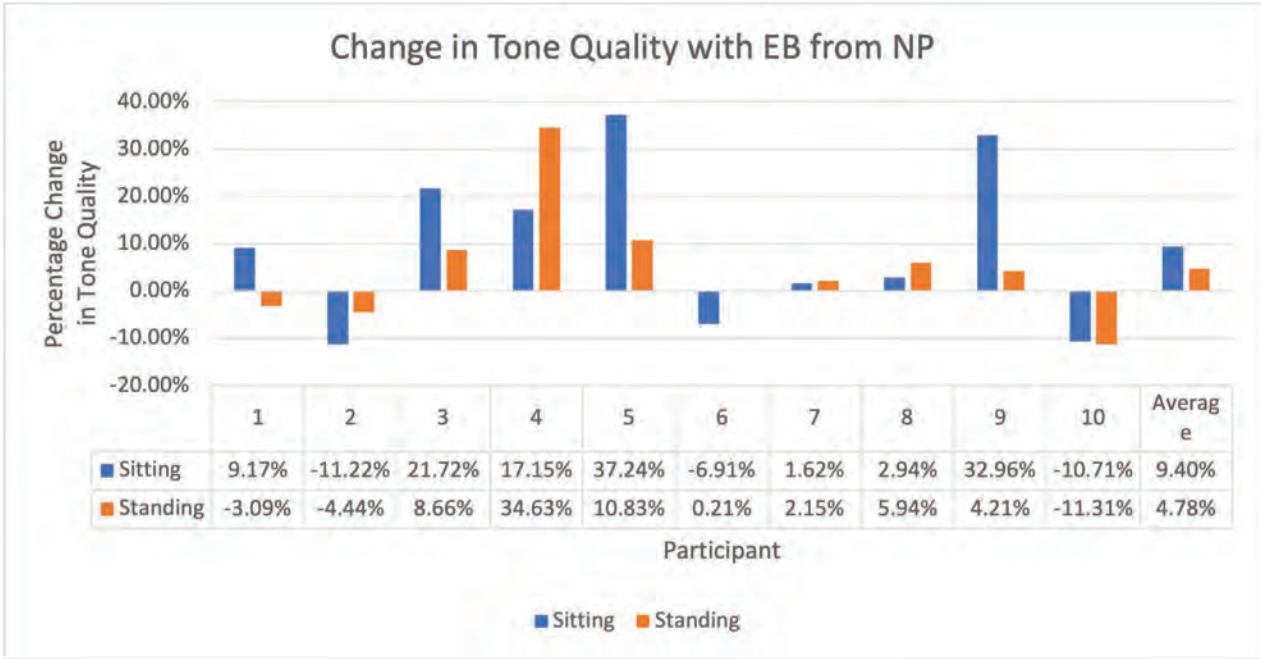
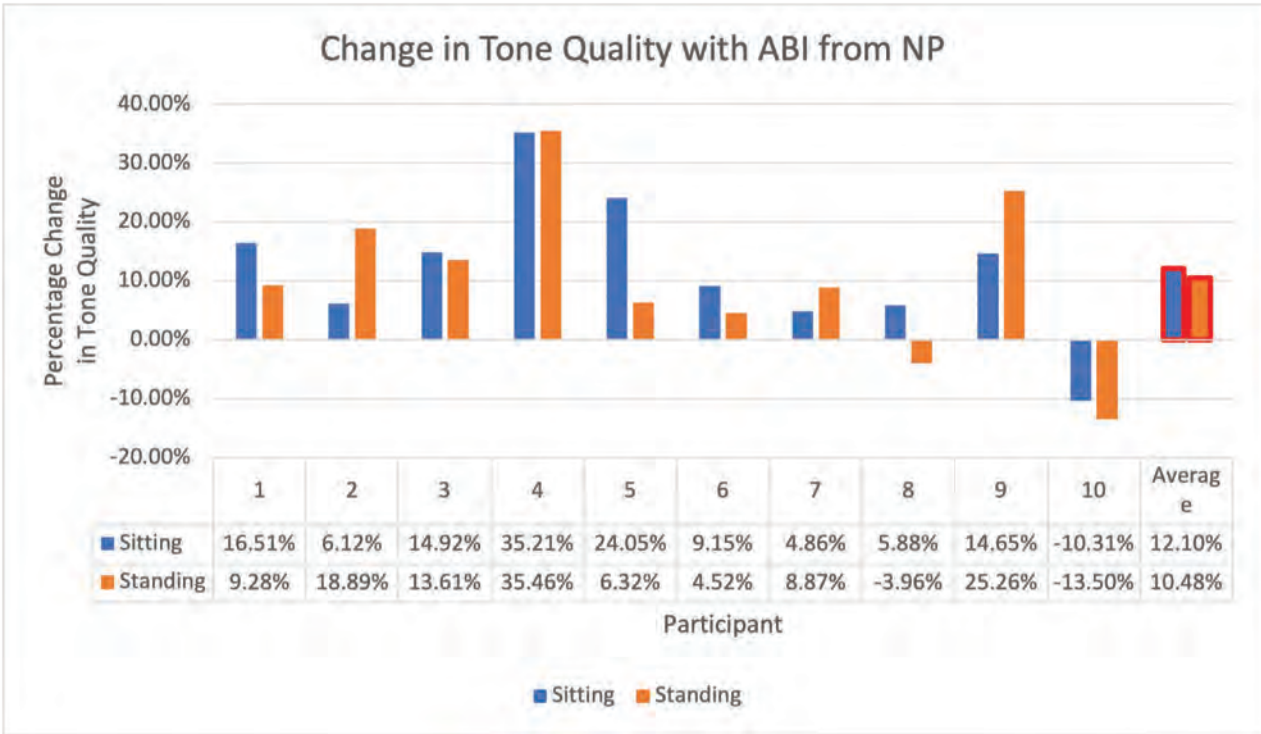


Figure 2. Percentage of change in tone quality from Natural Position to Alexandrian-Based Instructions. Note: red border indicates  $p < .05$ .





## Statistical Analysis

Table 4 shows the f-values and p-values of the f-value for repeated measures ANOVA tests performed for standing and seated changes in tone quality. Table 5 shows paired p-values for the different situations generated by the repeated measures ANOVAs that were performed

to compare the effect of the different situations on tone quality at a 95% confidence level. This indicates that average percentages of tone quality associated with the pairs with significant p-values are also significant and are outlined in red in Figure 2.

Table 4. ANOVA-RM F-values and Significance for Tone Quality

Stance	F-value	P-value
Standing	3.421	.084
Seated	6.173	.024 *

\*  $p < .05$ .

Table 5. P-Values from ANOVA-RM Pairs Tone Quality

Situation pair	P-value
Standing NP, EB	.329
Standing NP, ABI	.024 *
Standing EB, ABI	.082
Seated NP, EB	.318
Seated NP, ABI	.007 *
Seated EB, ABI	.182

\*  $p < .05$ .

## Limitations

With a complex study, there are several limitations. The participant pool was 90% biologically female and 80% were between the ages of 18 and 34. The participant pool thus was not an ideal representation of the population of horn players.

With the data collection protocol, participants were asked to play a one-octave C major scale with a metronome 32 times to control for timing of recordings, and consistency of actions. However, repetitively playing a C Major scale is musically unstimulating and not representative of what a hornist does in everyday life while performing and practicing. Additionally, having electrodes and reflective markers attached while performing could cause overall increased muscle tension compared to normal playing because of the unfamiliarity of the situation.

This study reports the acute effects of using an EB system; the manufacturer suggests a six-week adjustment period to the product, so improvements in tone quality may be greater after a longer adjustment period. Studying the acute effects of the EB was a more practical protocol because only one EB system was required, the equipment did not need to be distributed prior to the study, it was simpler to determine how much time participants had spent using the EB, and participant recruitment was easier because they were not being asked to use an EB, a device that tends to be stigmatized as primarily for injured players in the United States, for six weeks prior to data collection.

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There is no objective standard for good tone quality; although five professionals judged the recordings, other professional judges may have produced quite different results. The audio data could suffer from two types of order bias; as a participant progressed through the data collection, fatigue from playing could set in and negatively affect tone quality scores if they were recorded towards the end of the session. Natural postures were always recorded prior to EB and ABI. Although recordings were made in an order that hopefully reduced order bias, all judges listened to trials in the same order. With 320 renditions of

C Major scales, order bias from listening is possible.

Participant 10 had decreases in tone quality in all four categories; Participant 10 was the most inexperienced participant in the study with only three years playing the horn and less than a year taking lessons. This suggests that Participant 10 either fatigued during the data collection process or that introducing detailed postural instructions or novel equipment to beginning horn students may be a less effective strategy than waiting until students gain more experience and are more comfortable with basic horn proficiencies.

## Conclusion

Tone quality scores improved more consistently with both seated and standing ABI and with statistically significant averages than with an EB; however, using an EB was also an effective intervention for improving tone quality

for most participants. The use of an EB in combination with ABI may prove to be the most effective way to improve body alignment and tone quality.



# LEGACY

## HORN EXPERIENCE

**MOUTHPIECES:**  
L'Olifant Paris

LEGACY line inspired by Reynolds and King

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*Daniel Nebel is a hornist, church organist, music director, and educator whose diverse career has taken him across the United States. Currently he is the principal horn of the Monterey Symphony, horn instructor at Colorado State University Pueblo, and organist at Arvada United Methodist Church. He served as a bandsman with the United States Air Force Band of the Golden West for five years.*



*He holds degrees from the University of Northern Colorado, the Eastman School of Music, and Wichita State University.*

<sup>1</sup>Daniel Nebel, Establishing Guidelines for Achieving Optimal Individual Posture in Hornists, Published Doctor of Arts dissertation, University of Northern Colorado ProQuest Dissertations Publishing: 30817074, 2023, 97-150.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 40-94.

<sup>3</sup>The ERGObrass™ system is available from several retailers; detailed information about the product can be found at <https://www.ergobrass.com/frenchhorn/>

<sup>4</sup>Postural instructions are derived from the practices of Alexander Technique and Body Mapping. The researcher is not a certified instructor in either practice, but has personal experience in both and additional mind-body practices. Instructions were developed with input from Dr. Melissa Malde, current president of The Association for Body Mapping Education.

<sup>5</sup>The Monkey is an Alexander Technique position of mechanical advantage. Chapter 16 of Tim Soar's 2010 publication *Defining the Alexander Technique* explains it in detail and can be accessed at [thealexander-technique.org.uk](http://thealexander-technique.org.uk)

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# Celebrating 35 Years of Spanish Brass:

## An Interview with Manolo Pérez

### Editorial Content

Since winning first prize at the Sixth International Ville de Narbonne (France) Brass Quintet Competition in 1996, Spanish Brass has performed throughout the world, premiered over 190 new works, recorded 32 compact discs, and garnered numerous other awards, including the National Music Prize from Spain's Ministry of Culture, the country's highest honor in music. This outstanding chamber ensemble recently celebrated the 35th anniversary of its founding, and their horn player, Manolo Pérez, generously answered our questions for this interview. The members of Spanish Brass are Carlos Benetó (trumpet); Juanjo Serna (trumpet); Manolo Pérez (horn); Indalecio Bonet (trombone); and Sergio Finca (tuba). [spanishbrass.com](http://spanishbrass.com)

[The Editors thank IHS Vice President J. Bernardo Silva for suggesting this interview and providing contact information for Manolo Pérez.]

Manolo Pérez



**Horn Call (HC):** As one of the founding members of Spanish Brass, can you speak about the formation of the group? How and why was it founded?

**Manolo Pérez (MP):** The quintet was formed in July 1989 on the stage of the National Youth Orchestra of Spain (JONDE). Back then, except for the horn players, in the conservatories of Spain, brass players did not receive chamber music classes. However, the JONDE did emphasize this type of education, as for them it was fundamental for the training of any musician. The five of us knew each other, but although we were not really friends, we decided to get together during that month of July to spend our free time rehearsing.

From the first chord the sound was special. I remember that we started with Bach chorales for tuning, balance, and sonority. Then we went into the orchestra's archive and the first piece we saw was Victor Ewald's Quintet No. 1. We started to work on it, and from time to time we asked the guest professors for their opinion so that they could guide us and help us in our work. At the end of the month, we decided to give a concert. Our audience was the orchestra, the teachers, and the waiters who had served the meals during that month. We were very nervous, but in the end, the concert went well. We've been rehearsing and performing ever since.

**HC:** Do the members of the group have other jobs as musicians, or is the Spanish Brass their full-time job?

**MP:** As a result of winning the International Competition in Narbonne (France), we were offered a small tour around Europe. This gave us the chance to see what an international tour was all about, and we loved it! From then on, we set out to do more concerts and above all more rehearsals. Every Monday we would meet all day to rehearse. It was the only day we had available in our jobs, as each of us was working in different orchestras and conservatories in Spain. Each time we would meet in a different place. We combined our personal jobs with the rehearsals and concerts of the quintet, but eventually it became inhumane and we couldn't do either our jobs or the quintet well. In 1998 we decided to leave our "fixed" jobs and

dedicate ourselves fully to the group. For us, it was the best way to do things and to get the maximum quality in what we did. Since then, we rehearse every day and dedicate ourselves to concerts, masterclasses all over the world, recording albums, and other projects.

**HC:** Was it difficult at first booking performances? Was there a big break for the group that led to more regular work?

**MP:** The beginning was difficult (even now it's not easy either), from having economic stability to suddenly depending on the concerts and classes we had to give was not easy at all, and even less so for a brass quintet. We were reinventing ourselves every day, thinking about new projects, shows, and collaborations. We knew that the more projects we had, the more concerts we would be able to perform, as this was, and still is, a full-time job. We have the time to create new projects and rehearse every day as well. Now we perform more than 100 concerts a year.

We set up as a company and decided to hire an administrative person to work with us and dedicate themselves to "selling" the group, because if we outsourced it, the manager in charge wouldn't care whether they sold a brass quintet or a string quartet, and in the long run the brass quintet would lose out. Now we have two people and we think it was a good decision; these people fight for you 100% and at the same time they do all the administrative work of the company.

**HC:** One of Spanish Brass's major accomplishments was winning First Prize at the 1996 Narbonne (France) International Brass Quintet Competition. How did the group prepare for the competition, and do you have any advice for other groups preparing for major competitions?

**MP:** The competition was one of the motivations to continue with the group after finishing with JONDE. We tried to take part in the Narbonne competition in previous years, but when we received the music and tried it out, it was difficult for us. For the 1996 competition, we decided to do whatever it took to perform.

Narbonne at that time was the world's leading competition for brass quintets, and it was a dream for us to be able to participate. We received the scores and almost every weekend we rehearsed intensively. We asked our colleagues to come and listen to us and to give us their opinion, especially advice on how to interpret musical styles and languages that we didn't have much experience in. We would record ourselves with different placements and then listen to each other to decide which setting we liked best. We made up exercises to warm up (intonation, articulation, balance). A month before the competition, we asked for a leave of absence from our jobs and dedicated ourselves to rehearsing every day for more than 8 hours a day. We lived together, and it was a nice and profitable experience.

The advice I give to groups preparing for important competitions is precisely my experience; that is, meticulous work on the scores, that they record themselves, that they let themselves be advised by colleagues who are not even from the same instrumental family, and that they learn to perform all kinds of musical languages, and if they don't know how to do it, they should not hesitate to learn. It will be good for their professional careers. And one important thing is to have the same goals; if this is the case, the personal relationship between the members of the group will work, which is fundamental for an ensemble.

**HC:** For you, what are some of the most significant changes in the music business over the past 35 years?

**MP:** While the music business has not changed much during these 35 years that we have been on the road, what I do notice is that culture since COVID-19 has regressed a little, and people still seem to be scared of closed and "crowded" places. For many cultural organizers, the excuse was that there was no budget for culture because it had been transferred to healthcare and they couldn't program concerts; for others that the culture budget had been cut to give more to healthcare and they didn't have much money; if you wanted to play, it had to be for less money, and so on and so forth.

After the pandemic, musical performances and specifically chamber music have resumed, and I hope that soon we can be in the same state as we were before the pandemic. The production and sale of CDs have changed a lot. In the past, when we finished concerts, the sale of CDs was greater than now, and for us recording and selling CDs is not an economically profitable business. At least the sales after the concerts helped to cover the costs of the recording. Now, with digital platforms, everything has changed, although for me all the work of design and documentation of the liner notes of the CD is just as important as the recorded music itself.

**HC:** Has membership in the group stayed the same over the years, or have new musicians joined?

**MP:** Spanish Brass has changed members twice and it has always been the tuba. Since 2006 our tuba player has been Sergio Finca, the rest of us are the founders of the ensemble.

**HC:** Spanish Brass has premiered numerous works for brass quintet. Looking back, what were some of the most memorable premiere performances for you?

**MP:** We have premiered more than 190 pieces. All of them are in some way memorable. For premieres you must make extra time, the effort is longer than usual because many times the composer works with us and therefore, we feel that we are present during the creation. Depending on the place where it is premiered or the audience, this may give it more or less exposure.

Among the many works we have commissioned are seven pieces for brass quintet and orchestra. This without doubt is more memorable because of having a symphony orchestra behind you and in large halls. But as I said before, all the premieres are memorable, for one reason or another.

**HC:** Related to the previous question, how does the group decide which composers to work with on new compositions?

**MP:** Unfortunately, we do not have the same repertoire as other chamber ensembles, such as the string quartet, and we believe that it is our job to create this repertoire. To do so, we have to commission works. We have been organizing for 11 years a competition of short overtures for brass quintet (no longer than 2 minutes) and more and more composers are sending us their compositions.

We have been organizing the SBALZ (Festival Spanish Brass Alzira) for 23 years ([sbalz.com](http://sbalz.com)), and every year we have commissioned different composers for different projects, always with the brass quintet as the main protagonist. We take care to participate in many other music festivals, and we always propose the possibility of a commission. You can commission established composers, but also many emerging composers are very good and often surprise you. Composers often do not know the brass quintet as a medium, and it is important to be able to work with them and provide as much information as possible.

**HC:** Spanish Brass is also involved with several music festivals. Can you share some information about them?

**MP:** Spanish Brass organizes two festivals and two congresses a year: SBALZ ([sbalz.com](http://sbalz.com)) has been running for 23 years and is a five-day event in summer. The BRASS-SURROUND ([brasssurround.com](http://brasssurround.com)) has been taking place for 17 years and is held over a weekend in winter. The CITGUAD ([citguad.com](http://citguad.com)) is dedicated exclusively to the horn, has been organized for three years, and is always held on December 28, 29 and 30. The CITBON-BETERA ([ci-tbon.com](http://ci-tbon.com)) is dedicated exclusively to trombonists and is celebrated in spring.

Spanish Brass has always been committed to quality in both teaching and concerts, and during these events those attending receive classes from the most experienced artists while listening to them in the daily concerts. All of them are highly recommended, but the one dedicated to the horn (CITGUAD) is even more so. You are all invited!



**HC:** I did not know that Spanish Brass owned the BAGS instrument cases company. How did that relationship come about?

**MP:** BAGS is a Spanish case company in the province of Valencia, founded in the same year as Spanish Brass, 1989. For many years, we were the image of the brand. We always had a good relationship with them, especially for the quality of their cases and the proximity of the factory. In 2018, due to health problems, the owner of the company had to retire and the workers proposed to us that we take it over. Another investment group wanted to take it over but the owners did not trust that group. The workers knew that we believed in the company and were good ambassadors of the brand, so in 2019 we took it over.

If anyone comes to Valencia and is interested in visiting the factory, we will be delighted to show it to them, it is amazing to see how the whole production chain is done manually. You can visit the website to see the different models we manufacture ([musical-bags.com](http://musical-bags.com)).

**HC:** Have you encountered any challenges for the horn player in a brass quintet? If so, how did you overcome them?

**MP:** For my colleagues and me, playing chamber music has benefited us in every way. Artistically we have helped each other; when any of us had a problem, we disclosed it and we all helped each other. It is still our work philosophy; in the long run, it is beneficial both for the individual and for the group as a whole. It is also a way for the level of the group to be equal with no technical differences between any of the members. And for daily coexistence, we have helped each other whenever it has been necessary. This is even more important than playing, and we have learnt it during all the time we have been together. We always say that we don't consider ourselves instrumentalists; that is, I don't consider myself a horn player but 20% of an instrument called a brass quintet. At all times we must be clear about the role we are playing, and that your 20% is just as important as the rest, otherwise there would be no balance. In a 7th chord, all the notes are important; if there is no balance, the chord doesn't fit.

**HC:** Is there anything else you would like to add?

**MP:** Spanish Brass has recorded 24 CDs and 2 DVDs. We also have different educational shows for primary and secondary schools and a great variety of shows; you can find all this information on our website [spanishbrass.com](http://spanishbrass.com). We have our own publishing house ([sbedicions.com](http://sbedicions.com)) where you can find a large part of our repertoire and other publications for other ensembles, including music for horn.

And last but not least, I would like to thank the sponsors who help each other to give us visibility and, in the case of the horn, to Paxman Horns for making it all so easy.

Thank you very much to the IHS for giving me the opportunity to make Spanish Brass a little more known.

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# Carl Daniel Lorenz: Forgotten Hornist and Composer

by Piotr Pożakowski

During the Romantic Era, many outstanding instrumentalists also composed, predominantly composing pieces for their own instruments. Today, most of those composers have been forgotten, including Carl Daniel Lorenz. His name is not found in any encyclopedia of music or lexicon. A lengthy, perseverant search and investigations throughout German libraries permitted me to find only a few pieces of basic information about him.

Carl Daniel Lorenz was born on April 21, 1816 at Tiefenort in Thuringia, near Weimar. All that is known about his private life is that on July 6, 1844 his son Daniel Wilhelm Ferdinand Carl Lorenz was born in the house at 230, Hildesheimer Strasse in Hanover; another son, Alfred, died in Hanover on December 10, 1866. It was probably a sudden death as the same date is listed in the archives of the orchestra as the date when he finished his work there.

Nothing is known about Carl Lorenz's musical education; however, he must have been an exceptionally talented instrumentalist since he was admitted to the position of principal horn in the Royal Court Orchestra in Hanover when he was only 20 years of age. He took over the principal position from an excellent musician, Georg Christian Bachmann, on September 1, 1836. On July 7, 1840 Lorenz was granted the honorable title of Kammermusiker by decree of the king.

In Georg Fischer's book *Musik in Hannover* – the most important, yet still very modest, source of knowledge on Lorenz – Lorenz is enumerated among the members of the orchestra (which included 40 members in 1842), being one of four horn players (Lorenz, Bachmann, Schriev-

er and Koch). In 1852, the orchestra was enlarged to 63 musicians; Lorenz was then one of five hornists on a permanent contract and one of 18 musicians who enjoyed the title of Kammermusiker. In the 1864-1865 concert season, the orchestra employed 75 musicians, and Lorenz was the section leader of six horn players (Lorenz, Nitschner, Zoberbier, Angermann, Kruckenberg, Wack).

In the archives of concerts which the orchestra

performed in those years, Lorenz appears several times as the chamber musician playing the horn. Among the works he played are Hummel's Septet (March 13, 1858), his own Noc-

turno for 4 horns (March 24, 1860), Beethoven's Rondino (February 2, 1861), along with Beethoven's Septet (January 3, 1863) and Schubert's Octet (January 7, 1864). In the last two pieces, he performed with Joseph Joachim, who was the concertmaster of the orchestra. Hans Pizka provides us with the information that Lorenz played in the premiere of Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* (Königliches Sächsisches Hoftheater – now Semperoper, on February 1, 1843).

Above all, Lorenz was an excellent instrumentalist whose playing influenced Karl Matys. In eastern Europe, Lorenz as a composer is mainly known only to hornists and only for one piece, the *Elegie*, Op. 24, published by the Soviet publisher Muzika. However, he wrote more than a dozen other valuable pieces for horn and piano, along with chamber pieces with horn that are worth remembering.

I managed to find information on 18 pieces by Lorenz but judging from their numbering, there must have been more.

**Above all, Lorenz was an excellent Instrumentalist...**





## Works for Horn and Piano

*Abendgesang*, Op. 10. First publication: Chr. Bachmann, Hanover (year of publication unknown). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50c

*Der Abschied*: Fantasie, Op. 11. First publication: Chr. Bachmann, Hanover (1855). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50c

Rondo Original, Op. 12. First publication: Chr. Bachmann, Hanover (year of publication unknown). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50d.

Fantasie über Themen aus der Oper *Die Puritaner* von V. Bellini, Op. 13. First publication: unknown. Contemporary publication: Southern Music, San Antonio, Texas 1987; Hans Pizka Edition SC50d.

Melancholie, Op. 16. First publication: Chr. Bachmann, Hanover (year of publication unknown). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50e.

Elegie, Op. 20. First publication: Chr. Bachmann, Hanover (year of publication unknown). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50e.

Fantaisie Melodique, Op. 21. First publication: Chr. Bachmann, Hanover (year of publication unknown). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50f.

Thüringer Gebirgsklänge: Fantasie, Op. 22. First publica-

tion: Chr. Bachmann, Hanover (year of publication unknown). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50f.

Elegie, Op. 24. First publication: C.F. Kahnt, Lepizig (year of publication unknown). Contemporary publication: Gosudarstviennoye Muzikalnoye Izdatielstvo Moskva; Hans Pizka Edition SC50.

Frühlings-Fantasie, Op. 25. First publication: C.F. Kahnt, Lepizig (year of publication unknown). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50b.

Andantino mit Variationen. First publication: Chr. Bachmann, Hanover (1848). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50g.

Notturmo: Adagio. First publication: Chr. Bachmann, Hanover (1847). Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50g.

Romance, Sehnsucht des Entferntennach seiner Heimat. First publication: unknown. Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition.

Fantasie über Themen aus der Oper *Lucrezia Borgia* von G. Donizetti. First publication: unknown Contemporary publication: Hans Pizka Edition SC50a.

## Other Compositions

Thema und Variationen für 4 Trompeten, 2 Horns, 2 Posaunen, Tuba. First publication: unknown. Contemporary publication: Editions Marc Reift EMR5371, Crans-Montana, Switzerland.

Notturmo for Horn Quartet. No publication data available.

Jägermarsch for Horn Quartet. First publication: unknown. Contemporary publication: Musikverlag Bruno Uetz

BU1272, Halberstadt 2013 (in: *Esbliessein Jäger...* Musik für vier Waldhörner – French horn quartets, compiled by Peter Damm).

“Jetzt trink’n ma noch a Flascherl Wein” for voice and piano. First publication: unknown. Contemporary publication: Edition Melodie Anton Peterer EM 1110.

Until 2019 only one of Lorenz’s works for horn had been recorded, in a 1985 recording by the American hornist Thomas Bacon and pianist Phillip Mol. They recorded the Fantasie über Themen aus der Oper *Die Puritaner* von V. Bellini, Op. 13, which was included along with the works of Rossini, Moscheles, Franz Strauss, and Kuhlau on the album *Fantasie* (Crystal Records S379). The same artists re-recorded the piece in 2003, for the album *The Complete Hornist* (Summit Records DCD 379), which featured small works by 11 different composers. In 2019 the author released premiere recordings of eight of Lorenz’s works for horn on the album *Horn Fantasy*, with Božena Szull-Talar, piano (Soliton SL 910-2).

Lorenz’s compositions for horn and piano belong to the parlor music tradition, a popular trend in the 19th century. For parlor music, his pieces are of considerable length; they last between 8 and 11 minutes. Lorenz enjoyed invention in developing his melodic lines; his phrases are rich in ideas and reveal a lyrical and romantic mood, sometimes elegiac and melancholic, sometimes cheerful and easy-going.

In technical terms, Lorenz’s pieces range from simple (Notturmo and Melancholie Op. 16, No. 1) to considerably

more difficult (Andantino mit variationen, Rondo Original Op. 12 and fantasias on themes from the operas *I Puritani* and *Lucrezia Borgia*), the majority not posing any extraordinary challenge to a performer. Usually, Lorenz uses the basic scope of the scale (G3-G5 for horn in F), any notes exceeding this limit rarely appearing. The highest note in his compositions known to me is A5 (in fantasias based on the themes from *I Puritani* and *Lucrezia Borgia*), while the lowest is E3 (Fantaisie melodique Op. 21). What prevails in his pieces is a cantilena-like melodic line, sometimes enhanced with expressive figuration to reinforce the impact (e.g. Elegies Op. 20 and Op. 24). His tempos are usually slow and peaceful (Adagio, Larghetto, Andante sostenuto, Andante, Andante con moto, Andantino, Moderato maestoso), faster tempos rarely being used (Allegretto, Allegro moderato). Certainly, technical demands appear not only in fast tempos. The tempo in the middle part of the Fantasie über Themen aus der Oper *Lucrezia Borgia* is Adagio; however, the considerable rhythmic diversity and figurative character of the second half of this section make it as difficult as the daring polonaise and the impressive Coda closing the whole piece.

Most of Lorenz’s compositions require a good level

of control from the hornist; although, as mentioned, they do not employ the highest register of the horn. Still, the tessitura of his melodies is relatively high. Beautiful, long phrases flow in moderate tempos and, most often, in the G4-G5 range. It is recommended to play these parts in a single breath; any additional air intake would break a phrase, diminishing its artistic value. In many of Lorenz's pieces, lower pitches never appear at all, thus depriving the hornist of any opportunity to relax the muscles of the embouchure. If one adds to these features long notes at piano volumes, with which Lorenz would often end his pieces, his compositions can prove to be an undertaking of achievement in breathing technique; his *Notturmo* and *Der Abschied*, Op. 11 being exceptionally demanding.

Lorenz's compositions offer a precious complement to the horn's repertoire. They prove to be excellent informative and educational material for teaching long phrases, development of breathing technique, the control of dynamics, and the ability to shape one's musical expres-

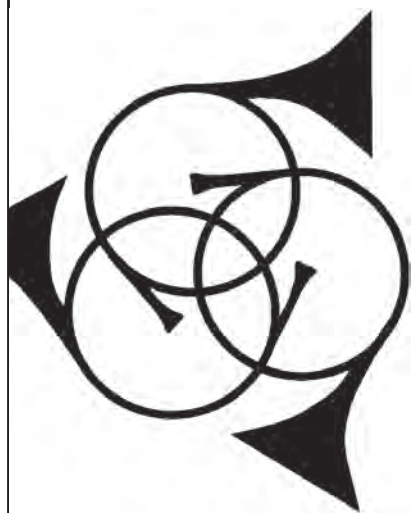
sion and overall performance. Some of his pieces offer the hornist an opportunity to demonstrate various skills so essential in creating meaningful performance. His richly beautiful compositions permit the hornist to show off technical and musical proficiency, which can become an interesting addition to a horn recital. As for their musical value, they are nothing short of miniature pieces of other composers. Thus, before one reaches the masterpieces of romantic horn literature, such as Schumann's *Adagio* and *Allegro*, it is worth familiarizing oneself with the works of Carl Daniel Lorenz.

**Most of Lorenz's  
compositions require  
a good level of control  
from the hornist...**



*Piotr Pożakowski is a graduate of the Academy of Music in Gdańsk, Poland and also received his doctoral degree there. He joined the Polish Baltic Philharmonic in Gdańsk in 1993, and is also an active chamber and solo musician. He teaches at the Primary and Secondary Music School in Gdynia, the State Music School Complex in Koszalin, and at the Academy of Music in Gdańsk. He has published several arrangements and transcriptions for horn and chamber ensembles.*

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Wilhelm Ferdinand Carl Lorenz (06.07.1844 Hanover – 20.12.1889 Berlin) – a famous German inventor and businessman in the field of telecommunications and electro-mechanics, who established a factory producing, among other things, Morse's telegraph in 1880.

<sup>2</sup>Königlichen Hofkapelle Hannover – the orchestra active at the Royal Court Theatre (Königlichen Hoftheater – now Niedersächsische Staatstheater Hannover).

<sup>3</sup>Georg Christian Bachmann (1787–1860) continued to play in the orchestra (at least until 1842), although not as the leading voice anymore. It is worth mentioning that Bachmann was also founder of a small publishing house Bachmann & Nagel which published the majority of Lorenz's compositions for horn and piano.

<sup>4</sup>Georg Fischer, *Musik in Hannover*, Verlag der Hahn'schen Buchhandlung, Hannover 1903, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup>op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>6</sup>op. cit., p. 276.

<sup>7</sup>Hans Pizka (b. 1942) – an Austrian hornist, expert in the history of the horn, manufacturer of instruments and mouthpieces, owner of a publishing house specializing mostly in horn literature, author of many books on matters related to horn, among which are *Mozart und das Horn* and *Hornistenlexikon*, 1986.

<sup>8</sup>Karl Matys (1835–1908) – a cellist in the orchestra Königliche Hofkapelle in Hanover during the years 1854–1895, the composer of several pieces for horn and piano and four horn concertos, two of which gained much popularity. It is known that his horn compositions were inspired by Lorenz's playing.

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# Orchestral Audition Excerpts by Women Composers

## Irlande and Andromède by Augusta Holmès

by Libby Ando

Continuing the examination of diverse orchestral repertoire and its audition excerpts in the May 2024 issue of *The Horn Call*, excerpts from Augusta Holmès's symphonic poems *Irlande* (1882) and *Andromède* (1883) are presented here.

Excerpts are standard assessment tools in auditions, and preparation includes understanding their context and historical performance practices, as well as the musical fundamentals they require. The goal is to include a variety of composers on concert programs. Until then, equity requires additional education to equalize representation that has been historically so unbalanced.

### Augusta Holmès

"Why," he answered, "I once produced a symphonic poem of hers called 'Irlande,'" adding that it was first-rate and finely scored. That must have been a quarter of a century ago, and I wonder who but he would have had the curiosity in those days to examine a woman's work, let alone the courage, or shall we say the energy, to brush aside prejudice and perform it!"

– Henry Wood discussing composer Augusta Holmès



Augusta Holmès in 1908.  
Public Domain Image.

To be a female composer in the 19th century meant to struggle to be taken seriously...



Holmès's charm was rumored to have captivated everyone...

To be a female composer in the 19th century meant to struggle to be taken seriously, and Augusta Holmès (1847-1903) struggled mightily to separate her reputation from her music. Holmès was a French composer of Irish descent.<sup>2</sup> As a child in Versailles, Holmès showed aptitude for music and other arts. Her father provided her with lessons in composition, orchestration, and performance, and she began writing music by age twelve. She published her first song at fourteen.<sup>3</sup> By the time Holmès entered Paris as a young composer, contemporaneous accounts describe her as flamboyant, charismatic, and charming, but that does not mean this was always to her benefit: usually, assessment of her persona outweighed assessment of her music. Camille Saint-Saëns reported: "We were all in love with her (Holmès) – literary men, painters, musicians – any one of us would have been proud to make her his wife."<sup>4</sup>

Karen Henson writes in the *New Grove Dictionary*:

Although Holmès devoted considerable energy to mythologizing her career, it was a tendency with which contemporary commentators were complicit. And even if such stories risk overwhelming the woman and her music, they are worth recalling as an example of the 19th-century impulse to conflate life and work, especially the life and work of female composers.<sup>5</sup>

According to the English composer and suffragette Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), "Her reputation was based mainly, so I was told, on songs and seduction."<sup>6</sup> Holmès's charm was rumored to have captivated everyone: Smyth wrote in her book *A Final Burning of Boats, Etc* that she had resolved not to notice Holmès, but upon hearing her sing, "That melody killed indifference."<sup>7</sup> Smyth points out both Holmès's physically attractive traits as well as her musicality; this demonstrates how Holmès's reputation preceded her. Smyth later wrote that she owed a lot to Holmès for being a pioneering composer, but that this pioneering led Holmès to withdraw from public life.<sup>8</sup>

Opportunities for women composers to have their works performed by professional ensembles were rare during this period. One conductor who tried to make more room for women composers was Sir Henry Joseph Wood (1869-1944), about whom Ethel Smyth wrote and with whom she worked. She asked him about Holmès and his opinion of her work, and was surprised at his knowledge, depth of understanding, and championing of her accomplishments.

Ethel Smyth's inquiries of Wood about Holmès further illustrate her reception and the obstacles she encountered. When Smyth talks about Henry Wood's courage and energy in programming a piece by a woman, we understand that she means the societal pressure and criticism that may have resulted. Wood could choose to program

a piece by a woman, but Holmès is permanently herself. Women composers needed the empathy of their male peers to gain forward movement in the profession, since their female equivalents were in similar positions. Smyth, as a woman, was still sympathetic to the problems that Wood endured in programming a piece by a woman, even while Smyth's career and the careers of her predecessors were hobbled by society's ideals for their gender. Programming the piece was an act that caused Smyth to empathize with Woods, due to the negative reaction that would likely ensue.

Smyth attributes Holmès's later decline and withdrawal from society to her struggle against the gendered barriers of her life.<sup>9</sup> Holmès was 56 when she died. Smyth said the following after her death:

Herein lay the pathos of her fate, that by the time she saw her work played it was too late to profit by the experience. Worn out by the struggle for life and the nervous strain to which all pioneers are exposed – a strain of which followers of ever so slightly-beaten track can form no conception. Augusta Holmès had laid down her arms.<sup>10</sup>

Sexism followed Holmès and other female composers well into the 20th century. In "Augusta Holmès: A Meteoric Career," Rollo Meyers writes that the fascinating thing about Holmès was not her music, but her personality.

Composed in 1882, *Irlande* is scored for a large orchestra, including 4 piston horns and a variety of percussion instruments. Horns 1 and 2 were originally written in G, but are transposed in the edition available on IMSLP engraved by Nick Johnson. It would be ideal to locate the exact notation from 1882, but due to the already limited accessibility of this music, the notation from the transposed parts is used here. The percussion section is a major contributor to the bombastic quality of the composition. *Irlande* is Romantic in style, which would have been familiar to audiences at the time. It makes use of abrupt, heightened musical changes and boldly announced sections. Self-contained themes return throughout, and these may be heard as separate vignettes, as in other symphonic poems such as *Ma Vlast* by Czech composer Bedřich Smetana (1824-1884).

The constant kaleidoscope of themes, which oscillates between muscular figures and singing anthems, makes full use of the brass and percussion color palette. One criticism from fellow Parisian composer Camille Saint-Saëns (from his book *Harmonie et mélodie*<sup>12</sup>) about another symphonic poem, *Les Argonautes*, commented on her "excessive virility – a frequent fault with women composers – and flamboyant orchestration in which the brass explodes like fireworks."<sup>13</sup> To audiences, this piece could not be from

[. . .]Augusta Holmès belonged to that not altogether undistinguished category of artists whose reputation in the last resort rests more on the strength and originality of their personalities than on the intrinsic or lasting merit of their works; but as such she deserves, as I hope I have shown, to be rescued from what could have been total but undeserved oblivion.<sup>11</sup>

This quote exemplifies one version of prejudice that women composers met historically. Holmès's reputation persisted and continued to compete with her music. Composers are as subject to sensationalist press as any other public-facing person. Her music was scrutinized through the same gendered lens that the works of Amy Beach and Ethel Smyth were, again exposing the problem of the female composer in a double bind. If she wrote something too bombastic or muscular it would have been seen as too masculine, but music that was lyrical was seen as feminine and unfitting for the large-scale symphonic concert hall. Though Meyers's article is over 50 years old, it represents another data point in the evolution of the reception of female composers.

Holmès produced a sizable volume of works. These include five libretti, four operas, sixteen vocal works including solo songs and chorale works, thirteen instrumental orchestral works (including two symphonic poems), seven works for orchestra and chorus, including the *Ode triomphale*, which was an enormous display at the centennial celebration of Paris, and seven chamber works.

## Irlande

the pen of a woman composer. The loud, accented brassy, abrupt changes in mood, and extroverted *fortes* supported by percussion were the antithesis of ladylike. *Irlande* and *Andromède* are no exceptions to this element of Holmès's style. Saint-Saëns's comment exemplifies the problem of the double bind.

The piece begins in F major, on the third scale degree, with a free spirited, lyrical clarinet solo. Measure 23 begins an *Allegro vivace* in cut time, with percussive bassoon notes leading us into flurried, creeping, chromatic figures in the strings. The piece gathers energy quickly, the winds making repeated *crescendos* into a stockier, march-like theme in the bassoons, horns, and strings. The piece is spirited, and its energetic nature was muscular to critics' ears at the time, and thus incongruous with the idea of a female composer.

The excerpt in Example 1, mm. 51-71, in which the horns play the main theme with the bassoons, violas, and cellos, tests articulation skills, playing through the muddy mid-range of the horn, testing fluidity and tone in that middle register. The use of staccato and accents at high volumes tests accuracy and middle-range articulation. The woodwinds join in on this near-tutti, jaunty, angular theme. For the horn player, this means not overplaying, despite the loud dynamic markings, including



Example 1: Holmès *Irlande*, Main Theme, mm. 53-70, Horns 2 and 4 in F.

multiple instances of *fortissimo* growing into *fortississimo* in mm. 53, 57, 62, and 66. The full ensemble needs to play compactly, in unison. By the end of the climax in bar 67, the dynamic is marked *fortississimo* with heavy accents and large dynamic swells. This section presents a vigorous, distinctive character.

A common practice in orchestral excerpt planning is to ask for textural, harmonic, non-soloistic music to test the auditionee's ability to play in a group with ensemble or tutti parts; that is, not performing as a solo player. Many auditions even include a round where the auditionee

must perform with the section, and blend with the other performers in tone quality, articulation, and sound.

The flowing horn solo in Examples 2 and 3 occurs in D major at measure 125, four measures after C, and then in E-flat Major at measure 178. Here is a great opportunity for the performer to showcase control and smoothness over octave leaps, followed by scale-wise descending phrases. *Legato* articulations and a strong tone here will serve the player well. The added challenge of learning it in two keys presents a great audition excerpt for testing a legato, singing style of playing.

Example 2: Holmès *Irlande*, mm. 125-136, Horn 1 in F.

Engraving © 2017, Nick Johnson

Example 3: *Irlande*, mm 178 – 190, Horn 1 in F.



Example 4: Richard Strauss, Don Juan, 20 measures after D to 1 after F, Horn 1 in E.

Example 5: Holmès Andromède, letter T to 7 after W, Horns 1 and 2 in F.



In comparing this excerpt to repertoire currently requested in auditions, note that it resembles the horn excerpts from Richard Strauss's (1864-1949) tone poem *Don Juan* (1888), with its triumphant horn call featuring strong yet legato articulations and singing, anthemic octaves. The player has similar rhythmic and lyrical responsibilities in that excerpt to those exhibited in the Holmès excerpt (see Example 4).

The long legato scalar slurs and the shifts between duple and triple meter are hallmarks of both excerpts and

showcase musical styles. In all excerpts of this style, hornists need full air support for volume, clear and quick note changes, and a singing, anthem-like style of playing.

**Augusta Holmès was a pioneering composer whose works provide many suitable audition excerpts for horn.**

## Andromède

*Andromède* was first performed in 1883, during the same period as *Irlande*.<sup>14</sup> Like *Irlande*, *Andromède* makes use of the horns in the typical setting of high first and third parts, and low second and fourth parts. The piece opens with an aggressive, pointed statement in the trombone section. In Example 5, *Andromède* displays the same "virile, muscular, bombastic" qualities of *Irlande*.

Another prominent excerpt occurs five measures after rehearsal letter T (Example 6). This triumphant fanfare melody is passed throughout the ensemble at differ-

ent moments. The section is in unison four measures after T, marked with a Col 1 to indicate that everyone is playing the same passage as the principal player. The dotted ascending rhythmic figure in 6/8 time is reminiscent of the Short Call from Richard Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* (Example 7), a test of agility, accuracy, articulation, and air support through the upper tessitura of the horn. One can also hear Wagner's influence on Holmès in the grandiosity of phrasing and dense orchestral texture.

Example 6: Holmès *Andromède*, letter T to 5 after W, Horns 3 and 4 in F.

Examples 8 and 9 contain a challenging low excerpt from earlier in the piece. It begins in the 2nd horn for one phrase then the 4th horn joins to match and support. Performance considerations include articulation in the low register, balancing a wider airstream with aggressive accents, and the nuances of continually growing louder. After this section, this motive is passed to the trombones. The low register requires a balance of slow air and clear articulation, as this range typically becomes muddled and rounded. These bombastic, biting accents need clear articulation and a full, supported sound. This excerpt is comparable

to the low horn tutti from Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, since it requires blending with the other low horn on the same part, playing low, accented long tones. The excerpts from Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony are among the most asked audition pieces, largely due to this blend and balance of low register writing in this tutti section. Similar considerations apply when the 4th horn joins the 2nd horn in the Holmès excerpt. The phrase happens once in the 2nd horn, giving the 4th horn one two-bar phrase to listen before blending into the section sound.

*Example 7: Wagner, Siegfried's Short Call from Götterdämmerung, Horn 1 in F.*

[illegible]

Musical score for 'The Merry Widow' (No. 10). The score is written for piano (p) and features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The melody is in 2/4 time and consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a final measure marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The bass line is mostly rests, with a single note in the fifth measure marked with a forte (f) dynamic.

Allegro (♩ = 120)

*In F.*

2 3 4 5

*Example 8: Holmès, Andromède, 6 before letter I, Horns 1 and 2 in F.*

First system of the musical score for "L'Allegretto". The score is in 3/2 time. The piano accompaniment (bass line) includes dynamic markings: *cresc.*, *mf*, *ff*, *f*, *più f*, and *ff*. The right hand has a melodic line with a crescendo and a first ending marked "I".

*Example 9: Holmès, Andromède, 6 before letter I, Horns 3 and 4 in F.*

**H** stretto a tempo **TROMB.**

**I**

**J**



## Conclusion

Augusta Holmès was a pioneering composer whose works provide many suitable audition excerpts for horn. The characteristics for which she was criticized – virile, muscular writing, fully scored brass and percussion sections, and the dramaticism of her music – make her music worthy of study and performance today. Though

she faced much gendered criticism during her time, she wrote a variety of virtuosic horn parts that push our technical skills and make excellent audition excerpts.



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<sup>6</sup>Smyth, "Augusta Holmès, Pioneer," in *A Final Burning of Boats, Etc.*, 127.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 131 - 132.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

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# Tips from a Pro

## Enhancing Breathing and Core Support in Playing

by Tommi Hyytinen

**T**his set of exercises focuses on developing a deep and free breathing technique and a strong core support. The playing exercises are simple so that you can fully concentrate on the use of the body.

Inhalation starts from the diaphragm. The diaphragm isn't a voluntary muscle, so we need to allow the inhalation to happen – to let the air come in. The serratus anterior muscle is the most efficient inhalation-assisting muscle. It is located on the sides of the ribcage. Breathing should start by opening and expanding the back and the ribcage sideways and allowing the air to flow into the back and to the sides. That means that we should avoid “taking” the air in which leads to more tense and superficial breathing.

Core support consists of four strong and efficient exhalation muscles: the pelvic floor, transverse abdomen, external oblique abdominal, and transverse thoracis. These muscles are connected via myofascia and together form a strong support for playing. Core support also helps to deepen the inhalation. When you inhale, focus on keeping a soft activation in the pelvic floor muscles and in the transverse abdomen muscle. This supports the work of the diaphragm and also expands the ribcage more efficiently. Additionally, keeping the core activated when inhaling helps to prepare the support for the next phrase, improving both accuracy and sound quality at the same time.

More detailed information and many kinds of exercises can be found in my book *Playing from the Core: A New Method for French Horn* (Fennica Gehrman 2021). The physical exercises in the book strengthen the whole body comprehensively. The movements improve the posture and strengthen especially the deep muscle groups of the body. The movements open the breath and increase the mobility of the spine and the shoulder girdle. Shoulder support exercises teach free and supported movement of the arms. Breathing exercises create a voice production based on the support of the core muscles.

This method also helps to develop a balanced playing position that is at the same time relaxed and supported. The book also includes several mental exercises to improve concentration and to help cope with performance anxiety. These mental exercises change the state of the body and mind from “fight or flight” mode to a state of “flow” when performing.

Play the next exercises with a comfortable dynamic focusing all the time to breathing and the use of the body.

**Breathing 1 – Diaphragm:** Exhale fully, squeeze the air out of the lungs – inhale freely, let the air come in, let your body breathe – play middle C. Play three times.



**Breathing 2 – Serratus anterior:** Inhale to the back and to the sides, focus expanding the sides of the ribcage – play first octave E. Keep the sides expanded as you play the note. Play three times.



**Breathing 3 – Deep inhalation:** Exhale fully, squeeze the air out of the lungs – inhale, first let the air come in and then expand the sides of the ribcage. (Breathe in to the back and to the sides.) – play first octave G. Play three times.





**Core 1 – Pelvic floor:** Inhale to the back and to the sides – activate pelvic floor muscles by pulling the sitting bones (ischial bones) towards each other – play C major triad. Play three times.



**Core 2 – Transverse abdomen:** Inhale to the back and to the sides – activate transverse abdomen by pulling the abdomen inward and sliding it upward to the direction of the ribcage – play C major triad. When you hold the last note continue sliding the belly in and up. Play three times.



**Core 3 – Obliques:** Inhale to the back and to the sides – activate oblique abdominal muscles by sliding the ribs together in the front – play middle G and do a crescendo to fortissimo. Focus doing the crescendo with the activation of the obliques. Play three times.



**Core 4 – Transverse thoracis:** Inhale to the back and to the sides – activate transverse thoracis muscle by sliding the ribs together from both sides of the breast bone – play a round legato from middle C to the high G. Play three times.



**Playing from the Core:** Exhale fully, squeeze the air out of the lungs – inhale, first let the air come in and then expand the sides of the ribcage – activate the core support by sliding the abdomen in and up and by sliding the ribs together in the front – play a legato phrase starting from the middle C. When you inhale, keep the core support softly activated. When you play, keep the sides of the ribcage expanded. Play three times.



Tommi Hyytinen is a member of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and horn teacher at the Sibelius Academy of the University of Arts Helsinki. He is also a certified Pilates instructor and is the author of *Playing from the Core: A New Method for French Horn*. [webshop.fennicagehrman.fi/page/product/playing-from-the-core/3726223](http://webshop.fennicagehrman.fi/page/product/playing-from-the-core/3726223)

# MILITARY MATTERS

Erika Loke, Column Editor

## The Royal Marines Band Service: From the Career Office to the Coronation

by Lance Corporal Emily Jowle

**LCpl** Emily Jowle is a hornist in the Royal Marines Band Service (RMBS) and currently on a draft to the Royal Marines Band Plymouth, one of the five RM bands that are situated around the UK. She grew up in the brass band world, having taken up the tenor horn at age 8, but went on to join the RMBS on horn at age 18, having completed secondary education. During musical training at the Royal Marines School of Music (RMSoM), Emily studied with Ed Lockwood, Professor of Horn. She is now in her fourth year performing with the bands.



### An Unconventional Start: Back to Basics

I never would have imagined that after 14 years of playing the piano and 10 years of playing the tenor horn, I would be starting a new instrument again in order to join my dream job. This is the reality, however, for the majority of instrumentalists who join the Royal Marines Band Service (RMBS).

Given the types of instruments used in the RMBS and the current vacancies, most musicians and buglers are offered a place in the RMBS under the condition that they learn to play an entirely new instrument. This may be similar to their previous experience or within an entirely new instrument family. For example, a pianist would be required to learn a parade instrument, whilst players of the “bass” category instruments, double bass, electric bass, and tuba, must learn to play all three. However, if none of a needed category have been recruited within a troop, a trombone player may be asked to join on bassoon, for example!

Every musician who proceeds to the audition is asked in the interview whether they would accept a place on an

alternative instrument and are also vetted for potential aptitudes on instruments across every category. The odds of being accepted into the troop are potentially higher if applicants are open to the prospect of playing a new instrument, but, understandably, not everyone is interested in starting over!

I knew from the outset that I would have to learn at least one new instrument. RMBS does not include the tenor horn, and, as previously stated, pianists must learn a parade instrument, typically clarinet. This, whilst being slightly nerve-wracking, excited me, as I knew that learning another instrument would open up more musical opportunities. For me, this was one of the most attractive aspects of the job, along with exciting training opportunities, playing at major sporting fixtures, and the chance to perform internationally. I will always have a love for brass banding and playing the piano, but picking up the horn has added significant depth to my musical life and I doubt I will ever put it back down.

### Introduction to the RMBS

The RMBS was first introduced to me when I was 14 as I stumbled across their recruitment stand at a brass band competition. Every aspect of the job that was described by the attract team immediately appealed to me! They shared lots of information about what a career in the RMBS might look like, and I was given the details to apply for a “Look at Life” course, where I could experience some elements of this first-hand.

I applied for one of these week-long courses soon after, and when the time came, travelled to HMS Collingwood, where one of the RM bands is based. Here, we learnt the basics of marching in step, participated in exercise and team-building sessions, and visited the nearby Royal Marines School of Music (RMSoM), where we met musicians and buglers currently in training and saw them at work. Having thoroughly enjoyed this

experience, my next step was to get in touch with the local Armed Forces Careers Office (AFCO) back at home.

I completed the necessary initial interviews, paperwork, and basic aptitude tests, before being put forward for the next step – the audition. I now had to make a decision: join as soon as I could (at age 16) or to wait for two years until I had completed A-Levels. [A-Levels are a UK-based qualification of voluntary education, usually undertaken between the ages of 16 and 18.] Whilst I was motivated to join the RMBS, I made the decision to continue with two more years of education. This was the right decision for me, as the self-confidence, maturity, and wider musical experience that I gained in this time became invaluable in the audition and training processes that would go on to occupy the next few years of my life.



## The Audition

The audition to become a member of the RMBS is a week-long process that takes place at the RMSoM in Portsmouth. Prior to attending, I had to complete standard medical and pre-joining fitness tests. Once at the audition, there are multiple physical and musical tests, before the final interview with the Director of Music Training (DoMT), Assistant Director of Music Training (ADoMT), and Bandmaster. I attended my audition in the summer of 2019, and was lucky enough to be featured in a documentary that was made at this time about the audition process. This documentary, "Inside the Band School," can be found on Youtube [QR code at the end of the article.] The channel "The Bands of the HM Royal Marines" also includes videos on the "Look at Life" course and Initial Military Training (IMT), as well as many other aspects of the job.

We began my audition week with a Basic Fitness Test (BFT) on the track. Consisting of press-ups, sit-ups, a 1.5-mile troop run, and a 1.5 mile "best effort" run, this is the basic standard of fitness used to test all members of the RMBS throughout their careers, starting on day one!

The following day brought with it the first opportunity in the application process to showcase musical ability – the instrumental auditions. At each audition, we were asked to demonstrate our musical skills (including sight-reading) on our own instruments, before being assessed for potential on completely new ones. I was auditioned on cornet, violin, clarinet, and horn, all of which were new to me. I was also auditioned on piano, which I already played, and percussion, which I had played for a year whilst orthodontic braces limited my tenor horn playing. This was both exciting and challenging! Aural and theory tests completed this process, ensuring our musical knowledge had been fully examined.

Now that our musical comfort zones had been stretched, it was time to apply the same principle to physical activity and our personal character. Whilst we had already completed the BFT, we were tested further in the pool with a swimming competency test, including jumping from a 5-meter diving board and swimming whilst

in military overalls. This was followed by a challenging surprise physical circuit that mimicked what would soon become normal if we were successful at this audition stage and proceeded to IMT.

Next was the Determination Test, a trial specifically designed to push the participants to the very edges of their physical and mental comfort zones...and then a bit further! It included challenges, such as tyre-flipping, multiple physical aptitude tests, and a variety of exercises, such as crawling low to the ground. Whilst this test was incredibly demanding, it was satisfying to push myself in a way I had never really done before and to get a sense of what I needed to prepare myself for if I reached the next stage.

The last part of the process was an important one – the interview. After demonstrating our abilities on our own instruments to the DoMT, ADoMT, and Bandmaster, they asked us various questions to judge our character, motivations, and preparedness for what was to come, as well as whether we might accept a place on an alternative instrument. This was an easy one for me to answer, given that the tenor horn had never been an option, and I was quite enthusiastic about the prospect of learning something new (the horn in particular). I felt that the week had gone really well for me, but I knew that the competition was high for a place in the RMBS.

Despite the worries, I was in the DoMT's office and ready to hear the verdict: I had passed! We received feedback on how all aspects of our testing had gone but were not yet told if we had been officially accepted into the new troop. There were in fact three audition weeks spaced throughout the year to be considered for the new troop of September 2019, and all of these applicants had to be considered together. This meant we also did not find out at this stage what instrument we might be playing. Thankfully, I had attended the last audition week and did not have to wait long!

The following week, I received the good news, starting the next stage in my journey to becoming a Royal Marines Musician and a horn player.

## Initial Military Training

Once accepted into the RMBS, troop 1/19 (as we were now called) did not return to the RMSoM, or play a note of music within the job, until we had completed 15 weeks of IMT. This takes place at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) in Lympstone, and is a condensed and modified version of the 32-week Commando Course which trains civilians to become Royal Marines Commandos.

For over three months, we lived and breathed military life, learning how to perform precise drill movements, look after our kit and ourselves in challenging environments, and how to operate efficiently and effectively "in the field." We learnt to navigate both at day and night (as part of teams and solo), how to shoot and look after an SA80 assault rifle, and even how to escape from a helicopter...

submerged in water, in the pitch black and upside down! It was clear that the basic tests of character that we completed at the audition stage had been designed for a purpose. This was all underlined by a heavy focus on physical fitness and military bearing, as we made the transition from civilians to full-time military personnel.

"Basics," as we also call it, was grueling and pushed me far beyond what I thought was possible, but passing out of IMT in front of my friends and family will always remain one of the proudest moments of my life. In the present day, the RM Band Plymouth performs every week at the Royal Naval pass-out ceremony (Raleigh Divisions), and I am reminded of this proud moment every time I am a part of it.

## The School of Music

After Christmas leave, which marked the end of IMT and allowed us all a much-needed respite, troop 1/19 headed back to the RMSoM for the first time as Royal Marines musicians and buglers. After unpacking in the accommodation block that would be our home for the next few years, we were issued our new instruments and it was straight to work! We began with lessons from world-renowned tutors, as well as from military instructors with many years of experience working in the RMBS. These were combined with aural, theory, and weekly choir lessons, as well as group “phys” (physical exercise) to keep up our fitness levels. We also had parade band at least twice a week as we learnt to not only play our new instruments but march with them. The rest of the time was reserved for personal practice in our “cells.” The RMSoM (now the Alfred Schools of Military Music) is based in an old naval detention centre, and we each had an old cell as a practice room. Most of the details were still original and so it was atmospheric for sure!

During this practice time, I began the process of learning the intricacies of the horn and adapting my technique from that of the tenor horn. One of the aspects that took the longest to completely adjust to was the slight changes in fingering patterns, as it took time to retrain my muscle memory, particularly in scalar passages. The sheer range of the horn was also something I had to get used to! I had always been quite good at low register playing on the tenor horn, but I really had to work at improving my range and stamina in the high register. This is something that I still focus on today, but the time that I had at the RMSoM to dedicate to building a foundation of skills was absolutely invaluable.

As training typically takes three years for musicians and two for buglers, there are always three troops at the RMSoM at any one time. This meant that the newest troop must form a junior parade band until reaching a good enough standard to join the more experienced trainees. They also must reach a required standard before joining the concert band. As I progressed through my time at the RMSoM and my confidence with the horn grew, I was gradually able to be a part of more ensembles. The wind and brass quintets were my first experiences with chamber

music beyond duets, and I found that I loved them both! To this day, quintet gigs remain among my favourites.

At several points during the training, we took a series of musical exams. Depending on an individual’s prior experience of their instrument/instrumental family, musicians and buglers often pass out of training at different times. However, the typical length is three years for musicians and just two years for buglers. This is the longest training time for any UK-based military band, and is arguably one of the RMBS’s key distinguishing features. Whilst this is another aspect of training that may seem daunting to a potential applicant, I believe that this time allows us to hone the finer details of parade band, as well as allowing us to become highly proficient on (potentially) multiple completely new instruments.

This time also means that, whilst at the RMSoM, trainees are able to begin optional work on the fully-funded BMus (Honours) Degree in Professional Music Studies. It is a part-time degree that takes five years to complete (without the optional gap year), and it has been specifically designed to work in parallel with a career in the RMBS. I am currently in my fourth year of this degree course and while it is hard work, I have enjoyed being able to pursue a higher qualification whilst improving my skills in historical and musical analysis, composition, arrangement, and performance. The final year includes a recital, and I am beginning to decide on the repertoire I will play. Tips from previous issues of *The Horn Call* have been very helpful!

My time at the RMSoM took place between January 2020 and July of 2021, which meant that it was quite heavily affected by COVID. This did make training more challenging in many respects, but compared to the general public’s experience of COVID lockdowns, I think we got quite lucky! We had secure jobs as musicians in such an unprecedented and unstable time, and we were also a legal household of approximately 80 people living together! This meant that we could conduct ensembles such as concert band relatively normally and we could also socialise within our household much more than average. We had a purpose, and we also had some fun.

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## Life in the Bands

I passed my final exam a year early in late June 2021, and within a week had moved to nearby Fareham on my first draft to the Royal Marines Band Collingwood! Four other RM bands are situated around the UK (as well as the RMSoM): RM Band Portsmouth, RM Band Plymouth, RM Band CTCRM, and RM Band Scotland. Each band performs essentially the same role, although there are inherent differences based on what types of gigs are typically present in each area. For example, because Portsmouth and Collingwood are the closest to London, they typically perform here more due to the logistics of travel.

One of my highlights from being in the Collingwood band was the opening of the Queen's Baton Relay for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth games. This took place in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace in London, and Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was in attendance. Also whilst at Collingwood band, I was able to attend my pass-out ceremony from the RMSoM, which had been delayed due to COVID. Collingwood was my first real experience of the career that I joined up for, and it was a great one! Whilst travel, sport, and adventure training opportunities were still fairly restricted due to the after-effects of COVID, I had performed at various prestigious events, developed my horn playing in both small and large ensembles, and learnt the rhythm of working in a Royal Marines Band.

I was drafted to Plymouth band in May 2022, and have stayed here ever since. Just a few months after I moved to Plymouth, we had the honour of being part of the procession for the funeral of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We played the National Anthem for her for one of the final times, which is something I will always remember. We were also honoured to be involved in the Coronation of King Charles III, including playing the National Anthem in Buckingham Palace forecourt when the newly-crowned King appeared on the balcony to greet the crowds. Both of these events are perhaps the highest-profile and most historically significant that I will ever perform, and I am very lucky to have been a part of them so early in my career.

Amongst the many other highlights of my time at Plymouth band was a trip to Washington, DC in the USA.

This article is in fact a product of this trip, as I played alongside MU1 Erika Loke (Military Matters Column Editor) as part of our collaboration with the US Naval Academy Band. I have also had the chance to complete several adventure training packages whilst at Plymouth band, including skiing in Bavaria, and I have also taken part in sporting events as part of the RMBS Women's football team.

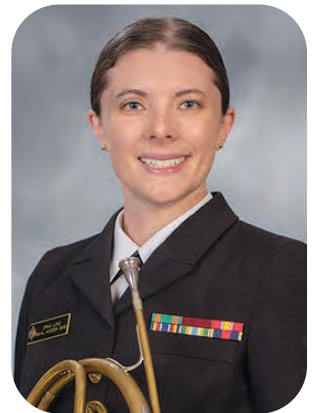
As I am writing this article in June of 2024, we have already had a busy year at Plymouth band, and much more is still to come. We were involved in the Mountbatten Festival of Music 2024 at the Royal Albert Hall in London, which included a performance with Nicko McBrain of Iron Maiden, and later this year we are due to be part of the RMBS Beating Retreat on Horseguard's Parade, as well as the Edinburgh Tattoo. I watched the Edinburgh Tattoo on TV many times when I was younger, and I have always wanted to be a part of it!

Ever since I came across that recruitment stand in 2014, I have wanted to be a part of the RMBS. Now, a decade later, I have benefited from every opportunity that was described to me back then, as well as many more that I could never have expected. Discovering the horn and its vast capabilities was certainly one of these unexpected joys, and I look forward to many more years of exploring the opportunities that it has opened up for me.

Scan this QR code to view the documentary, "Inside the Band School."



*Editor's note: Various elements of the application, audition, and training processes within the RMBS have changed since Emily's experience. See royal.navy.mod.uk/rmbs or email careers@royalmarinesbands.co.uk with any career-related enquiries.*



MU1 Erika Loke is the Horn Section Leader of the US Naval Academy Band.

*www.hornsociety.org*

## COR Values

Ellie Jenkins, Column Editor

### Houser Mouthpieces and Dave Houser

*D*ave Houser created Houser Mouthpieces in 1989, bringing his engineering and manufacturing training to focus on the interface between musician and instrument. Though he is a trumpet player, Houser Mouthpieces have become iconic in the horn world and are widespread among professionals, amateurs, and students. With its proprietary scanning technology, using CNC machinery, Houser produces mouthpieces of its own design and is also able to duplicate and modify standard mouthpieces. Houser is particularly known for being on the forefront of stainless-steel mouthpieces, along with their specialized H-Kote coatings. In July 2024, Dave Houser sat down to tell us more about his company in Norristown, Pennsylvania and his mouthpieces.



**Ellie Jenkins (EJ):** Tell me about your background. Your website has limited information on how you got started.

**Dave Houser (DH):** My background is electrical engineering by education. I worked with General Electric and later Tektronix in production and manufacturing. I'm not a trained musician. I started in sixth grade playing the trumpet, and loved the trumpet and the big bands from the 1940s-1970s. I continued with the trumpet as a hobby. I had a quintet for about ten years with several friends, and played in local orchestras. It's always been a second love, and I've always been fascinated with the mouthpiece. I think it's like choosing the "magic club" in a golf bag. There's always something to hang onto and blame it or love it, or adapt to a certain situation. So that became a focal point for me.

I bought an old manual lathe and experimented with cutting and threading rims, cups, and shanks. I placed ads in the Charles Colin *Brass Player* and began modifying mouthpieces on the side. At this time, in the late 1980s, CNC (computer numerical control) manufacturing and CAD/CAM software (computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacturing) were coming into vogue. I don't believe these techniques had infiltrated the mouthpiece-manufacturing world to any great extent. Repeatability/consistency is critical in a product, so the old manual methods were not the way forward.

Early on, I developed a technique to digitize mouthpieces and bring them into CAD software to make duplications for customers. We now use a high-tech digitizer and have several CNC lathes for production.

If I look at the human being, the horn, the music that comes out, that's the system. How do you break that down and understand it? It's virtually impossible to categorize. You look at the human body, the lungs, the oral cavity, the mouth, the structure of the lips and the muscles, and you get the mouthpiece, then the lead pipe, then the horn. There are so many variables. The one point to me that seemed the most critical was the mouthpiece. To divide that even more, it's the rim – that's the first connection with your body.

If I look at the products we offer, there are lots of screw rims, and that's been my focus. It's fitting the face and making somebody happy and content with that, and then they can work out the mouthpiece. That seemed to me to be a good way to proceed, because once you get that fit and feeling right, you can begin to find a cup and experiment with differences in bore size or back bore or cup depth, as long as you have something constant on the face. That's a good reference point, which can change throughout a horn player's career. Some people will play on a specific rim contour, but they may want something that's a quarter millimeter larger or smaller, depending on if they're tired and their lips are swollen, or if they're playing low range or high range.

**EJ:** So you're starting with the way the rim feels, and making that comfortable for the player.

**DH:** Yes. The challenge for me is that embouchures vary so much. I just looked at how I would set up to play the trumpet, and then I looked at other people, and the way the face is set up around the rim is totally different than what I had. There's no *one* thing, no *one* rim that's going to work with every person.

The embouchure itself is a black art. When I work with people, I ask, what do you feel? Do you need an anchor point? Where's your reference point – in your lower lip, your upper lip, how do you place? And from that I can gently steer people in a direction. But there's no one recipe that fits every person. Each person must work that out on their own. I can give them a range of things that might help. If you need more definition, you can get a rim with a sharper inner edge, or if you need more support, a little wider, a little rounder. And it depends on whether you're *einsetzen* or *ansetzen* – I knew nothing about that as a trumpet player; it was a culture shock for a trumpet player to learn that horn players did that!

Early on, when I played with local orchestras, a horn player named Gene Wieland – he's almost 96 now and still going – played with the Houston Symphony in the 1950s and became a professional photographer. When he retired,



he moved in here and set up shop upstairs doing horn repair and screw bell conversions. Gene's collaboration got me focused on the horn, because I had a resident horn expert in my own shop. I began making bell rings for horns and trombones and of course, horn mouthpieces.

**EJ:** Since you're a trumpet player, do you also make trumpet mouthpieces?

**DH:** I've done custom ones in brass and stainless, but with trumpet mouthpieces, there's much more of a machining challenge/tooling expense to a backbore in stainless steel than in brass. Since I wanted to move into stainless steel and maximize flexibility in design, trumpet mouthpieces weren't practical.

**EJ:** What pushed you into stainless steel?

**DH:** One is the practical aspect. I used to do all my own silver-plating, which uses a silver cyanide solution, so you have to be careful. Touching it isn't going to hurt you, but you don't ever want to accidentally mix it with an acid, where you get deadly fumes. We have a vent hood here, but over time, the solution requires maintenance and filtering. Restoring the cyanide solution to a good condition is messy, and you still have to dispose of stuff that's not savory. I did that for about 15-20 years, and then decided, no more. Anderson Silver Plating has since done all our plating on the brass products, and they do a great job.

Stainless was the next option, and it also has the advantage that certain types of stainless steel are non-allergenic. Brass contains a lot of zinc, which can produce skin reactions, redness, and blotchiness inside the lip. People who have been playing for 25 years, and suddenly this rash developed, sometimes from continued exposure, or maybe there's been one mouthpiece with the plating breaking down. Even with good silver or gold plating, the salt in the saliva creates an ion transport mechanism that will erode and work its way into the brass, and then you begin to exchange zinc. Some people have an immediate reaction and others develop over years. You don't get that with stainless steel. The stainless rims provide a good barrier when used with a brass underpart and eliminate most allergic issues with players. If issues still remain, then using a stainless cup should eliminate any further reaction.

**EJ:** Is stainless harder to work with in general?

**DH:** Yes. Stainless steel is very stringy. It tends to form steel wool pads around the tooling and inside the machines. It's something you can't leave alone. With brass, you can set a process up, let it run, and walk away, go have lunch. But stainless steel will trip you up. It'll wrap around something. Tooling wears out faster, and if you don't catch it in time, you can make a lot of scrap metal. On top of that, you're out lots of money in tooling. You have to monitor it and babysit it.

We have two coatings for rims, a black and a gold coat-

ing that are a substance called titanium nitride. The idea came to me because a lot of the tooling we use has little inserts that, as they wear, you can replace them, and those are often coated with different types of titanium nitride. I researched, and toured a company that does coating, and quite a few of those coatings are used on medical devices or implants like stents and pacemaker electrodes, that are in the body and impervious to a reaction. We worked with samples and techniques to finish it after they're coated. It's quite a process. It takes eight or nine hours, and it's done in this Jules Verne-looking chamber with big, thick glass windows. Then they vaporize titanium in a gas environment, and it's electrically deposited onto the rim.

**EJ:** Wow, that's really cool!

**DH:** It is! I don't know whoever came up with that, but it's a phenomenal technique, and it does a good job. Most of the parts we get are close to being 100%. Sometimes a couple of dropouts occur in a batch, but it's minimal. If somebody has a problem, if something wears, we replace it, though it shouldn't wear. That's been an innovation that has really helped, because sometimes people can have a contact allergy even with stainless steel, and sometimes they can only play on plastic, like Delrin. Going to a coated rim can help with that.

**EJ:** Were you a pioneer, or among the pioneers with stainless steel mouthpieces?

**DH:** I think so. At about the same time Giddings and Webster came out with stainless steel, I was also working with a fellow that had his own business just selling mouthpieces called Loud Mouthpieces, and those were all stainless steel, but they were mostly for tuba and trombone.

**EJ:** You're doing two- and three-piece mouthpieces, right?

**DH:** Yes, but not so many three-pieces anymore. I've been so busy with the others that we haven't restocked the three-pieces. When/as we restock screw shanks, they will be raw brass. We're not going to do them in stainless, and that will have minimal effect on the sound. You'll have the steel rim and a steel cup, and that's the isolation from the brass. The screw-shanks and cups are a way to experiment with nuances or a particular mouthpiece model.

**EJ:** Do many people come into the shop, or is most business done online?

**DH:** We do everything online, through the website, email and phone calls. We're in a residential development and aren't zoned for commercial traffic.

**EJ:** Do you send out trials?

**DH:** We do, but it's a sales transaction. You buy the mouthpiece and then we agree on a time frame during which it's returnable. With the stainless products, unless you run over it or beat it with a hammer, it will not come back

damaged. The restocking fee is minimal, just to re-bag and clean it. Some people know within a day or two whether something's going to work, and others can take several weeks. If they want to see drawings, I'll send that out to them. I don't expect an immediate response from anybody if they're trying things out. Their playing situation changes, and they have to be able to adapt and see what works for them.

**EJ:** Do you go to any of the symposiums or workshops these days?

**DH:** No. We stay quite busy, and it's expensive in terms of time away from the shop. The last one I went to was in Texas. We went down with Houghton Horns, and had a table set up there. It's just the time, based on the volume of business and the things that have to be done to set up and go to a show, to ship everything out, set up; It's a week-plus away, and always in the end, you just get behind on the work.

**EJ:** You're known so well now that you don't need the advertising of going to a show.

**DH:** I guess that's true, but the website helps keep us "in circulation." Houghton Horns has been a great partner. Our collaboration has been beneficial to us both, and I look forward to continuing with them.

**EJ:** As you perceive it, or as you've measured it, what are the different tonal qualities from the different metals in the mouthpiece?

**DH:** Brass will always have a warmer sound, whatever the cup dimensions are; it probably works best in smaller ensembles as it's not an overpowering sound, but a good blending sound. Stainless steel tends to be a little more responsive, maybe a little brighter, which can be good in a horn that's a little dull. It is good in an orchestral setting, from what I've been told, in that you can project at those times when you need to cut through and step on the gas. In the end, brass is probably home for most people, but there are some who have extreme allergies and have to stay on stainless steel, even for the cup. Sometimes just having a stainless or other hypoallergenic rim isn't enough. A stainless cup gives that extra barrier. In an ideal world, I'd like to make stainless rims only and brass underparts, but some people need the stainless and some just like the response.

**EJ:** Since you're doing most everything at a distance, where do you start if someone calls you? Do most people who contact you already have a specific idea of what they want?

**DH:** They'll say they're playing on such and such a rim, but they need something a little bigger. Do I have something like that rim, maybe a half a millimeter bigger or

something that can give a little more definition? Something that will help with attacks, help with the front end of the note, or with comfort, and that gives me something to work with. I have a library of rims that I've scanned, and try to cross-reference their need with what I have and come up with a match. Then we send the rims out for trial to see what works. Sometimes customers come back two or three times, and sometimes we get the right match the first time. About 60-70% of the time, we get it right the first time, and for the rest, we keep trying until we find what they're looking for. It comes down to the player taking it to their own laboratory and working it out.

When I started, Myron Bloom was the first professional horn player I came in contact with. He used to teach at Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. When teaching, he stayed across the street at a hotel. I'd go down and we'd sit in his room, and he would play for me, and we'd talk about mouthpieces. He used a very deep funnel cup, a small diameter rim, and a #1 drill, making a large, low resistance bore. He had thick lips, but he played with almost no pressure, just very relaxed. It was one of those embouchures that worked with a narrow 17.5mm rim. For most players the #1 drill is too large, so we offered the cup in smaller bores.

**EJ:** For a long time, it seemed that everyone was trying to play with that equipment, some with good results and some not.

**DH:** Exactly. It wouldn't work for everyone, and variation existed within any given mouthpiece model. Obtaining two identical models of the same mouthpiece was a stroke of luck. Did you ever hear of Vince Dell'Osa in Philadelphia? Gene Wieland was friends with Vince, so we visited his repair shop and saw his mouthpiece-making equipment. You could see why no two were the same. The techniques were clever and resourceful; however, each mouthpiece was essentially a one-off and usually made for specific players while they were with Vince. This was in the mid 1980s and CAD/CAM and CNC technology was relatively new. From my background, repeatability is paramount and underscores why I wanted to use automation and CNC machines.

**EJ:** Is there anything else that's important for people to know about you and your products?

**DH:** Custom work is broken into several categories. The quickest to turn around is cutting and threading cups and rims. Making alterations to our standard rims and cups or custom versions of either that we have on file for customers is also quick to turn around. Duplication of cups or rims takes more time and becomes more costly, particularly in stainless steel.

See [housermouthpiece.net/](http://housermouthpiece.net/) or contact Dave at [dave@housermouthpiece.net](mailto:dave@housermouthpiece.net).



# Unlucky Chops: The Perils of Embouchure Overuse Syndrome

by Joseph D. Johnson

**T**he contents of this article are for educational and informational purposes only. They are not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Readers are encouraged to seek the advice of qualified healthcare professionals regarding any medical condition or treatment plan. The information provided in this article should not be construed as medical advice or a replacement for consultation with a healthcare provider.

Because embouchure overuse syndrome most often appears at a time when a player is at the top of his form...

- Lucinda Lewis, *Broken Embouchures*

This statement is true for me. My experience with Embouchure Overuse Syndrome (EOS) began when I was at the height of my playing abilities, at a time when I felt invincible. Unfortunately, I pushed myself too far, injured my top lip, and never gave it time to properly heal. Musicians do not have an "Injured List" or "Injured Reserve" designation such as is found in many popular sports. For most of us, especially freelance musicians, if you are hurt or sick, you are replaced. This causes many of us to play through injuries or issues, which can exacerbate the original malady.

This is one of the primary reasons why Nick Fife and I created this new column, Unlucky Chops, which focuses

on performance injuries, mental health topics, and other illnesses and issues that affect brass playing. If my problems had stopped with the injury, then I might have been fine; however, that was just the beginning. Prolonged injuries and illnesses take a toll on the mind and body. The depression and identity crisis that I suffered as my performing abilities deteriorated were even worse than the injury.

As with any musician who has been in a similar situation, I never thought that this would happen to me. It has been more than a decade since I suffered the playing injury that altered my career, and I continue to search for answers. I have been able to reteach myself how to play, and my embouchure is back to its original setting, but I am still unable to play as efficiently as I did prior to the injury. It is my hope that the trials and tribulations that I have endured will be of solace to those who have suffered through similar circumstances.



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(1681-1767)

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## My Injury Story

I will never forget the day my injury occurred. I was in the second year of my doctoral studies at West Virginia University (WVU), Spring semester, pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance. I had just completed a week of heavy playing and multiple performances, including my third DMA recital. I was asked to play on a chamber piece, *Dance of the Ocean Breeze* for Horn, Tuba, and Piano by Roger Kellaway, for a Guest Artist Recital at WVU. Even though I was tired and needed a break, I did not want to say no. We had one rehearsal on a freezing Sunday afternoon for a Monday evening performance. The rehearsal room was like a sauna, and the piano was out of tune. Intonation was awful, and the guest artist wanted to keep running through the entire piece to try and work out the tuning issues. There is a scalar run up to a written C6 towards the end, which we must hold out. On the last run through, I felt a sharp pain in my upper lip as I was playing the C6. The next morning, my upper lip was extremely sore, slightly swollen, and my embouchure control was limited. I was able to push through and perform the following evening, but it took about a week for my lip to feel normal.

After the pain and swelling abated, I noticed a lump/knot on my upper lip, which was conveniently situated where the rim of the mouthpiece rested on my lip. It did not hurt all the time, but I would occasionally feel pain or discomfort. The pain manifested in the form of a shooting pain that was impossible to predict. Playing with the knot was uncomfortable, and it took almost a year for it to go away. In hindsight, I now know that I tore, either partially or fully, the orbicularis oris muscle. This is the multi-layered muscle “which attaches through a thin, superficial musculoaponeurotic system to the dermis of the upper lip and lower lip and serves as an attachment site for many other facial muscles around the oral region.” The knot that I felt was the scar tissue that was left after the tear was unable to heal properly. At the time, February of 2011, neither I nor my teacher, Virginia Thompson, were aware of medical professionals who could help with or diagnose this issue. We knew of Lucinda Lewis and her book, *Broken Embouchures*, but consulting a medical pro-

fessional could have helped me to better understand my injury and provide a quicker path to recovery; however, as a financially challenged graduate student with lots of debt, I doubt that I would have been able to afford to see a specialist at the time.

I had one year left for my graduate assistantship, so I did not have time to wait around for my injury to heal properly. I could still play at a high level even though I was constantly feeling pain or discomfort. I performed principal on Mahler’s Symphony No. 1 and won a professional orchestral audition the following semester. Unfortunately, the pain and discomfort lasted so long that I decided to start tinkering with my embouchure. I read and practiced the exercises from Jeff Smiley’s book, *The Balanced Embouchure*. I experimented with different mouthpiece placements, as well as different mouthpieces with varying rim contours and sizes. When the discomfort finally disappeared, the damage had already been done. My embouchure felt weak, and I did not have the same strength and endurance that I enjoyed prior to the injury, which led to even more embouchure and mouthpiece changes. Thankfully, I was able to perform my final recital and earn my degree before my playing really started to deteriorate.

I have endured a tumultuous relationship with the horn over the past decade. After finishing my DMA, I could still play horn at a professional level, but I had to work harder to keep things in check. My playing was no longer effortless. I am one of those rare people who enjoys practicing, but for a while, I did not want to look at my horn. I began to practice less, and my embouchure finally collapsed, meaning that I was unable to produce a sound on the horn for a period. At first, I believed that I had developed focal dystonia, but I could still play other instruments and did not experience the tremors and other neurological side effects associated with dystonia. Due to the frequent embouchure changes over a two-year period, I developed a severe case of Embouchure Overuse Syndrome during the spring of 2014. Currently my embouchure is back in its natural setting, but I continue to struggle to rediscover the ease of playing and command of the instrument that I once possessed.

## The Recovery Process

My recovery has been an arduous journey, and at the writing of this article, it is still an ongoing process. I wish I could offer the horn community a definitive approach to overcoming EOS, but the best I can provide is a summary of what exercises have been beneficial and helpful in regaining some of my playing abilities. These are my opinions, and what worked for me may not necessarily do the same for another player. My struggles with EOS not only affected my playing, but also had an adverse effect on my mental health and overall belief in myself as a musician. Many of the following exercises and techniques aided me

in regaining my playing abilities and were instrumental in helping me build back my confidence.

I took approximately six months away from playing during 2014. It was difficult, but I needed to step away to clear my head and hopefully reset my embouchure. For the first three months, I did not touch a mouthpiece. Beginning in the fourth month, I started doing Lucinda Lewis’s blocked buzzing exercise daily using my Laskey 725J mouthpiece. This was the mouthpiece that I used prior to and throughout my DMA studies. After experimenting with many different mouthpieces and rims, it was important for me to go



back to the mouthpiece that I achieved much success with to create a sense of comfort and hopefully reactivate any muscle memory that was left.

The blocked buzzing exercise is a technique developed by Lucinda Lewis and explained further in her book. It requires the end of the mouthpiece to be covered, or blocked, while simulating a buzz. The repeated action of this practice is supposed to force the embouchure to form correctly and reestablish connection with muscle memory. This exercise should be done as instructed in the companion

booklet, *Embouchure Rehabilitation*. I began doing the blocked buzzing exercise multiple times a day during the fifth month, and then I eventually progressed to buzzing on the mouthpiece during the sixth month. My buzzing consisted of long tones and simple scalar patterns. These exercises were performed while sitting at a piano or using a drone, so that I was able to correctly match pitch. Example 1 shows a sample exercise that I would use to buzz on the mouthpiece alone.

Play note(s) on  
piano or drone

Take mouthpiece off of lips  
during rests

etc.

Example 1. Sample Buzzing Exercises

At first, I held the stem of the mouthpiece with my left hand (non-dominant) using only my thumb and forefinger while buzzing. This kept me from using pressure to force my lips into an incorrect embouchure position. I also occasionally used the Buzzard device or a BERP to create resistance while buzzing. The BERP is attached to the leadpipe of the horn, so I was able to hold my horn and use correct fingerings while buzzing. This allowed me to mentally prepare myself for the moment that I would attempt to play again. My psyche was so scarred from the injury, EOS, and subsequent collapse of my embouchure that I needed time to reestablish a positive connection with the horn.

When I started playing again, around September 2014, it was a slow and painstaking process. As with buzzing on the mouthpiece, I started with long tones. My first note would always be our written C4, then I would work my way up chromatically to the written high B $\flat$ 5 and progress down chromatically to the written low B $\flat$ 2. Typically, each note would be held for eight beats with at least a measure of rest between successive notes.

I also used an exercise from the *Standley Routine*, which is based on the practice routine of the late Forrest Standley, former Principal Horn of the Pittsburgh Symphony and former Professor of Horn at Carnegie Mellon University. It is the first exercise in the book and incorporates long tones with accuracy and first attacks. My struggles brought back an issue related to my anxiety, which renders me unable to attack notes, especially those of a soft dynamic level. This exercise, when modified with breath attacks, helped me work through my hesitation issues. Example 2 presents an excerpt of the modified exercise.<sup>6</sup>

As I progressed in my recovery, I noticed that my facility in the mid to low range of the horn did not return. The break between my upper and lower range was now more pronounced, and I was unable to seamlessly transition between the two settings. I still struggle with this issue. Over the past decade, I have tried numerous exercises, devices, and techniques on my quest for answers, but nothing has completely resolved the issue.

Another exercise I use is taken from the warm-up

Take horn off face b/w attacks to facilitate a first attack

Breath Tongue Tongue Rest, take horn off face

mp

B T T T T T

etc.

Example 2. Modified Standley Attack Routine

routine of my former teacher and former Professor of Horn at the University of South Carolina, the late Robert Pruzin (1947-2013). He would often have his students work on a simple five-note scalar exercise that emphasizes finger dexterity and articulation. This exercise, when played in the mid to low range of the horn, forces me to play with a correct embouchure setting and work across my break. Example 3 shows the exercise in its modified form.

During my time at WVU, I was fortunate enough to have a lesson with Adam Unsworth, current Professor of Horn at the University of Michigan and former member of the Philadelphia Orchestra and Detroit Symphony. We worked primarily on orchestral excerpts, specifically the low horn excerpt from Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 and the opening solo from *Till Eulenspiegel*. Both excerpts require

the player to project a full and robust sound in the low register. This is an especially challenging task, and Unsworth used stopped horn to aid in developing the necessary projection in the low range, playing through certain portions of each excerpt using stopped horn. This technique worked so well that I began to incorporate more stopped horn work into my recovery process. I modified a personal favorite low horn exercise from William Brophy's book, *Technical Studies for Solving Special Problems on the Horn*, which has been helpful in strengthening my mid to low range and managing the register break.<sup>7</sup> Example 4 presents the Brophy exercise with my personal modifications. It should be noted that stopped horn playing puts a lot of stress on the embouchure, so it is important to rest and practice these types of exercises in moderation.



Play on the horn

Rest

legato

legato

legato

legato

etc.

Example 3. 5-Note Scale Pattern

mp

ff

mp

ff

mp

ff

mp

ff

mp

ff


mp

ff


etc.

Example 4. Modified Brophy Low Horn Exercise

Here is a list of exercises that I have used consistently over the past few years to help expand and maintain my facility throughout the entire range of the horn:



Basler, Paul – *Horn Warm-Up*  
Brophy, William – *Technical Studies for Solving Special Problems on the Horn*  
Caruso, Carmine – *Musical Calisthenics for Brass*  
Farkas, Phillip – *The Art of French Horn Playing*  
Fearn, Ward – *Exercises for Flexible Horn Playing*  
Hill, Douglas – *Warm-Ups and Maintenance Sessions for the Horn Player*  
Hilliard, Howard – *Lip Slurs for Horn*  
Singer, Joseph – *Embouchure Building for French Horn*  
Standley, Forrest – *Standley Routine*  
Sullivan, Nancy – *Flow Studies, Horn Edition*  
Wekre, Frøydis Ree – *Thoughts on Playing the Horn Well*



These are just some of the books and studies that have been helpful in my journey to regain my playing abilities on the horn. I currently use the *Standley Routine* book daily to help maintain facility and range. The exercises are divided into six sections that contain scale, arpeggio, and endurance studies, focusing on a specific set of major/minor keys

within each section. Other specific exercises include Sections IV and V from Singer's *Embouchure Building*, "Slurred Arpeggios" and "Tongued Arpeggios" from Basler's *Horn Warm-Up*, and the "Tuba flexie" from Frøydis's *Thoughts on Playing the Horn Well*.

## Conclusion

Unfortunately, I cannot give a definitive answer or "cure" for EOS, because I am still struggling as a horn player. Even though my embouchure and mouthpiece setting feel normal, my playing abilities still fluctuate. I tend to let my jaw recede, so actively pushing my jaw forward while playing has been beneficial. It feels as though I must push my bottom teeth against the mouthpiece more to achieve the correct setting. The receding of my jaw does not normally affect my high range, but I struggle to consistently play notes within the mid to low range of the horn. Performing a simple blocked buzzing exercise before a practice session will often help to correct my embouchure setting.

My mental health has adversely affected my ability to play horn. I experience a great deal of anxiety associated with performing, and there are moments when my anxiety will not allow me to play due to excess tension. This tension is present in my embouchure, tongue, neck, and the rest of my upper body. Thankfully, I am at a place mentally where I am receptive to the idea of therapy, and am currently seeking professional help for my anxiety.

A positive outcome is that this whole ordeal has made me a more effective and empathetic teacher. Even though I have been unable to fully solve my own problems, because of my personal experiences I am able to diagnose and offer suggestions to students for issues that other instructors may overlook. At times, I have also been forced to teach in a different way. Most of us demonstrate for our students on our own instrument, but there have been many times when I have been unable to play. Instead, I was able to develop a different style of teaching by talking students through issues pertaining to phrasing, style, and dynamics.

I hope that this story will provide a glimpse of hope for anyone struggling through similar issues. I welcome any correspondence pertaining to embouchure injuries, EOS, or any type of playing issues. I am more than happy to share advice and help in any way that I am able. Just remember to never be afraid to ask for help. I am still frustrated with my current playing abilities, which has kept me from asking for help at times. Please do not make the same mistake.

---

Joseph D. Johnson is a horn player, composer, and educator based in the Augusta, Georgia area. He earned a BME from Augusta (State) University, an MM from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and a DMA from West Virginia University. His primary teachers include Carrie Strickland, Darian Washington, Robert Pruzin, Calvin Smith, and Virginia Thompson. He is currently on the faculty at Augusta University and Newberry College. [jdjohnsonhorn.com](http://jdjohnsonhorn.com)





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<sup>1</sup>Lucinda Lewis, *Broken Embouchures: An Embouchure Handbook* (New York: Oscar's House Press, 2013), 4.

<sup>2</sup>Prachi Jain and Manu Rathee, "Anatomy, Head and Neck, Orbicularis Oris Muscle," *National Library of Medicine* (Treasure Island, FL: StatPearls Publishing, 2024), Accessed June 7, 2024, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK545169/>.

<sup>3</sup>Lucinda Lewis, *Broken Embouchures: An Embouchure Handbook* (New York: Oscar's House Press, 2013), 34-35.

<sup>4</sup>Lucinda Lewis, *Embouchure Rehabilitation* (New York: Oscar's House Press, 2012), 10-16.

<sup>5</sup>The Buzzard is a buzzing enhancement device produced by Warburton Music. The Berp, or buzz extension and resistance piece, is another buzzing enhancement device produced by Berp & Company.

<sup>6</sup>Forrest Standley, *Standley Routine*, ed. Stephen Hager and Gene Standley (San Antonio, TX: Southern Music Company, 2002), 8.

<sup>7</sup>William R. Brophy, *Technical Studies for Solving Special Problems on the Horn* (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1977), 6.



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Students of all levels are invited to submit material to the Column Editor at [laurenantoniolli@gmail.com](mailto:laurenantoniolli@gmail.com).

## Graduation is not the End!

After I completed my performance degree a little over two years ago, I had no idea what to expect when entering the music scene outside my university. For a while, in my sophomore and junior years, I considered going to graduate school for performance, but towards the end of my degree, for a variety of reasons, I felt that a career in music was not the right path for me. The more I was required to play, the less I enjoyed it, and I was burned out from playing in so many ensembles and trying to find time to practice for my recitals on top of it. I developed jaw issues from the number of hours a day I was playing, to the extent that I was regularly trying soft-food diets and wearing mouthguards to sleep. I became scared about the instability of a career in music performance during the COVID-19 pandemic, and I also developed an interest in the healthcare field after joining my campus EMS team. Upon graduating in May of 2022, right after completing my senior recital, I was excited to take a break from playing.

After a month off, I started to miss the horn. I enrolled in lessons and joined a local orchestra. I discovered that I loved playing in community orchestras. The environment is welcoming, the repertoire is usually quite fun, and I can easily balance the time commitment with work. I also learned the value of unpaid music opportunities. Because I was making money from other jobs, I had no expectation to find paid opportunities, but instead focused on finding opportunities that balanced well with my lifestyle and groups that I enjoyed. This mindset was different from my prior expectations as a performance major, when I expected to spend a lot of time stressing about auditions and finding the right opportunities. As a performance major, turning my musical passion into a future career took the passion away from my playing and turned it into work for me. This is not true for everyone.

In addition to the low pressure and enjoyment I found in the local music scene, I have also been surprised by the wide selection of groups and performances available. I

never realized just how many opportunities were out there. I have had no shortage of opportunities come my way, and often learn about new opportunities from people in groups I currently play in. Over the past two years, I have played in church, community opera programs, orchestras, bands, drum corps alumni groups, WGI (Winter Guard International) winds, a woodwind quintet, and I also spent a school year in the Northwestern University Philharmonic while studying science as a post baccalaureate student there. This spring, I even had the opportunity to return to my alma mater for a week to play Mahler's First Symphony, which brought back some of my best memories from my time as an undergraduate music major.

Sometimes I drive an hour to attend rehearsals and performances, and sometimes they happen to be nearby. The furthest I drove was three and a half hours for a paid opportunity in Iowa, and made a little trip out of it by visiting old friends on the way home! Sometimes drive time factors into whether I accept a playing opportunity, but usually it is worth it to drive a little farther for the right fit. I also love exploring horn solo repertoire at home with my fiancé, who is a pianist. We played our first church performance together this summer in Minneapolis and are hoping to do more this Christmas season.

There are many ways to stay involved in music outside of music school. Finishing college was not the end of the road for me as a musician, but it was certainly a transition to different kinds of experiences. Greater self-motivation is needed now, as nobody is reminding me to practice or assigning me to ensembles. Although it takes more effort to set up my own schedule and opportunities, I enjoy playing much more now. Through playing music outside of college, I have found a greater balance and fulfillment in music than I ever expected, and am excited to see what other opportunities this chapter holds for me.



*Lauren Antoniolli earned a Bachelor of Music degree at Western Illinois University, where she studied with Professor Jena Gardner, and also served on the IHS's Student Advisory Council. In addition to performing, Lauren teaches private lessons to local junior high and high school students.*



# Creative Technique When Using Kopprasch Makes Cents!

by James Naigus

## The What

Fundamentally speaking, fundamentals are fundamental for our growth as horn players. You can't spell "fundamental" without "fun"! You also can't spell fundamental without "mental," but we'll ignore that one. As such, I'm always looking for ways to practice the building blocks of horn playing in ways that are both familiar, yet different. Remember: it's not always the "what" that matters, it's "how" we do it that makes the biggest changes. The more we can vary the "what" while reaffirming the "how," the less we'll get burned out on basics.

In this case, the "what" of this series of exercises is the beginning of beloved Kopprasch No. 1. The goals of these exercises are threefold: scalar kinesthetics, aural intonation, and pitch muscle memory. What I like about these first couple of phrases is that the scalar motion starts on a different scale degree each time, forcing us to focus on what notes we are playing, and their roles in the scale, rather than falling into complacency via traditional scalar patterns.

## The How

These exercises are designed to be played with a drone and tuner. Approach each exercise slowly, note by note, taking the time to see (tuner), hear (ears), and feel (muscle memory) the correct intonation for each note. As you get comfortable and consistent with hitting the center of the pitch quickly, gradually incorporate the

printed rhythm and increase the tempo of the exercise.

Use the scale degree chart to help adjust pitch at a just-intonation level, either by using the simplified chart, or the exact cent adjustments. Remember, there are 100 cents in one half step, so adjustments are largely ... not large.

## The Intonation

# Kopprasch #1 Scale/Intonation Study Major Keys

## Simplified:

Scale degree:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	
Intonation adjustments:	-	-	↓	-	-	↓	↓	-	-	↓	-	-	↓	↓	-	-	↓	

## By cents:

(100 cents = 1 half step)

Scale degree:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	
Cent adjustments:	0	+4	-13	-2	+2	-15	-12	0	+4	+13	-2	+2	-15	-12	0	+4	-13	

## The Exercise

Continue chromatically up or down through all major keys. A fully notated set of these exercises can be downloaded from [hornsociety.org/publications/horn-call/extras](https://hornsociety.org/publications/horn-call/extras).

### C Major

## The Intonation – Part 2

Repeat the exercise as written above, but in the parallel minor key. Continue chromatically up or down through all minor keys. Happy playing!

## Kopprasch #1 Scale/Intonation Study Natural Minor Keys

### Simplified:

Scale degree:	1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1	2	b3	
Intonation adjustments:	-	-	↑	-	-	↑	↑	-	-	↑	-	-	↑	↑	-	-	↑	

### By cents:

(100 cents = 1 half step)

Scale degree:	1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1	2	b3	
Cent adjustments:	0	+4	+16	-2	+2	+14	+4	0	+4	+16	-2	+2	+14	+4	0	+4	+16	

James Naigus is Assistant Professor of Horn at the University of Georgia. He is also the co-founder of the Cor Moto Horn Duo and co-host of the podcast "The Complete Musician." His favorite mode is Lydian and his current favorite scale is the overtone/acoustic scale. [jamesnaiguscomposer@gmail.com](mailto:jamesnaiguscomposer@gmail.com).



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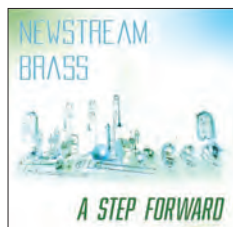


## Recording Reviews

Lydia Van Dreel, Editor



Send discs to be reviewed to Lydia Van Dreel, School of Music and Dance, 1225 University of Oregon, Eugene OR 97403-1225 USA. Readers interested in obtaining discs reviewed in this column are urged to place orders with dealers or record stores in their area. If local dealers are unable to assist, contact one of the reputable suppliers such as Tap Music Sales ([tapmusic.com](http://tapmusic.com)), MusicSource ([themusicsource.org](http://themusicsource.org)), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), or distributors or artists listed in the reviews.



**A Step Forward. NewStream Brass.** Dakota Corbliss, horn; Robert Sears, Derek Ganong, Buddy Deschler, trumpets; Austin Seybert, Michael Wilkinson, Conner Frederick, trombones; Brett Copeland, tuba; Andrew Wheelock, percussion. Mon Hills Records.

Michale Kahle, *Mountain Fanfare*; Robert Sears, *Green Street*; Manuel de Falla, *Three-Cornered Hat*; Tom Harrell, *Train Shuffle*; Austin Seybert, *Soundscapes*; Robert Sears *Minor Detail*; Ed O'Brien, Jonathan Richard Greenwood, *Everything in Its Right Place*; Conner Frederick, *A Step Forward*. All works arranged by NewStream Brass.

NewStream Brass is a group of nine brass and percussion artists who perform a blended mix of music from the traditional brass and jazz idioms. Their album alternates and intermingles these styles with ease and fluency that allows for a relaxed and enjoyable listening experience. *A Step Forward* is their first album, consisting of five original compositions and three arrangements. Group members Robert Sears, Austin Seybert, and Connor Frederick

composed the original compositions, and the arrangements are attributed to the group.

Demonstrating fluency in orchestral, 21st-century, commercial, and jazz styles, this versatile album presents an imaginative and novel ensemble that creates a musical experience with broad appeal for listeners from all sorts of experiences, understanding, and backgrounds in music.

The members of the ensemble are all professors at various institutions throughout the United States, and, along with their prodigious degrees in performance, they also have degrees in music education and clearly have ideals of music education and edification at the center of their projects. Music educators should check out their fine website and the educational opportunities they have to offer.

Hornist Dakota Corbliss, Assistant Professor of Horn at Appalachian State University, performs beautifully on this album, and his performance on the arrangement of de Falla's *Three Cornered Hat* is particularly enjoyable. Congratulations to the musicians of NewStream Brass for an excellent debut album!

—LVD



**Three Suites for Four Horns. The Sego Lily Horns:** Laura Huggard, Wendy Koller, Anita Miller, Sonja Reynolds, Martha Sharpe, horns; Mountain Horn Music independent release. [mountainhornmusic.com](http://mountainhornmusic.com)

Vignettes from the British Isles, Brian Boru's March (Ireland), The Ash Grove (Wales), The Bonnie Lass O'Fyvie (Scotland), She Moved Through the Fair (Ireland), The Fox (England); Old Tyme Gospel Tunes, The Morning Trumpet, Down in the River to Pray, Saints Bound for Heaven, Angel Band, Wondrous Love/Old Time Religion; Sea Shanties, Blow the Man Down, Shenandoah, Sailor's Hornpipe, What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor? All arrangements by Don Abernathy.

The Sego Lily Horns are a western-US-based ensemble comprising professional women horn players and have performed frequently in regional, national, and international settings. Each member of the quartet brings a uniqueness of musical personality, flair, and charisma which, when blended together, combine to form an ensemble sound full of luscious warmth and flavor. Their

fluid melodic lines and clear articulations are enhanced further by the group's ability to think, feel, and play as one unified body. They are a tremendous quartet!

This recording features three suites for four horns by long-time performer, composer, and pedagogue Donald Abernathy. Folk music and hymn tunes have long been sources of inspiration for the composer; an artist who has "attempted to provide music that enlightens, challenges, encourages musical growth, is enjoyable, and is fun to play." The three suites featured on this album certainly fit the bill. On each track, The Sego Lily Horns epitomize the concept of singing through one's instrument. Richness of tone throughout the range, variety of articulations, and the tasteful presence of vibrato are just a few of the ensemble members' attributes. Their impeccable timing and infectious camaraderie are on par with some of the greatest small vocal and/or instrumental ensembles of all time.

English author/philosopher Aldous Huxley once wrote, "There is no bad day that can't be overcome by listening to a barbershop quartet. That is truth, plain and simple." If only he could have heard this new release by The Sego Lily horns – he may have changed "barbershop" to "horn."

—Patrick Smith, Virginia Commonwealth University



**Courage!** Valerie Whitney, horn; Terrance Dawson, piano; Summit Records 824

Stephen Chatman, *Courage!*; Kristin Flores, *By the Lake*; Stacy Garrop, *Sanskara*; Stephen Gryc, *Reflections on a Southern Hymn Tune*; Randall Faust, *Harmonielehre*; Erika Raum, *Confessions of St. Augustine*; Afarin Mansouri Tehrani, *Bewildered*; Elizabeth Raum, *Idiom*; James Stephenson, *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day*.

Valerie Whitney, Assistant Professor of Horn at the University of British Columbia, has recorded a brilliant album of music for solo horn – most of it entirely solo, with one piece including piano. The intent of the album is explained on the Summit Recordings website: “This recording reflects Whitney’s desire to create a narrative exploring the positive and negative impacts of solitude, the quiet reflection of self and nature, and the animating qualities of courage and hope. She wished to feature works by Canadian and women composers who were not yet well-known and include some pieces that she simply enjoyed playing. Two premiere works bookend the album.”

The album opens with Stephen Chatman’s *Courage!*, a piece for solo horn that demands muscularity and vigor from the performer. Whitney delivers both in abundance in her deft and precise performance of this challenging work. The following pieces demand tremendous strength and precision, but also require self-reflection and solemnity. Whitney performs with moving, reverberant phrasing and well-timed and well-paced delivery in these introspective works.

Canadian composer Kristin Flore’s *By the Lake* captures the essence of a quiet summer evening by a mountain lake, with the natural world preparing for the night to come. American composer Randall Faust’s *Harmonielehre* is a modern-day exploration of the natural horn; its modern folk-like melodies and rollicking passages harken back to the hunting horn. Canadian Composer Erika Raum’s *Confessions of St. Augustine* is a four-movement tone poem for solo horn, titled after St. Augustine’s autobiography, depicting major events in his life. Canadian Composer Afarin Mansouri Tehrani’s *Bewildered* was composed to explore deep nostalgia, solitude, and isolation. With vivid emotional gestures, it evokes the image of a solitary individual seeking comfort in nature. Erika Raum’s *Idiom* places the horn back in its native outdoor setting by evoking all the musical expressions historically associated with the horn and the hunt; a raucous chase across the fields interspersed with dances and songs!

Closing out the album, American composer James Stephenson’s *Shall I Compare Thee* is a selection from his etude collection *Maytudes*. Whitney commissioned Stephenson to write a piano accompaniment to the etude with the intention of including it on this album. Stephenson has captured the poem’s sentiments of love and loss in this beautiful new addition to the horn repertoire.

This inspiring recording of music for solo horn should be in any aficionado’s collection. Whitney’s technical and interpretive skills are top-notch, and her choices of repertoire are thoughtful and necessary in the world of horn performance. Congratulations on a meaningful and expertly crafted recording project!

–LVD



**Schumann & Brahms.** Hongpark Kim, horn; Jonghai Park, piano; Jaewon Kim, violin. Sony Classical

Robert Schumann, *Adagio and Allegro*, Op. 70; *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 73; 3 *Romanzen*, Op. 94; Johannes Brahms, *Trio for Violin, Horn, and*

Piano, Op. 40.

Hornist Hongpark Kim, a veteran orchestral performer, has released a debut album which showcases his virtuosity, lyricism, and beautiful sound. His career as an orchestral musician began when he joined the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra under maestro Chung Myung-Whun in 2007. He later served as second principal horn of the Royal Swedish Opera before taking up the position of principal horn with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, a position he held until 2023. Kim is now the professor of horn at Seoul National University, and this recording can introduce his playing to those who haven’t had the

pleasure of hearing him perform in person.

Schumann’s *Adagio and Allegro*, and Brahms’s *Trio* will be familiar to any listener who knows the horn repertoire. The *Fantasiestücke* and *Romanzen* are pieces frequently borrowed by hornists from the clarinet and oboe repertoire.

In an interview with the Korea Herald, Professor Kim describes the process of making music in an orchestra as “[...requiring] us to always listen with open ears. We need to provide a strong foundation and be a good background so that the melodic instruments can paint their picture on top of it. In a way, because it controls the overall atmosphere, it needs to be very stable and unwavering. Through these experiences, I found a lot of joy and fulfillment.”

As a soloist, Professor Kim’s renditions paint a beautiful picture of these classics. His consummate performances are studied and seasoned. His fluidity and flexibility on the horn are exemplary, and the performances are flawless. Bravo and congratulations to Hongpark Kim!

–LVD





**New Hornology.** Arkady Shilkloper, horn. Jazzist.

*Wupper, Blues on Seven, Edelweiss, Cobra, Chorale, Take Seven, Four Brothers, Tales for Alexandra.* All Compositions composed or arranged by Arkady Shilkloper.

Multi-instrumentalist Arkady Shilkloper has released another spectacular jazz album of music for horn. By overdubbing, looping, and creating masterful grooves over which he plays driving solos, this album is a banger.

In the July 2024 issue of *Horn and More*, the online newsletter of the IHS, Shilkloper writes:

The album, *New Hornology*, is a continuation of my solo works, recorded using the overdubbing method. Previous albums [are] *Hornology* (1998), *Pilatus* (2000), and *Zum Gipfel und Zurück: Neue Alphornmusik* (2006). ... The concept for all the albums is the same: to share my own stories with the listeners, and to show the range of timbral, technical, harmonic, aesthetic, and other capabilities of the instruments, including horn, alphorn, kuhlhorn, etc. All compositions and arrangements are my own, but in the last piece, "Tale for Alexandra" (dedicated to my daughter), at the request of the producer, a string quartet was added to the version from the original *Hornology* album. The arrangement was made by Ksenia Akimkina. The result is something that can be defined as "a fresh breath of tradition," the old composition having acquired new colors.

The variety of styles on display as Shilkloper moves deftly from tune to tune is delightful. From the Balkan/Brubeck mash-up of *Take Seven* to the Lederhosen-clad *Edelweiss*, Shilkloper performs with seemingly inexhaustible melodic imagination and endlessly spirited groove. This album will inspire, surprise, and delight – Bravo, Arkady!

– LVD



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Eli Epstein

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—RICHARD SEBRING, Associate Principal Horn, Boston Symphony

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## Media Reviews

Matthew C. Haislip, Editor

**T**his column reviews online media, including recordings, livestreamed/archived concerts, music videos, extended play records, research/educational videos, interviews, podcasts, mobile applications, and websites. Send submissions of media to be reviewed to Matthew C. Haislip at Mississippi State University, [matthew.haislip@msstate.edu](mailto:matthew.haislip@msstate.edu).

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### Digital Album: *Out of the Mud*; June 2023; Tom Varner, horn;

Neil Welch, tenor and bass saxophone.

[tomvarner.bandcamp.com/album/out-of-the-mud-tom-varner-and-neil-welch](https://tomvarner.bandcamp.com/album/out-of-the-mud-tom-varner-and-neil-welch)

This new recording by Tom Varner and Neil Welch is minimalistic and relies on microtonality, rhythmic phasing, chromaticism, melodic fragmentation, and extended techniques to paint a perfect avant-garde representation of the act of dragging oneself back from what felt like oblivion during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The album starts off in the doldrums, with slow, meditative, didgeridoo-like drones traded between Tom and Neil. They present a long sighing and phasing “Om” to calm our frazzled minds and just live in quiet and dark for a bit. Slowly, melodic fragments are introduced as we hazily remember our lives beforehand. With this remembering we receive welcome reminders throughout: how to practice (“Do Your Scales!”); what our instruments sound like; to pause and reflect; how to be busy and move once again (“Jump in Quick”); the animal kingdom; how to just breathe; how to honor our friends.

While dark at times, a glimmer of hope is present throughout. We receive brief reprieves from the less familiar microtonal growls and somber meditations throughout the album. It offers a truly beautiful nod to trombonist Stuart Dempster with a track whose opening notes hint at Tommy Dorsey’s classic “I’m Getting Senti-

mental Over You.” Dempster was responsible for introducing the didgeridoo to the United States.

I relished the challenge of hearing music crafted with a microtonal scale of 31 notes, as the horn is uniquely well suited to this type of music through right hand use. Thea Musgrave’s marvelous horn concerto and Harry Partch’s invented instruments also use this technique. Sussing out a melody from a microtonal piece of music (“Quarter-tone Love”) is a wonderful exercise in extending your ears and musical mind. Such mastery over so many more tones is impressive to say the least.

*Out of the Mud* demands your undivided attention as a brilliantly deep reflection and reminiscence of the emotional and existential crises shared by much of the arts world during the pandemic. My recommendation is to sit in a dark room and commit yourself to a journey. This album left an impression as I found myself thinking of it often and unexpectedly during the week or so following my initial listening. Its reward is in texture, gesture, impression, and deep reflection transmitted by two masters of sound-scaping.

—Adam Schommer,  
New York City freelancer

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### Music Video: *Chicago Symphony Brass Quintet “Rush Hour Concert Series”*, June 25, 2024. David Griffin, horn;

Esteban Batallán and John Hagstrom, trumpets; Michael Mulcahy, trombone;

Gene Pokorny, tuba. [www.youtube.com/live/0NLHebfO\\_iI](https://www.youtube.com/live/0NLHebfO_iI)

It’s no secret that the brass section of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra has been among the finest in the world for many decades. They are admired around the globe for the “Chicago Sound,” recognizable by a unique approach to style and sound, and an impressive dynamic palette. Led by principal trumpet Esteban Batallán, the CSO Brass Quintet is impressive throughout this recital of works by Mattern, Bourgeois, Shostakovich, and Crespo. From start to finish this ensemble performs with the exquisite balance and blend of an elite string quartet. Articulations and dynamics are perfectly matched, and the score is always presented in a transparent manner.

I found the last portion of the program to be the most enjoyable. The transcription of Shostakovich’s String Quartet No. 3 is impressive in its virtuosity and showcases the flexibility of the group. *Suite Americana No. 1* by Enrique Crespo is equally virtuosic and features a variety of popular styles that make for a great closer.

Hornist David Griffin excels in every situation. His masterful chamber music skills are on full display as he weaves seamlessly between classical and jazz-influenced styles. His solo playing is especially impressive in the last two movements of the Bourgeois and the Bossa Nova movement of the Crespo.

—Jeb M. Wallace, Wichita State University



**Music Video: Robert Herberigs - *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1912); June 8, 2024; Jeroen Billiet, horn;**

Inja Stanović, piano; Korneel Bernolet, audio and video production.

[youtu.be/sB\\_1UKJvpTA?si=t5SPSoxpYEy-myO0](https://youtu.be/sB_1UKJvpTA?si=t5SPSoxpYEy-myO0)

We are blessed to live in a time with such a wealth of resources created by powerfully inspiring hornists across the world. YouTube has become the key medium for publication of music videos and recordings, even as hornists continue to produce compact disc albums. It requires planning and imagination to create a professional quality music video. I have seen a few that stand out to me as stellar models. Jeroen Billiet's music video featuring Robert Herberigs's epic work for horn and piano, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, is a superb example of what is possible in this format. Both the performance and the audio/video production are brilliant.

Billiet is Professor of Horn and Natural Horn at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels. He received the International Horn Society's Punto Award and hosted the 51st IHS Symposium. In this video, he performed the Belgian composer's 1912 composition from memory and sounded truly fabulous. I was particularly impressed with his sensitive soft playing and exciting approach. Both Billiet and pianist

Inja Stanović brought their absolute best to this virtuoso performance. Bravo! Hornists will be interested to note that this lesser-known work was originally written for horn and orchestra and has been arranged for horn and piano with a new edition created in 2019 and featured in this video. This wonderful piece deserves to be performed as a staple of the repertoire.

The video elements add personality and fun in depicting the humorous love story this piece is based upon. The video captures the performers on stage in the beautiful Miry Hall of the Royal Conservatory of Ghent. Visual elements were quite effectively handled by producer Korneel Bernolet. Paintings of the *Cyrano* story interweave with the video in a creative manner. One notable effect was seeing the pianist's sheet music transformed into an animated photo from the story. I applaud Billiet, Stanović, and Bernolet for a wonderful music video presentation of this splendid symphonic poem. Well done! —MCH



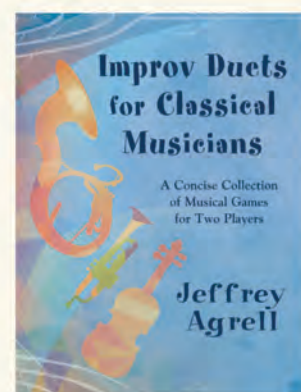
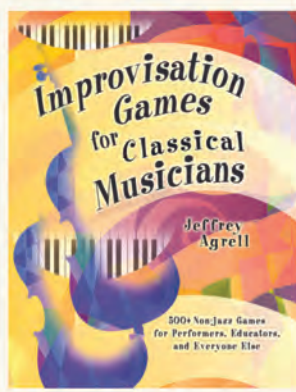
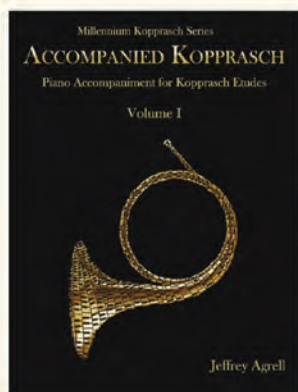
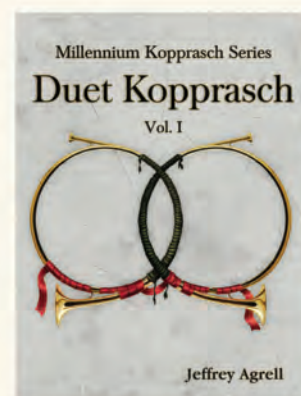
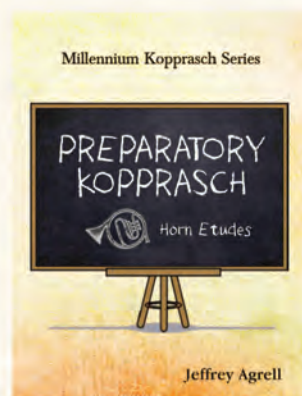
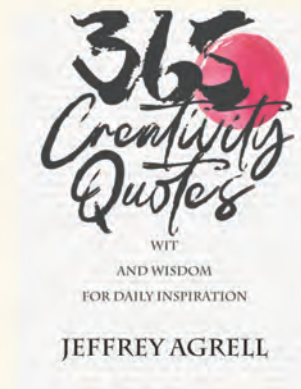
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# Book and Music Reviews

Heidi Lucas, Editor

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## Method Books

*A Singing Approach to Horn Playing: Pitch, Rhythm, and Harmony Training for Horn* by Natalie Douglass Grana.

Oxford University Press; [Global.oup.com/academic](http://Global.oup.com/academic), 9780197603574, 2022,

\$37.99 (paperback), \$150 (hardcover).

The benefits of developing a comfort level with singing and tapping into one's inner ear are embraced by many teachers and performers, professionals, and amateurs alike. The teachings of Zoltán Kodály have been adopted and adapted into numerous resources in a variety of music teaching concepts, though perhaps not so specifically for the horn player. It is a belief widely held that to truly connect with the horn and enjoy the musicality, technicality, and facility of the instrument, it is essential to build audiation and related proficiencies.

Natalie Grana has created an invaluable resource for the horn community (which no doubt could also be adopted by other instrumentalists), which provides a path to developing these vital skills. Grana was awarded a Fulbright and spent a year at the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét, Hungary, working with László Norbert Nemes, Agnes Gerges Gal, and Renáta Darász to study voice and solfege through the Hungarian approach to music education. Grana currently resides in the Chicago area, is the hornist with the Gaudete Brass, and teaches on the faculties of Loyola University, DePaul University, and Lake Forest College.

The text opens by introducing the basic elements of the approach, as well as exercises for practice. Solfege, singing, handstaff, buzzing, inner hearing, transposition, canon, memorization, and stick notation are all defined and presented as the foundational building blocks of the method. These are followed by examples of how the concepts will be utilized in practice, through songs by tone set, canons, solfeggi (Concone studies), and samples from the standard horn literature. Suggestions for how the text may be

used by teachers and for personal practice are also given, which can aid in setting intentions. A companion website for the text is also listed in the preface. This resource houses a repository of videos created by Grana, in which she patiently and effortlessly demonstrates elements and exercises from the text. This website is extremely useful, especially to someone who may be using the text without access to a keyboard and/or one who learns best by having something modelled. The fact that you can start and stop the videos as you go helps to facilitate connections with the process and content. The book is useful, regardless of your background and experience with Kodály and the horn.

It's clear that Grana put a good deal of thought and consideration into how to structure the text, and this allows any reader to readily access their best starting point and to move forward (or backwards) when ready or needed. When used as a teaching tool, and with beginning students, it is easy to see how this approach may set them up for consistency and success in their horn playing, and how it may easily be integrated as a facet of a daily routine. Grana even suggests that it may work well as a warm-up or action that helps to bring intention to the practice session; both seem like great uses of this resource, especially in aiding the player in building confidence and eventually knowing how to use the tools presented here in other contexts.

Brava to Natalie Grana for this insightful and useful resource (and companion website); both are sure to be staples of the horn player's library.

—HL

## Etude Books

**30 Concert Etudes for Low Horn by Tommi Hyytinen.**  
Fennica Gehrman; webshop.fennicagehrman.fi/FI/, 2022,  
€22.90 Hard Copy, €15.50 Digital Download.

Tommi Hyytinen's *30 Concert Etudes for Low Horn* are both technically intricate and musically engaging and join the canon of etudes composed specifically to address challenges of the lower range including those by Neuling, Galley, and Hackleman, to name a few. The composer writes:

I composed these *30 Concert Etudes for Low Horn* to be at the same time instructive and at the same time fun and interesting to play. The etudes consist [of] similar technical challenges that a low horn player confronts in orchestra. The etudes also encompass many of the technical challenges that a horn player encounters in chamber music and in solo repertoire, especially since many of the touring soloists in the 18th and 19th centuries were Cor-Basse players. Some of these etudes are not the most serious in nature in the horn literature, but nevertheless they challenge and develop the playing technique in a wide variety of ways.

Most of these etudes are quite virtuosic; the collection spans a range of nearly four octaves and offers several unexpected intricacies. In addition to rhythmic complexity and athletic technical passages, the player may also be tested by enharmonic designations, quick changes between stopped and open horn, jumps between ranges, articulations, and fingering complexities. Moments of quite beautiful and melodious writing and lyricism are also prevalent, which promote confidence in phrasing and musical decision making, as well as the development of tone and flexibility. Of significant importance is the ability of the player to adhere to a steady pulse to achieve rhythmic precision and ensure correct interpretation of the page.

Equally at home on the stand for practice or performance, these etudes offer a fresh set of opportunities to embrace the broad span of the instrument. —HL

## Horn and Piano

**Romanza for Corno solo, Op. 149 by Hamilton Clarke,**  
**edited, piano reduction and written introduction by John Humphries.**  
Edition db; editiondb.com, edb 0502007, 2024, £60.

It's not often that a previously unknown, but very enjoyable, playable, and well written piece for natural horn written nearly 150 years ago comes to light. This pleasant and musically substantial *Romanza* for horn and orchestra by Hamilton Clarke (1840-1912) was composed in 1876 for his friend, horn player William Handley, principal horn of Her Majesty's Theater. The manuscript of the piece was given to John Humphries many years ago by prominent British horn player Farquharson Cousins. Written for horn in D and orchestra, Humphries has produced a fine piano reduction that expresses the character of the music well and is transparent enough to let the natural horn play comfortably without having to force its way through a thick texture. Hamilton Clarke, English composer, conductor, organist, and pianist is best known today for his association with Sir Arthur Sullivan, with whom he worked as an arranger and in compiling overtures for some of Sullivan's operas, including *The Mikado*.

The *Romanza* is written in a late 19th-century romantic style and features the horn's flowing, lyrical qualities almost exclusively. The writing is idiomatic for the natural horn in D and shows excellent understanding of the hand horn and the subtleties and varieties of colors of the open and stopped notes. Though straightforward tonally and in its demands on hand stopping technique, using for the most part the best and most expressive mid-range

stopped notes, the piece has a middle section that goes further afield tonally to challenge the ears and intonation of the natural horn player. In what might have been its North American premier, we heard the piece performed with piano at the 2024 Indiana University Natural Horn Workshop in Bloomington, Indiana this past June by my former natural horn student Nate Udell, who as our special guest, gave a fine performance of it on natural horn for the participants.

Though the piece does not specify that it is to be played without valves, there is ample evidence that the composer intended it for natural horn in D. Humphries points out that in his 1882 *Manual of Orchestration*, Clarke writes that the addition of valves to the horn meant that, "some of the most noble qualities of this grandest of brass instruments are crippled, and others totally lost. Yet, if a horn-player desires to perform a solo more fit for a flute, let him have his valves; but it is not horn playing."

Whether played on valve horn or natural horn, this is a welcome addition to the literature for solo horn and would be a charming addition to any recital program. Range: C3 to C6 for horn in D. Duration: approximately 7 min.

Also available from the publisher are the original version with orchestra, a version with string orchestra with ad lib double bass, and a version for horn and string quartet.

—Richard Seraphinoff, Indiana University



## Horn Quartets

*Sea Shanties: Suite for Horn Quartet with optional percussion and harmonica* by Don A. Abernathy.

Mountain Horn Music; mountainhornmusic.com, 2003,  
\$20.00 Score and Parts.

Don A. Abernathy is a member of the Salt Lake Symphony Orchestra and a retired music educator, who now devotes significant time to music composition and arranging. His catalog can be accessed through the Mountain Horn Music website, which reveals a broad array of works featuring the horn, and notably, many horn quartets. A horn player himself, Abernathy writes with the knowledge and acumen of both the performer and teacher, which results in arrangements that are both accessible and idiomatic. The settings also give each part a moment to shine, providing a balanced experience for the players. The *Sea Shanties* set includes "Blow the Man Down," "Shenandoah," "Sailor's Hornpipe," and "What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor."

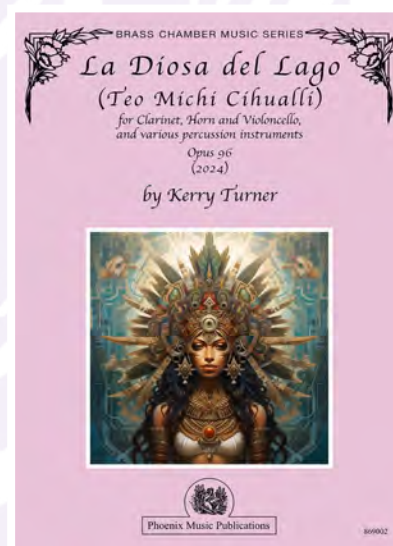
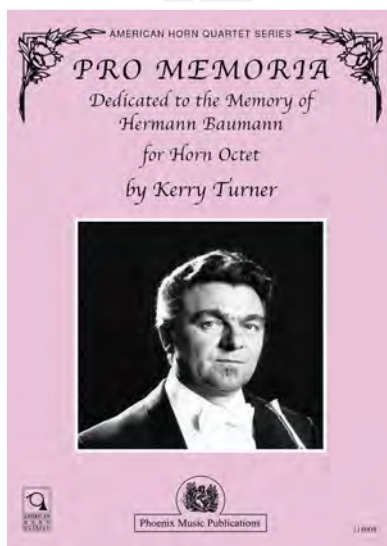
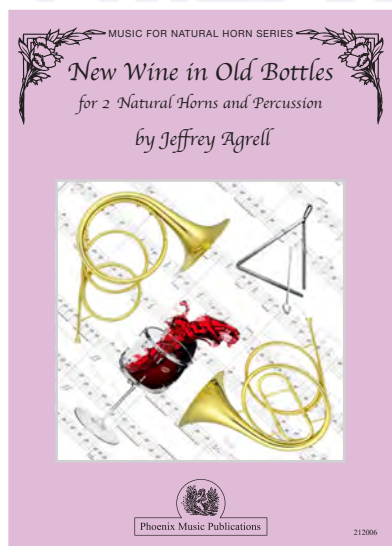
Along with their nautical connection, the order of these movements loosely mimics the construction of a symphony, which may aid in programming the full set for those seeking to fill a more substantial (yet light-hearted) portion of a program. Individual movements may also be pulled from the set as needed. Abernathy shares a

page of program notes at the beginning of the work, which provides context for the songs and their inclusion in the set. He includes details about the history of the songs, as well as their form and function, and interesting tidbits. In his general comments he notes that, "In the days of tall ships, and windpower to move across the oceans, various kinds of sailor's work songs, called shanties, were used on board to match the sailor's effort to the different type of work. The rhythm of each shanty corresponded to the nature of the job at hand."

Though much of the writing is straightforward, challenges occur throughout, perhaps most notably in terms of range (first horn has a written C6 in the first movement) and the technical challenges presented in the fourth movement at performance tempo. Adding in the optional percussion and harmonica parts will certainly add whimsy and spirit.

All in all, this certainly is a fun and versatile set, playable by advanced high school level players and up. —HL

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## Horn and String Orchestra

*Northlands: Album for Horn and Strings* by Matthew Whittall.

Fennica Gehrman; webshop.fennicagehrman.fi/FI/, 2017,

€28.00 Study Score, €14.92 Solo part.

Matthew Whittall is a Canadian-Finnish composer who pursued studies on the horn before switching his focus to composition. He moved to Finland in 2001 to pursue a Doctor of Music degree at the Sibelius Academy, which was conferred in 2013. Whittall has continued to reside in Helsinki and work as a freelance composer, in addition to teaching composition and orchestration at the Sibelius Academy. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including a two-year grant from the Finnish Cultural Foundation in 2024. His works have been commissioned by the Helsinki Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony, and Canadian National Arts Orchestra, among many others.

*Northlands* is scored for horn and string orchestra and was commissioned by Tommi Hyytinen with the assistance of the Sibelius Fund and LUSES. It is also dedicated to Hyytinen. Whittall shares the following in his program notes about the work:

This work came about as commission from my friend Tommi Hyytinen for a concertante-type piece. Initially apprehensive about both the concerto form, with its attendant expectations of virtuosic display, and about writing such a work for my former main instrument, I felt I wasn't ready, that I was still too close. The additional request for a piece with chamber string orchestra was another stumbling block, as I'd thought my first contribution to the horn concerto repertoire as an ex-player myself should be a rather grand statement. After some thought on the matter, though, I realized that Tommi had in fact saved me from myself, offering me the opportunity to write a subtler, more intimate piece. I began to think about his background and mine, and our shared love of the solo and chamber, rather than orchestral repertoire of the horn, and of the sound of the valveless natural horn. It also occurred to me that the clean, cool soundworld of horn and strings was highly evocative of the Nordic landscapes I find so inspiring, and therefore it seemed that what was called for was a contemporary take on the gentle "pastoral" concerto popular in the early 20th century, in which overt technical virtuosity takes a supportive role to the lyrical beauty of the solo instrument's voice.

Whittall has indeed created a work of immense expression and sensation. The title term *album* refers to the fact that musical moments seem organized as a collection, which can present to the listener as pictures, songs, or even written words, functioning, as the composer states, as "interconnected episodes." These are contained within two larger sections notated as Part I and Part II. None of the episodes lasts very long, which creates the impression that the listener is taking a journey with the group, perhaps exploring the nature of the Nordic Northlands. Whittall's writing is highly compelling, and he clearly has a mastery of the idiosyncrasies of both the horn and the string orchestra as the writing is idiomatic, picturesque, and lush.

The horn part is designated for "Horn in F doubling Natural Horn in D" (sections for each are clearly marked in the score). Some moments seem almost programmatic: the work opens with string glissandi, evoking seagulls, and a vast seascape (the composer writes "seagull gliss" in the string parts in the score). The horn enters in the low register, without menace, and moves leisurely, in exploratory fashion through the texture. A transition to the next section is designated by a horn rip and swifter moving passages alternating between stopped and open horn. The strings sustain underneath. The next section features arco tapping on the body of the string instruments (perhaps they are a campfire at a village), the horn is stopped and comments on a viola solo, which is laden with double stops.

Other moments seem more abstract, improvisatory, and aleatoric in nature, creating washes of sound that are perhaps just meant to be felt. "Episodes" are designated in the score by descriptor phrases: "Calm: Timeless," "Bleak: Melancholy," "Forward," "Ecstatic," "Treading: Mourning," etc. Alternating between stasis and more active moments, the work is nicely balanced, eventually building to a rousing and exciting conclusion.

This piece is a thrilling and substantial challenge for the soloist, featuring a range of nearly four octaves, from D#2 to C#6, and calling for a variety of techniques, including swift changes between stopped and open horn, trills, natural horn technique (the composer requests the performer not correct natural intonation except in instances where hand stops are shown), and whistle tone/half-valving. Composed of 18 string parts, this piece is equally at home on both large and smaller programs and is sure to engage and excite players and audiences alike. —HL







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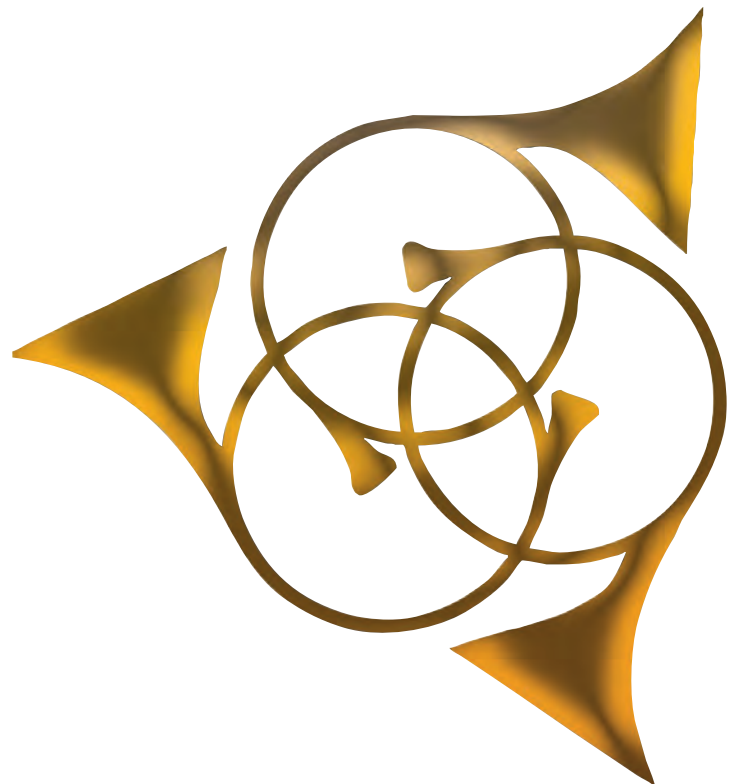


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# IHS54 General Membership Meeting Minutes

by Richard Todd

Wednesday, July 31, 2024, at 8 a.m. MDT

Meeting called to order at 8:01 a.m. by President Feitosa.  
The following awards and Advisory Council positions were announced.

## HONORARY MEMBERS

Martin Hackleman (US)  
Bedřich Tylšar (Czechia)

## PUNTO AWARD

Andre Cazalet (France)  
Susan McCullough (US)

## NEWLY ELECTED ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Benjamin Lieser (US)  
Tommi Hyytinen (Finland)

## ELECTED BY THE MEMBERSHIP

Gabriella Ibarra  
Marilyn Bone Kloss  
Margaret Tung

## SERVICE MEDAL OF HONOR

Julia Burtscher

## NEWLY ELECTED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Peter Luff – President  
Bernardo Silva – Vice President  
Jennifer Sholtis- Treasurer  
Monica Martinez – Secretary

Two new awards were announced:

Michael Hatfield Award (for outstanding student service to both the Society and the local community)

Paul Mansur Award (for an outstanding music education major).

The 2025 symposium (IHS57) will be held June 24-28 at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, Ian Zook, host. Ian spoke briefly to invite everyone to Virginia.

The new budget was explained to the membership with no discussion.

Michelle Stebleton's project to create a second IHS excerpt book to add to the current one available on the website was acknowledged; expected completion is within one to two years.

The student council has been restructured and will also be creating projects and content on their own. Emma Brown was acknowledged for her contributions and service.

Marcus Bonna once again provided various products for sale as gifts to the Society; all proceeds go directly to the International Horn Society.

The current dues rates were explained, with no discussion.

Discussion was opened to the attendees, particularly regarding what works, what could be changed in the society and the symposiums.

Marilyn Bone Kloss (MA) requested reinstating lifetime membership. President Feitosa said that it is not financially feasible at this time.

Steven Cohen (NY) suggested incentivizing membership at Symposium for non-members above current levels; i.e., more differential between fees for members versus those for non-members to encourage becoming members at the Symposium.

Jeff Snedeker (WA) suggested eliminating discount membership for non-members due to low response.

Michael Bell (IL) suggested engaging more amateurs/en-

thusiasts in state representative activities. Jennifer Sholtis, current state representative coordinator, states there is a pathway currently in place and encourages participation.

Richard Todd (FL) acknowledged evolution in programming at the Symposium over the past 20 years, including growth of international clubs and a more global view. He encouraged remote/streaming performances at Symposium. President Feitosa referred to the UN monetary chart to mitigate financial challenges for international membership.

A member from Colorado suggested aligning the Symposium registration page to the membership page for convenience, particularly for younger players, which would propose an option for joining when registering for Symposium.

Susan from Maryland suggested creating a better system for listing presentations at future Symposiums, such as organization of like topics, listings on all presentation rooms of the day or week, topics in each room, plus a better reference in either daily QR info or in the Symposium program booklet.

Wendy Coburn (UT) suggested more opportunities for general membership to play and/or perform at Symposiums.

Clint Baker (CO) suggested that the host connect with area band directors to encourage participation from high school and middle school students, giving them a time slot to meet and play together. Seconded by another member, who also suggested keeping *The Horn Call* forever.

President Feitosa was acknowledged as outgoing President and commended for his service.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 9 am.

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