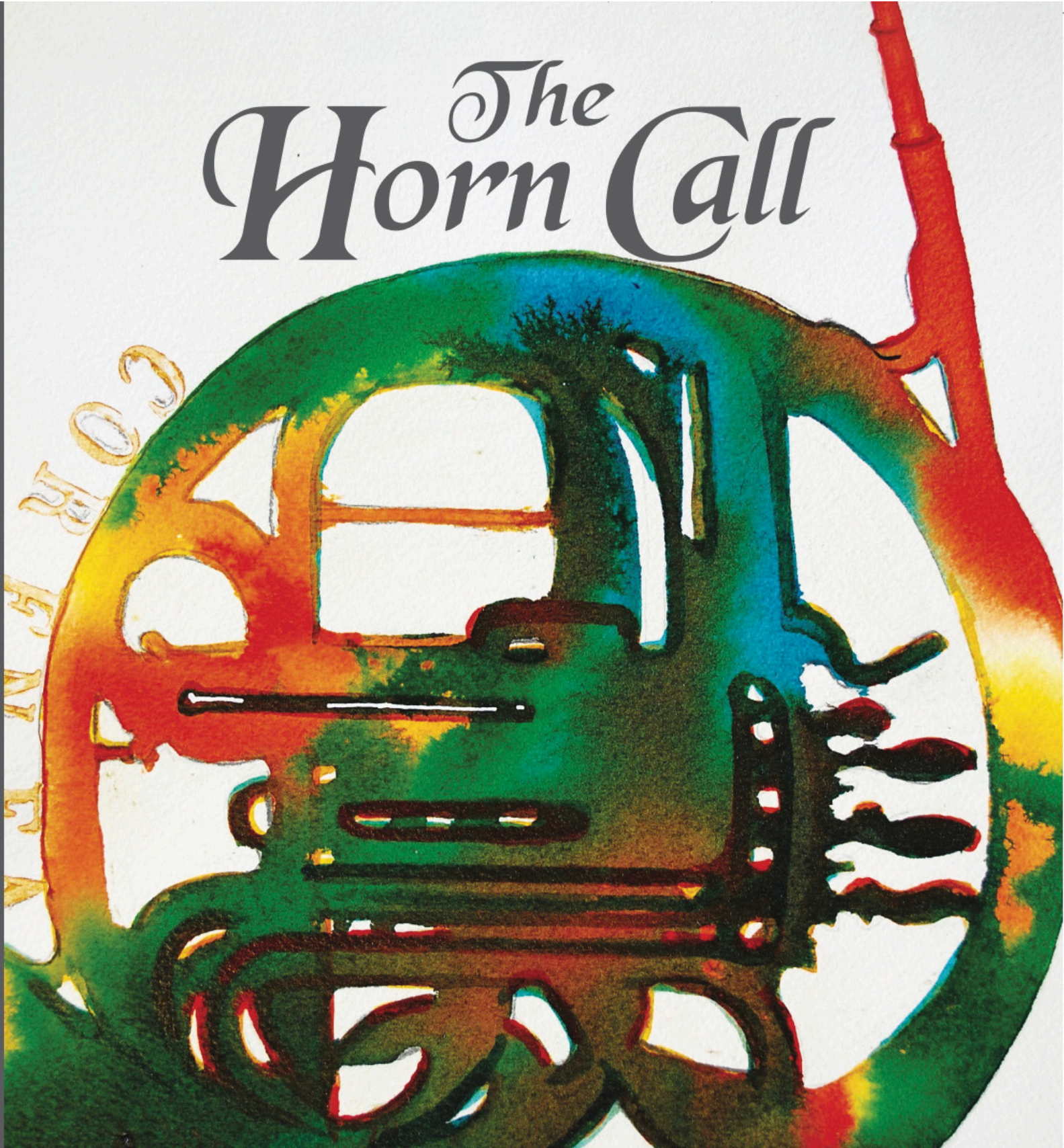


The Horn Call



JANUARY 2025



JOURNAL OF THE

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The Horn Call

Journal of the International Horn Society

Volume LV, No. 2, January 2025

James Boldin, Editor

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[From the Minutes of the First IHS General Meeting, June 15, 1971, Tallahassee, FL, USA]

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Cor en Fa, by Roberta Brown, watercolor.
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The International Horn Society

Officers

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president@hornsociety.org

Vice President

J. Bernardo Silva
vice-president@hornsociety.org

Treasurer

Jennifer Sholtis
treasurer@hornsociety.org

Secretary

Monica Martinez
secretary@hornsociety.org

Executive Director

Allison DeMeulle
PO Box 6691
Huntington Beach, CA 92615 USA,
exec-director@hornsociety.org

Assistant to the Executive Director

Myrddin Rees Davies
assistant@hornsociety.org

Website Manager

Dan Phillips
manager@hornsociety.org

Social Media Coordinator

Karen Warren
social-media@hornsociety.org

IHS Advisory Council

Lisa Bontrager
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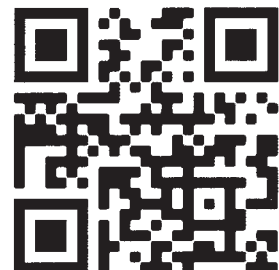
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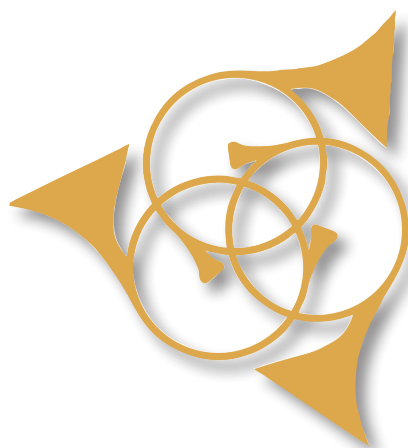


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International Horn Society

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From the Editor

James Boldin

Greetings, and Welcome to 2025!

I hope that your year is off to a great start. While not the first issue of our publication year, which begins in October, this is the first January issue of *The Horn Call* that I am aware of. We have some fantastic articles and other contributions for you to begin your year with, and I hope you enjoy reading them. There have also been some changes and additions to our Column Editors and Editorial Advisory Board.

Ellie Jenkins, the longtime Editor of our COR Values Column, has stepped down after many years. *Thank you, Ellie, for your excellent work; we will miss you!* The good news is that Brad Tatum will be taking over the column, effective with this issue. Welcome aboard, Brad!

Rusty Holmes has put together a wonderful inaugural entry in a new Mental Fitness column, which he will be editing. Be sure to check out Rusty's new column, and we look forward to seeing what ideas he has to share.

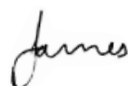
Johanna Yarbrough will be editing our newly created Equipment Reviews, to complement the existing Books/Music, Recording, and Media Reviews. Horn players may not be as obsessed with equipment as some other instru-

mentalists, but I think you're going to love what Johanna has put together. If you have ideas for future equipment to review, contact us at editor@hornsociety.org or see Johanna's contact information at the beginning of her column. Thanks for joining us, Johanna!

We are delighted to welcome three new members to the Editorial Advisory Board: Katy Ambrose, Mike Harcrow, and Joseph D. Johnson. All are eminently qualified, and I'm honored and excited that they agreed to share their expertise and insights with us.

Because the success of making New Year's resolutions is debatable, I'll leave you instead with a question: *What will you do this year to help grow your horn playing community?* The scope of the activity and your level of experience don't matter in this context, as any and every effort is worthwhile. It could be attending a conference (like IHS57), starting a new chamber group or joining a large ensemble, attending a concert, writing an article for *The Horn Call*, or virtually any other idea that comes from a shared love of the horn and making music together.

Best wishes for a safe and prosperous year!



The Horn Call Staff

Editor

James Boldin
editor@hornsociety.org

Assistant Editor and Website Editor

Marilyn Bone Kloss
asst-editor@hornsociety.org

Editorial Board

Katy Ambrose
Mike Harcrow
Joseph Johnson
Nikolette LaBonte
Joel Ockerman
Vidhurinda Samaraweera

Proofreaders

Joseph Johnson
Danielle Kramer

Website Manager (hornsociety.org)

Dan Phillips
manager@hornsociety.org

Contributing Editors

News Editor

Brenda Luchsinger
news@hornsociety.org

Book and Music Reviews

Heidi Lucas
heidilu@udel.edu

Equipment Reviews

Johanna Yarbrough
johannayarbrough@gmail.com

Recording Reviews

Lydia Van Dreel
vandreel@uoregon.edu

Online Media Reviews

Matthew Haislip
matthew.haislip@msstate.edu

Column Editors

COR Values

Brad Tatum
bradtatum@gmail.com

Creative Technique

James Naigus
jamesnaiguscomposer@gmail.com

Mental Fitness

Rusty Holmes
rustyrholmes@gmail.com

Military Matters

Erika Loke
ihsilitarymatters@gmail.com

Student Corner

Lauren Antonioli
laurenantonioli@gmail.com

Teacher Talk

Michelle Stebleton
mstebleton@fsu.edu

Unlucky Chops

Nick Fife
fifen8@gmail.com
Joseph Johnson
jdjohnson83@gmail.com

Advertising Agent

Paul Austin
advertising@hornsociety.org

Horn and More

Mike Harcrow, Editor
hornandmore@hornsociety.org

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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 on page 4).

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.

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. 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,

Welcome to the first New Year's edition of *The Horn Call*. I hope you have all had a wonderful Christmas and are enjoying some free time to practice ... or a little time away from practice? I know that I've indulged in a bit of both.

As I reflect on 2024, I realize that there is so much for us to be grateful for as a horn society. We enjoy a diverse and enthusiastic membership from across the globe, supported by a wonderful executive staff, advisory council and student advisory council who have injected a level of enthusiasm and excitement to the IHS that has inspired us all. We have a dedicated and professional editorial staff who are responsible for the world class publication which is *The Horn Call* and the irreplaceable Nancy Joy (international symposium coordinator) who continues to provide us with enthusiastic hosts and exciting destinations for our yearly Symposiums.

All the resources you enjoy as members of the IHS are a direct result of the hard work put in by these people and more. It is our legacy to honor those who came before us by continuing to provide you countless online and physical resources all available through the website. Check it out; you'd be amazed what's on there.



This year's symposium, as you know by now, will be held at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, just two hours from Washington DC. Thank you to our host Ian Zook, not only for his willingness to organise and run IHS 57, but for the wonderful and evocative theme of "Heritage Horns."

When I think about our Heritage as players, I'm excited about the diversity of styles and instruments that our horn world provides us. Are you a Kruspe or a Geyer player? Single, Double, or Triple? Yellow, Gold, or Nickel? The list of questions and rivalries are endless and interesting to think about when debating with your friends. For me, I'm fascinated by the different playing styles from around the world. As a young Australian horn player, I grew up listening to Barry Tuckwell. Of course, I wanted to sound just like him, an impossible task as it turned out, but one can dream. Now the Australian horn style is leaning more toward the European sound, but the heritage and history of our playing style was quite different.

Let's all think about the heritage of our amazing instrument, embrace the differences that place us in the most diverse yet unique of sound worlds, and remind ourselves why we play the greatest instrument of all ... the sound.

- Peter Luff

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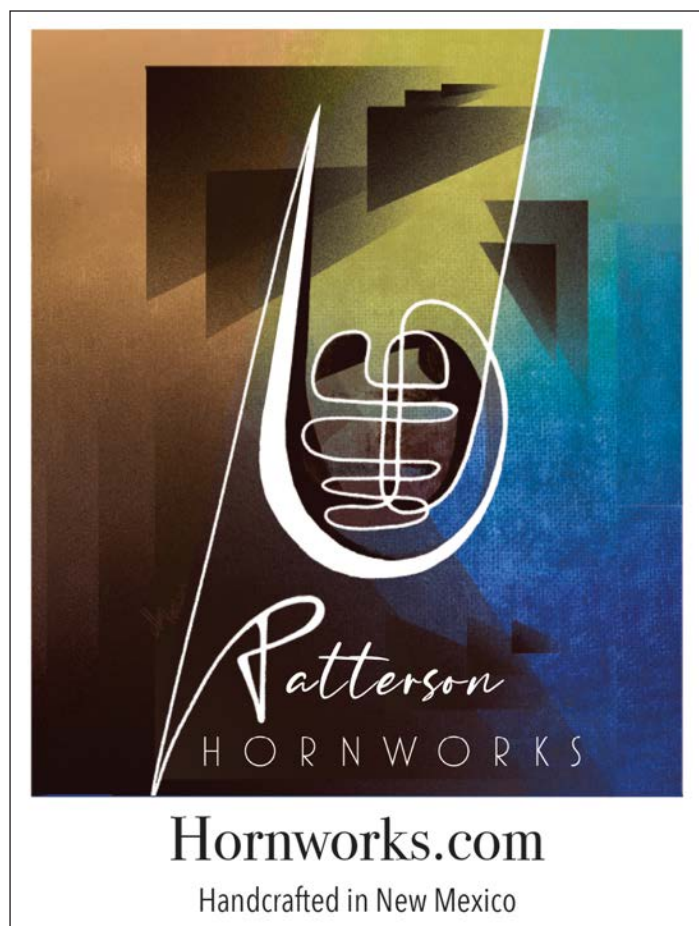
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Correspondence

What to my surprise and delight, in what is probably my last *Horn Call*, did I read Martin Hackleman's courageous *Testament* about his realization that he could no longer play the way he had for many years, and, therefore, decided it was time to quit *entirely*. [See the October 2024 issue, page 31.]

I had a long and happy career as a player in symphony, opera, ballet, Broadway, and studio, finishing as principal horn in the National Symphony Orchestra of the South African Broadcasting Corporation for four years. And then something happened, as Martin describes it: "Mother Nature's slap of enlightenment called Dystonia," and I couldn't be secure in my playing. So, I decided – using the age-old adage: First you notice it, then your colleagues notice it, and then everyone notices it – to retire from playing.

Playing principal horn means playing everything accurately all the time. This pretty much goes for the remainder of the section too. There are too many great players out there who want a shot at that. Read Richard King's article in the Cleveland newspaper that he wrote upon his decision to step down from Principal horn for more evidence of that. [Joshua Gunter, "Cleveland Orchestra's Richard King Stepping Down as Principal Horn," *The Plain Dealer*, November 12, 2014.]

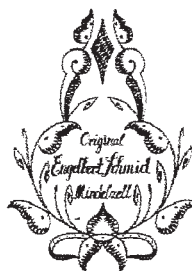
It's been harder for me to close the horn case permanently. I am sometimes asked to play in community orchestras or ensembles, where, surprisingly to me, intonation or missing a few notes doesn't seem to matter much. It still matters to me. Martin's letter has allowed me to relieve my anxiety and close the case for good. – Douglas Blackstone

My copy of the latest *Horn Call* arrived yesterday. Congratulations on another fine issue. Aside from all the other interesting articles, I was delighted to see Richard Seraphinoff's kind and very perceptive review of my piano reduction of Hamilton Clarke's Romanza on p. 96.

May I draw your readers' attention to a tiny, but important slip, please? The cost of the horn and piano version is only £15, not £60 as stated in the review. £60 is the price for score and parts of the original orchestral version of the Romanza. Best wishes,
– John Humphries



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IHS News and Reports

Brenda Luchsinger, Editor

From the Office

Happy New Year, and welcome to the first January edition of *The Horn Call*!

If you haven't heard the news from social media, in the last issue of *The Horn Call*, or at our last symposium, IHS 57 will be held at James Madison University from June 24-28, 2025. To learn more about IHS 57, keep an eye on the IHS 57 official website heritage-horns.com. Also, follow along with IHS social media pages on the International Horn Society page on Facebook and @international_horn_society on Instagram for updates,

news, and announcements. We can't wait to see you in Harrisonburg, Virginia this summer!

Your vote matters! Please vote for our Advisory Council (deadline for submitting your vote is April 15). Starting this year, due to lack of participation by mail and associated cost, we will be taking votes only online. Log in to your account at hornsociety.org. We also have an addition this year to approve two changes to our by-laws, so please vote. If you have any questions or concerns, email me at exec-director@hornsociety.org.

—Allison DeMeulle, Executive Director

Bylaws Updates

The International Horn Society's Bylaws can be amended by ballot to the membership for action. Please vote for or against the proposed Bylaws Amendments by logging on to the IHS website, hornsociety.org. Votes submitted by any other means, including email, will not be accepted.

Votes must be submitted by April 15, 2025. The following proposed changes in the IHS Bylaws were approved for general member vote at the Advisory Council meeting in September 2024. The rationale for each proposed change is provided and any changed wording is boldfaced.

Original Text, under Article VI, Advisory Council

Section 2. Nine members of the Advisory Council shall be elected by the members of the Society.

Nominations for the elected members shall be made through the Executive Director, who shall solicit nominations from all the members of the Society. Individuals may

not nominate themselves for a position on the Advisory Council ballot. Nominations must be received by December 1, ballots distributed by March 1, and all ballots returned by April 15 of each year. The three nominees receiving the largest number of votes shall be declared elected.

Revised Text

Section 2. Nine members of the Advisory Council shall be elected by the members of the Society.

Nominations for the elected members shall be made through the Executive Director, who shall solicit nominations from all the members of the Society. Individuals may

not nominate themselves for a position on the Advisory Council ballot. Nominations must be received by **November 1, ballots distributed by January 1, and all ballots returned by February 15 of each year**. The three nominees receiving the largest number of votes shall be declared elected.

Rationale

The timeline is too long by modern standards. We don't receive enough ballots by mail to be considered an effective and justifiable cost, so ballots will be distributed electronically starting in 2025. Thus, we propose to shorten the timeframe to vote since the online process is a much

faster approach. With this change, the deadline for nominations will correspond with the new submission timeline for the *Horn Call* issues since the Winter issue has been moved from February to January.

Original text, under Article IX, Publications

Section 4. Directory information of Society members shall be made available to members. Complete lists of all members with their contact information shall be archived annually.

Revised Text

Section 4. Complete lists of all members with their contact information shall be archived annually.

Rationale

The bylaws were first created during a different time period, and expectations, particularly regarding privacy and security, have changed substantially. This change will remove the directory from being publicly available to all members on the website moving forward. Privacy of all is the International Horn Society's priority. This change

would protect members' privacy, for all but also importantly for minors, regarding their home addresses and other contact info. Currently there's an option for members to opt out of being listed on the directory, but in this day and age, this is an antiquated practice.

Advisory Council Members Election

As you review the nominees listed below, consider the duties and responsibilities of the position. The Advisory Council (AC) is responsible for carrying out the aims and purposes of the Society, determines the policies and budget allocations for IHS programs, and elects additional AC members. AC members work and attend annual meetings at the international symposium.

The following individuals (listed alphabetically) have been nominated to serve a term on the IHS Advisory

Council beginning after the 2025 international symposium. Vote for up to three nominees by electronic ballot by logging on to the IHS website, hornsociety.org. Votes submitted by any other means, including email, will not be accepted. Ballots must be received by February 15, 2025.

Nominations must have been received by November 1, 2024 to be included in *The Horn Call*. Any nominations received between November 1 and December 1, 2024 will be posted on the ballot page at hornsociety.org.

Katy Ambrose is Assistant Professor of Horn at the University of Iowa. Previously, she held teaching positions at the University of Virginia and Drexel University, and administrative positions at the Curtis Institute and Yale University Recording Studio. An active performer, Ambrose is currently the horn player in Mirari Brass, Fourth Horn of the Delaware Symphony Orchestra, and Solo Horn of the New Orchestra of Washington and Victory Hall Opera. Commercial highlights have been playing for Adele's 2016 World Tour and recording for NFL Studios from 2010-2015. Ambrose is dedicated to the performance of chamber music and has created and cultivated several chamber ensembles, including Seraph Brass, Izula Horns, and the natural horn quartet Conica. She recently served as interim Operations Coordinator for the Boulanger Institute, an organization working to promote music written by and for women, helping to launch their inaugural festival in March 2019.

Zach Cooper is an advocate for the horn and a believer in the mission of the International Horn Society. From 2016-2023, Cooper previously served as Secretary and then President of the Northwest Horn Society and was a successful host of the 2019 Northwest Horn Symposium. Cooper has given masterclasses and performances across North America, in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. He is Assistant Professor of Horn and Coordinator of Brass at Butler University and maintains an active performing calendar as principal horn of Carmel Symphony and Richmond (IN) Symphony and also as a freelance and studio hornist in Indianapolis. Commissioning new works is a passion and has been the focus of his scholarly research. Supported works have included composers Paul Basler, Alexis Carrier, Aliyah Danielle, Austin Hammonds, Tyler Kline, Catherine Likhuta, Amy Riebs Mills, Shawn Okpebholo, Anthony Plog, and Jeff Scott. Learn more at zcooperhorn.com.

Mike Harcrow is Professor of Music at Messiah University in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, where he teaches horn and music theory and coaches brass ensembles. For nearly 14 years, he was an active performer and teacher in South Korea where he held faculty positions at Mokwon University in Taejeon and at the Korea National University of Arts in Seoul; he was concurrently principal horn in the Korean National Symphony Orchestra at the Seoul Arts Center. In the USA, he has been a member of the Amarillo Symphony Orchestra, the San Angelo Symphony Orchestra, the South Florida Symphony Orchestra, the Miami City Ballet Orchestra, and the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra. He is presently second horn in the Gettysburg Chamber Orchestra, a regular with the York Symphony Orchestra, and, for several summers, second horn for the Classical Music Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria. Dr. Harcrow is editor of *Horn and More*, the International Horn Society Newsletter.

Lauren Hunt is the Linda VanSickle Smith Horn Chair and Director of Brass Studies at Interlochen Center for the Arts. Her professional career began when she won first prize in the International Horn Competition of America in 2013. She performs regularly in the horn section of orchestras including Ballet West, Utah Symphony, Utah Festival Opera, and Artosphere Festival Orchestra. Hunt can be heard on an album of Beethoven's chamber works for winds released in 2019 on the Naxos label. Other recent chamber music appearances include at the Marlboro Music Festival, Northern Neck Chamber Series, Norfolk Festival, Appalachian Chamber Music Festival, the Phoenix Chamber Music Festival, and a chamber recital at Carnegie Hall in 2017. She is a founding member of the Lanta Horn Duo. laurenhunthorn.com.

Student Advisory Council

Calling all students! Applications for membership on the Student Advisory Council are now being accepted. The Student Advisory Council (SAC) is a way for students to have a greater voice in the IHS. This body of students meets regularly to give feedback, help brainstorm diverse initiatives, and make the Society more directly responsive to the needs of developing horn players. Each term on the Student Advisory Council lasts for two years. During that time, members will fulfill both an advisory role and a project-focused role.

The advisory role includes attending Advisory Council (AC) meetings to represent student perspective and

attending separate SAC meetings for additional discussion. Members are also expected to contribute to an ongoing project, which is being run by the SAC with support and mentorship from the AC and other IHS resources. Work on this project takes place both during and outside of SAC meetings.

The application deadline for the 2025-2027 term is Monday, February 17, 2025. Information on the Student Advisory Council is at hornsociety.org/ihs-people/s-a-c. The application form for new members will be available on the IHS website Home page hornsociety.org/ when the process opens on January 1, 2025.

News Deadline

The next deadline for news submissions is February 1, 2025. 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 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 doc-

ument. Submissions should be concise, while considering the 5Ws: who, what, when, where, why. 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.

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 December 1, 2025. See hornsociety.org/about-the-ihs/composition-projects/commissions or contact Randall E. Faust at RE-Faust@wiu.edu.

IHS Composition Contest

The IHS Composition Contest takes place every other year, alternating with the Meir Rimón Commissioning Assistance Fund applications. The contest has two divisions: Featured (playable by conservatory students and amateurs)

and Virtuoso (no limits on difficulty). The next deadline for applications is December 1, 2026. See hornsociety.org/about-the-ihs/composition-projects/composition-contest 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, Allison DeMeulle, at PO Box 6691, Huntington Beach, CA 92615; in either case, specify the Barbara Chinworth Project.

IHS Website

As of November 2024, the International Horn Society Advisory Council has made the decision to no longer list classified ads on hornsociety.org. We remain grateful to all those who have bought and sold horns and related merchandise through our website since the IHS's acquisi-

tion of hornplayer.net. However, with an increasing number of attempted instances of online horn-related fraud, this decision was made to protect sellers, reduce liability to the IHS, and concentrate resources on our programs and membership benefits. —**Dan Phillips**, Webmaster

Job Information Site

HornHornists with information about professional jobs should send the information to James Boldin at 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.

Area Representatives

Kerry Turner is the new Country Representative for Belgium and Luxembourg. We currently have several positions open for country representatives. If you are from one of the countries that does not have a representative, and you are inter-ested in becoming one, visit the website and apply! hornsociety.org/ihs-people/area-reps-other

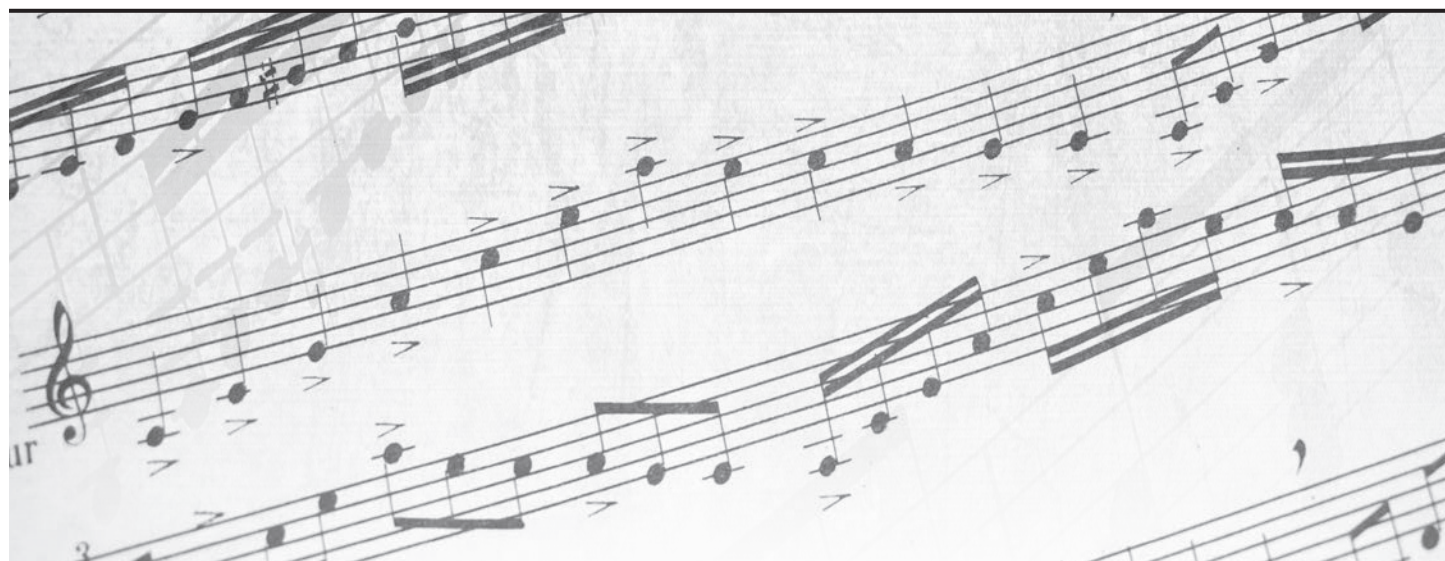
—**Bernardo Silva**, Coordinator

Congratulations to our new US Area Representatives this year: **Zachary Cooper** (Indiana), **Jenna McBride Harris** (Minnesota), **Bill Scharnberg** (Montana and Wyoming), **Albert Houde** (West Virginia), **Melanie Kjellsen** (Kentucky), and **Sonja Reynolds** (Utah). Welcome and we wish you much success!

Do you want to get more involved in the International Horn Society? One way is to become a US Area Representative. If you live in **Wisconsin**, **Texas-North** (north of San Antonio), **Texas-South**, **Rhode Island**, **Vermont**, **Alaska**, **Oregon**, **Iowa**, or **Hawaii**, apply for the US Area Representative position for your state. Organizational and networking skills are required. Apply for open positions in the US at hornsociety.org/ihs-people/area-reps-us

—**Jennifer Sholtis**, US Coordinator

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Member News

Bruno Schneider reports: In Europe, the deadline for retirement from institutional jobs like orchestras, universities, and music schools, is fixed and not negotiable. As musicians, we have several options: one is to sell or hang your instruments on the wall. Another one is to stay active and practice, which is what I am doing. I created in 2022 an orchestra for retired professional musicians. We had our first concert in April 2024. We play without any fees or salary for NGOs that I ask to organize the hall and handle publicity and ticketing. The profit is then for the NGOs. Our most recent concert was on December 15 in Bern. Dvořák's Symphony No. 7 and Schubert's *Rosamunde* were on the program. The conductors were chosen among students finishing their graduate degrees in conducting in Swiss universities. The youth orchestras are conducted mostly by senior conductors, while we do the opposite. Keep playing, it is good for your mental and physical health!



Bruno Schneider

Thomas and Tricia Jöstlein with pianist **Yeon-Kyung Kim** are featured on a new album, *Singing Smooth Melodies on the Horn*. This album includes recordings of the 12 Solos arranged by Marvin Howe in the volume, *The Solo Hornist*, including works by Bach, Brahms, Mozart, Fauré, Schubert, Dvořák, Mahler, Saint-Saëns, and Vivaldi. Framing this collection of beautiful lyric pieces are compositions by Randall Faust, including the Romanza for Horn and Piano, *Epitaph for Ellen Campbell* for Horn and Piano, and *Sights and Sounds of the Symposium* for Two Horns and Piano – a work commissioned by Robert Palmer and Venessa Montelongo for the 52nd International Horn Symposium. More information about the album and compositions are available at faustmusic.com.



L-R: Yeon-Kyung Kim, Tricia Jöstlein, Thomas Jöstlein



Tommi Hyytinen

Tommi Hyytinen, Finnish horn and natural horn artist, “re-premiered” Bernhard Crusell’s (1775-1838) newly reconstructed horn concerto in June 2024 at the Mozartfest Würzburg with the Finnish Baroque Orchestra and conductor Janne Nisonen. They also performed the concerto in July at the Crussell Music Festival in Uusikaupunki and at the Helsinki Music Centre. Bernhard Crusell is thought to be the first major Finnish composer.

His horn concerto was first performed in 1810 in Stockholm by Johann Michael Hirschfeld. The concerto was performed by at least three different soloists in Sweden and Germany in the early 1800s. After that, it was thought to be lost. The reconstruction of the concerto was completed by musicologist and composer Johanna Eränkö based on recent archival findings.

Howard Wall, former New York Philharmonic fourth horn, has released a CD, *Horn Trios: from Mozart to Piazzola and beyond* (Volume 1), with his wife, violinist Elmira Darvarova (former MET concertmaster), and concert pianist Thomas Weaver. See howardwall.com.

Jeffrey Lang and the horn section of the Philadelphia Orchestra this past summer performed the Schumann *Konzertstück* and the Strauss *Alpine Symphony* on the same program in Saratoga Springs, New York. Our current season opened with Bruckner’s Seventh Symphony and Mahler’s Third Symphony in Philadelphia and at Carnegie Hall, with Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin. We are currently on a tour of China with our Principal Guest Conductor Marin Alsop. We welcome a new member, third horn **Chelsea McFarland**.



Philadelphia Orchestra horn section

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James Boldin and the University of Louisiana Monroe Horn Studio hosted several guest artists in September and October 2024. **Ellie Jenkins** gave a masterclass and performed a recital featuring the music of Madeline A. Lee, Lydia Lowery, Lauren Bernofsky, J.F. Gallay, Hannah E. Adhikari, Rebecca Clarke, and Jerry Casey. Composer-performer **Brian KM** gave a recital of his own music for horn and live electronics and presented two lectures: AI Code of Ethics for Artists and Deep-Sea Fishing for Creatives. The trio 965 Brass (**Monica Martinez**, horn; Alex Sanso, trumpet; Bill Haugeberg, trombone) gave a recital of music for brass trio by Anton Reicha, Gina Gillie, Ivette-Herryman Rodriguez, and Shanyse Strickland.

SeokJoon Kwon hosted **Katie Woolley**, principal horn of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, for a free masterclass on December 11 with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra in Korea.

Steve Lewis, horn, Eman Chalshotori, cello, and John Livingston, piano, presented the premiere performance of Andrew Lewinter's Trio for Horn, Cello, and Piano in Prairie Village, Kansas on the Midwest Chamber Ensemble Series in October 2024. Also featured was Lewis's arrangement of Beethoven's Piano Trio, Op. 11 "Gassenhauer," and Philip Lasser's *Into Evening* (horn and piano). The trio also performed on Kansas Public Radio in Lawrence, Kansas.

Dave Rothfeld, semi-pro horn player, band director, horn teacher, former GM of Bose Corp, EVP of Viacom, and former sales manager of LeBlanc/Holton has officially retired. He has a collection of rare new horn music consisting of 40 pieces, including studies, solos, and etudes, many from Maxime Alphonse Publishers. He would like to sell all to an IHS member for a significantly reduced price. Contact Dave at dave@csmt4tqs.com.

Coming Events

South Texas Horn Workshop. The upcoming 15th Annual South Texas Horn Workshop is open to horn players of all ages, particularly middle school, high school, and collegiate players. The workshop will be held on Saturday, March 8 from 10:00am – 8:30pm at the Texas A&M University-Kingsville – School of Music. The featured artist is **Scott Leger**. Events include warm-up sessions, clinics, masterclasses, quartet and solo competitions, and a featured artist concert and mass horn ensemble. Registration is online at tamukhornstudio.com/south-texas-horn-workshop.html. The fee is \$30 (events only) or \$40 (events plus pizza dinner).

Contact **Jennifer Sholtis** at jennifer.sholtis@tamuk.edu.

University of Akron Horn Day. The University of Akron hosts Genghis Barbie at its annual Horn Day on Sunday, March 9, 2025, from 1-5 p.m. Horn players of all ages and abilities can register for free at uakron.edu/music/horn#community to play side-by-side with the Barbies or participate in the masterclass. Genghis Barbie performs in concert the previous day. Contact **Kiirsi Maunula Johnson** at kmaunulajohnson@uakron.edu.



Genghis Barbie

Liberty Horn Club, founded by **Lyndsie Wilson**, is a new large horn ensemble based in Philadelphia, open to horn players of all ages and skill levels. LHC provides an opportunity for horn players, including amateurs, students, and professionals, to make music together and share our love for the horn. We rehearse pieces for large horn choirs, play orchestral and wind ensemble works featuring the horn, and welcome guest artists to present masterclasses. Our goal is to share per-



Lyndsie Wilson

formances as part of our Cornocopia concert series. Bring your instrument and join us in celebrating the horn! Liberty Horn Club meets every other Wednesday from 6:00-8:00pm at St. Patrick's Hall, on the corner of 20th and Locust streets in Center City Philadelphia. The Liberty Horn Club is hosted by Lyndsie Wilson, in collaboration with the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra Music Institute. Contact Lyndsie Wilson at lynzcor@mac.com.

Obituaries

Robert Rouch (1949-2024)

Robert (Bobby) Rouch was successful as a classical and jazz horn player and as a teacher, known particularly as a member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

Rouch was born into a musical family in Allentown, Pennsylvania. By the age of 14, he was an accomplished horn player and went on to study at Oberlin and Juilliard. His career took off when he won the principal horn chairs in the American Symphony Orchestra and the Kansas City Symphony. "After Barry Tuckwell retired from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, I was appointed to succeed him as the artist-member on horn in 1988. Personal transformation has led me to explore my need to improvise over, around, and through driving, grooving,

swinging rhythms and expanded, searching harmonic platforms," he said in an interview.

He toured internationally as a soloist with dozens of orchestras and appeared as a guest artist with the Guarneri, Juilliard, Tokyo, Orion, and Emerson Quartets. He was also a frequent collaborator with Peter Serkin and TASHI. Rouch was also an accomplished jazz musician who played with the Charles Mingus Orchestra, the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, and with Quincy Jones, Gerry Mulligan, and Wynton Marsalis. He served on the faculty of SUNY Purchase, San Diego State University, California Institute of the Arts, the Hartt School of Music, and the Manhattan School of Music.

Event Reports

John Covert Memorial Concert at Ithaca College

by Bernice G. Schwartz

Ithaca College alumni, friends, and family gathered on September 1, 2024 to pay tribute to their beloved horn teacher, John "Jack" Covert. Alumni came from Germany and throughout the US to honor their mentor with music, stories, tributes, and fellowship. It was uplifting to watch the interaction of the hornists sharing stories about their dedicated teacher and see the influence he had on them. Highlighting the weekend was a concert including a solo performance by **Gail Williams**, a horn sextet comprising

retired military personnel, a horn octet, and a spectacular performance by a 29-member alumni horn ensemble. Oral tributes were presented throughout the concert, emphasizing the impact Jack had on his students and Ithaca College. A reception was held immediately following the concert, where everyone had a chance to reminisce and enjoy a photo montage. Many thanks to our host, **Alex Shuhan**, and all who helped make the weekend special.

Midwest Alphorn Retreat 2024

A Celebration of Alphorn, Culture, and Community

by Peggy DeMers

The Midwest Alphorn Retreat this year welcomed 26 participants at the picturesque Franciscan Life Center in Lowell, Michigan. The retreat included four days of performing, learning the traditions of alphorn playing, and Swiss and German culture.

The retreat was founded in 2009 by **John and Christine Griffith** from Kalamazoo, Michigan. Dr. **Peggy DeMers**, artistic director, along with **William Rose**, provided an opportunity for alphornists from the United States

and Canada to participate in a total immersion of this beautiful instrument.

Activities included group and individual instruction, performing culturally important music from Switzerland, and discussions on the legacy of the Swiss – both past and present. Participants learned about the art of yodeling and Swiss folk songs, plus gained practical knowledge on the maintenance and care of the alphorn and alphorn mouthpieces.



www.hornsociety.org



Living with My Donkeys: A New Work for Horn and Electronic Sounds

by Jewel Dirks

During one of Sarah Willis's *Horn Hangouts*, Sarah and Gail Williams lamented the lack of avant-garde music for young horn students. Those early years are key for developing an understanding and love of contemporary music.

My response has been to compose *Living with My Donkeys for Horn and Donkey Bray*, a suite of nine short pieces for solo horn with electronic sounds, reflecting the enchantment of sharing a home with two mini-burros. Although this was written with intermediate players in mind, advanced performers will also find challenges.



Blossom and Ouzal, who provided the inspiration for a new composition.

Introducing humor and fun with new sounds

The pieces immediately immerse the player in new sounds and contemporary notation, all in the context of humor and fun. Unusual performance techniques are introduced along with traditional practices. Challenges that I experienced as a young student are addressed.

In the opening, the horn part addresses what was my biggest performance hurdle as a beginner: performance anxiety. Instead of having to immediately produce strong,

confident, controlled beautiful horn tones, the performer is encouraged to relax and enjoy the experience by creating the most boisterous, donkey-imitating sounds possible. Glissandi, half-valve pinches, bell up/bell down honks and blats! Imitating a *Donkeysauris*, the performer doesn't have to fret about immediately sounding perfect. On the contrary, there might even be a certain glee in rousing an audience from its Mozartian slumber.

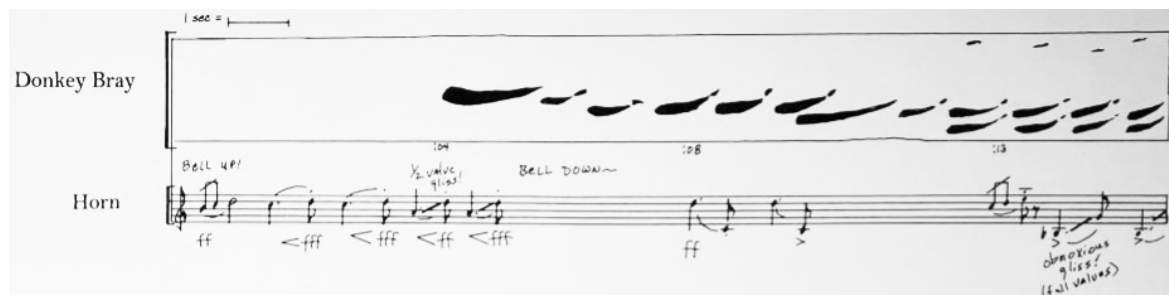


Figure 1. Donkey sounds in the first movement.

Each movement has a descriptive and whimsical title.

1. Donkeysauris and the Farrier Have a Quiet Conversation
2. Donkeys Have Such Soft Noses
3. Donkeys Love Their Peanuts
4. They Graze as the Magpie Rides Along
5. Mother and Son, They Share the Same Dream
6. The Cat Naps on the Donkey's Back
7. They Stand Guard Over Their Friend Nook as He Waits to Die
8. Donkeys Are Slowly Eating Their Barn
9. Donkeys Protect Their Goat Friends

Skills brought to bear

The remaining pieces pull the performer back into those characteristically warm, rich horn sounds we all spend a lifetime perfecting. The music flows into poignant, melodic, sometimes rhythmically complex but accessible lines. Familiarity with classic horn rudiments is now expected.

Articulation. Clean articulation is required in several gestures of isolated short notes, for perfecting that soft tongue and floating release.

Double tonguing. Double tonguing is prominent in

one movement, but until that is mastered, a fast single tongue can suffice.

Slurring. The characteristic sound of the horn smoothly moving from one note to another while always keeping the sound full permeates many of the melodies. A variety of short and long leaps appear throughout.

Projecting. Several movements encourage the performer to develop breath control to fill long, flowing phrases. Loud punches and whips of sound frequently add to extended soft lines.

Range. Some movements challenge the performer to go to extreme registers, but with “low” and “high” versions, although even the high version has alternative notes when the melody is really high.

Endurance. The suite can be performed as a whole, requiring about 16 minutes of constant playing; however, a selection of movements can also be performed in any order.

Challenges when performing with electronic music

Three unique challenges are involved in performing with electronic music. The first is contemporary notation. The electronic part happens in short gestures or waves and washes of sound, so the performer must be vigilant at following both standard and graphic notation. Instead

of measures and bar lines, minute:second markings are provided. In Movement 3, Donkeys Love Their Peanuts, for example, the horn part is notated with connected “lollipop” notes for a functional sustain symbol to coordinate with a rapidly changing electronic rhythm.



Figure 2. Note lengths indicated by “lollipop” notes.

The second challenge is coordinating with the electronic part. One tricky movement, No. 8, Donkeys Are Slowly Eating Their Barn, has the electronic part driving a wobbly rhythmic pattern that alternates between 12/8 and 13/8. Even when it’s stable and predictable, the performer is told to not coordinate with the electronic part until a specific moment when suddenly everything must come together. It wobbles apart again, representing the title of the movement.

In other instances – such as Movement 2, Donkeys Have Such Soft Noses – the horn must connect smoothly to the electronic part in call and response.

In contrast, there are moments where the horn player has to frolic in a give-and-take with the electronic sounds, emulating the playful bantering of two donkeys. Other pieces invite theatrical renditions. A sudden surprise by a bird landing on a donkey’s back or a ferocious argument with the farrier (a specialist in equine

hoof care) might delight more gregarious performers.

The third challenge, balance, is critical. Playback equipment must be configured so that the horn and electronic part are balanced, while allowing the performer to hear the electronic part clearly on stage. The balance can drastically change depending on the environment; what was easily audible in a practice room may totally disappear in a bigger hall.

The performer needs to anticipate this, rehearsing the entire piece in the concert venue to anticipate any problems. This might include setting up additional monitors facing the horn or having the performer wear earbuds. The performer then needs to remember to bring an extra-long audio cord with the correct adapters for the earbuds.

In my experience, this final step of preparing everything in a new environment for the performer to hear the sounds can be particularly problematic.



Figure 3. Dashed-line arrows indicate rhythmic alignment and independence.



Figure 4. Arrows indicate call and response.

Designing the electronic Donkey Bray sounds

The electronic part was created from a recorded donkey bray. I create music only from field recordings from my surroundings, without synthesized or commercial sounds. In this case, the bray itself provided a rich source of sound. Donkeys have a peculiar, pinched squeak caused from a strong inhale which then transforms into a boisterous, full-throated honking exhale that can be heard miles away.

All the sounds in the electronic part were created by selecting tiny portions of that original bray, processing them with effects, and using those newly created sounds to

compose and orchestrate a full score of music. Everything, with the exception of a brief magpie call, was created from that original donkey bray. The original bray is recognizable only in the opening gesture of the work.

Initially I transferred the recorded sound into iZotopeRX, HALion, and Iris2. With those tools, I isolated particular frequencies and unusual tiny snippets and grains of sound. This also allowed portions to be looped into sustained tones.

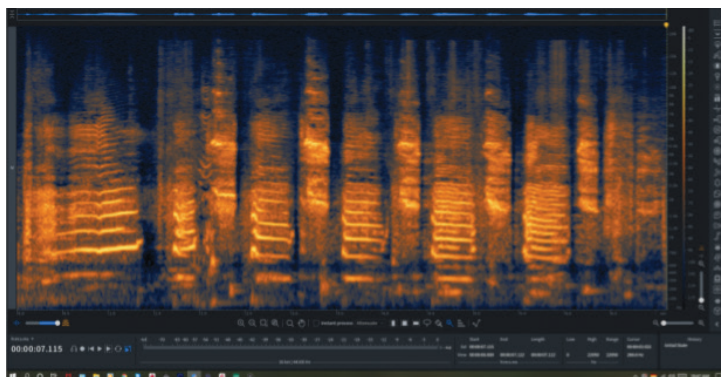


Figure 5. The original donkey call imported to iZotope RX. The harmonics are stacked vertically, and time appears horizontally.



Figure 6. HALion magnifies a tiny portion of the bray, creating a single sustained tone.



Figure 7. Another tiny portion of the sound is shown, now in Iris2. The fundamentals and overtones are white horizontal lines and the large gray and beige areas indicate volume.

Simultaneously I processed those snippets through sound effect programs such as CableGuys, Shimmerverb, and Infected Mushroom, which gave a rich palette of reverbs and filters. One reverb, for example, was set to take effect only after a delay of a full two seconds, then extending for more than eight seconds before slowly fading out. This caused an almost imperceptible transformation of a somewhat dry sound into an expanding cloud that quietly carried through into the next phrase. Other reverbs echoed only certain frequencies of the sound in echoes of ascending or descending perfect 4ths and 5ths, rendering a ghostly but pleasing aura. This created the shimmering in Movement 7, *They Stand Guard over Their Friend Nook as He Waits to Die*.

I'm always delighted with the possibilities of non-human sounds, accessible only through electronic music: complex rhythms, precise speeds, unusual modulating sounds swirling between the ears, all while still appealing to the human sensibility of surprise and joy.



*Jewel Dirks is an electronic music composer based in Wyoming. She studied with Don Haddad while in high school and earned a BM at Colorado State University, MM and DMA in composition at Eastman, and an MA in psychology at the University of Northern Colorado. The score and sound card are available at jewel@jeweldirks.com or from the website jeweldirks.com. The donkeys are featured in action on the *steinwaygoat* YouTube and Instagram accounts. Thanks to William Scharnberg for his enthusiastic effort to present this to the world; he performed the premiere at the 2024 IHS Symposium in Fort Collins.*

Conclusion

My primary goal throughout was to reflect that striking conversation between Sarah and Gail, to instill a sense of fun in new horn players with this universe which so enchants me. To quicken the heart and enliven the brain, our aim as teachers is to help facilitate love in all types of music.

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What I Learned

by Corbin Wagner

The path to my becoming a fulltime horn professor teaching masterclasses was not straight. Although I taught at regional colleges during my years with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, I gave few masterclasses until I retired and began teaching fulltime at Michigan

State University. Having other university professors teach masterclasses at my university studio and teaching masterclasses elsewhere myself gave me new insights into how to play well and what to pass on to my students. Here are my insights into preparation, practicing, and performance.

Background

My first piano lesson was in kindergarten at age five. In those days, there were more neighborhood teachers than you find today and music lessons were part of the educational landscape for most. However, when I remember my first piano lessons, it was mainly drudgery, forced on me, but I needed to persevere (and I am still grateful for it!). It was weekly obedience training in the guise of scales, Czerny, and "Hot Crossed Buns."

But horn lessons were different. I wanted those. I liked band and I liked getting better on my instrument. The horn was giving me a new identity, my own little superpower. I was 12 years old and Mr. Randall made me realize that the horn took discipline and regular practice, and that practice had to accomplish something. It was hard work, and although I didn't really like these lessons, they were necessary and I got better.

I was soon wooed by Louis Stout, the horn professor at the University of Michigan. I started lessons at age 14 in his basement and continued with him at the university. I learned from him that the horn is to be loved with pride. There is no better instrument, no better pursuit. A disciplined dive into the etudes, solo works, and excerpts would lead me to the promised horn land where I could perform anything with confidence.

My career started as third horn with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, a position I held for 35 years. With a fulltime job like that, there is little else you want or need to do. You can teach students, but you have a full life anyway. You can play in chamber groups, but you play so much anyway. Maybe a college job. Over my years in Detroit, I taught at Oakland University, Wayne State University, and the University of Michigan. I gave few masterclasses during my years with the DSO because it did not enhance my performance career. Then came the time to retire.

I retired to teach at Michigan State University. Now I needed to get out of East Lansing to give masterclasses, and I needed to bring in professors and performers to inspire my horn studio. Thankfully, university professors are happy to let me visit, and they are also happy to come to East Lansing. When professional performers come to town, they are often willing to stop by for a masterclass. I am

grateful for the sacrifice they make to support me and my studio, often with little financial remuneration.

I learn so much from these masterclasses. I sit in the back and take notes. Sometimes I get immersed in the event and forget to write, but eventually I put down the top morsels. Sometimes it means more to me after the event when I have time to breathe it in, and sometimes I take many notes and forget to really grasp what is being said. When I read it later, the gravity and truth of what was spoken sinks in and I am humbled by their wisdom.

Each teacher who has come to MSU is different from the next. I am impressed with their energy, personality, humor, ability to find the root of the problem, love for the students, and musicality. Each teacher has unique gifts that make them effective. While superstar professors have awesome studios, I have found similar teaching talent all over.

But the crazy thing I noticed over these fifty masterclasses of notes is that little is technical in nature. Most of it is in one of three categories: Preparation, Practice, and Performance.

My experience with masterclasses started as a young lad playing Mozart 3 for Barry Tuckwell and attending a masterclass with Hermann Baumann. And now fifty great horn teachers since have filled my notebook and my mind. Here is a sampling of the sage advice given to my students in these classes.

- React to your ear, react to the feel, react to the event.
- Don't play a line the way you do because you are scared.
- Don't worry about any note but the one you are on.
- Minutiae are alarming to the listener.
- Create a concert hall in your mouth.
- Work on musical ideas to fix technique.
- Your first note is your best note.
- Think about what you want to hear and then sound like that.
- Communicate in your music. You're battling every individual person for their attention.
- Convince us that you like this piece.
- No one cares how you feel. Produce!
- The tone is the note, not the articulation.

Preparation

The main areas of Preparation are: **Listening, Organizing, and Decision-making.**

When you have a new musical challenge – a concerto, an excerpt, or a new etude – listening is required. Listening should be a habit of all players. So much material is readily available with YouTube, IMSLP, Pandora, and other on-line resources, also LPs and CDs. High level professional recordings all the way down to school ensembles are available. All are productive in preparation of a new piece of music.

Recordings by professionals show us ideal tempos, phrasing options, tone colors, and nuances, but less professional versions can inspire consideration of what is missing. Why are they less effective? How would I improve the performance if this were me? Be surprised and enjoy the good aspects of all the performances as well.

Professional recordings are the best way to start. When in doubt, copy them! On these recordings you hear the combined performance experience of the orchestra, conductor, and horn players working together to teach us about musicality and performance norms.

While you are listening, keep the score open, not just the horn part so you can take note of the full picture and your future decisions will be well informed. Note issues that will require extra practice. Every piece has something that challenges our skills.

Organization is essential to produce positive results. Organization provides a path to achieve personal success, guides improvement, prevents wasting time, and keeps us on task to improve our technique, musicality, and endurance.

Everyone has a different definition of organization. Some, like me, need a loose and flexible approach. Some need charts and colored markers, tabs, and outlines. Know thyself and get organized to excel in your practice and improvement.

Organization includes both big and small picture issues. Small picture issues include finding etudes to improve your skills, planning regular recording sessions, and breaking up practice sessions so that the entire work is learned thoroughly. Large picture issues include planning backward from a performance date to set goals as the performance nears, considering fatigue and other performance commitments, finding ways to prepare physically for endurance, and scheduling special lesson times to drill deeper into the music.

As a professor and retired symphony performer, I rarely discuss my performance preparation with another professional, but I should. I know an operatic soprano who takes lessons and coaching before every new role to learn the proper pacing and phrasing. Getting another professional's perspective and support can lead to a more successful performance. Play for other people – including non-horn players – to get fresh ideas to improve the music.

Now it is Decision time. You must take your listening and organizing and finalize preparation by making decisions. The categories for your decision-making can be broad, including phrasing, dynamics, tone color, etudes, personal exercises, warm-ups, run-through days, and recording days. Some decisions will come as you begin your practice and as a result of your practice. These early decisions are important to form your finished product. Many decisions will survive up to the performance while others will change.

Good news: you can change your mind! When you are practicing, expect that you will need to step back and listen more, re-organize, and change decisions. We keep learning as we go, and taking a step back can help accelerate forward motion.

Many decisions will be supported by knowledge of the entire piece through score reading. Consider what has happened before you play, what happens while you play, and how you hand off the music to the next musician. This approach enhances confidence in decisions.

When choosing exercises to improve performance, recognize the challenges and do the nitty-gritty work to bolster your skillset. I have found personal exercises to be essential for me to survive over 45 years of performance. My face has survived over 7,000 performances, but I have had to rework skills along the way. In the 1970s I reworked my low range and tone control. In the 1980s I worked on my articulation and high soft performance. In the 1990s I pinched a lip nerve and spent a year relearning my pressure setup – less is better – as well as enduring a year of braces while still performing in Detroit.

Other musical decisions include where to breathe, phrasing, note length, lyricism, and tone color. While I love to perform by feel, the results can be shallow without thoughtful decisions. Excellent decisions can be made with study of the score, analysis of how breath blows the line, and copying somebody's masterpiece. These decisions can flex as you get deeper into Practice. If you sense new challenges in Practice, rework your Planning to assist Practice and finally Performance.

Extended Thoughts:

- Repetition isn't the only answer and can be overdone. Work by sections. Trust that you have improved and move on.
- Be persistent in your work ethic and trust that your preparation will succeed.
- Be positive and know that you will succeed.
- Mistakes are learning moments. Successes are also learning moments. Accept each with little emotion.
- Learn and adjust. Be willing to adjust as life happens.
- Planning is never perfect.

Practice

The main areas of Practice are: **Buzzing, Note Centering, and Connection.**

Use the warmup to develop your best tone, which comes from a great buzz. Your warmup should always sound great. Consider including mouthpiece buzzing exercises or free-buzzing exercises. Some players use the BERP, but a short plastic tube on the end of the mouthpiece works as well.

Most of us use long tones, arpeggios, and scales, which has been the tried-and-true way since the 1700s! Listen at all times for your tone/buzz quality. When moving up and down through an arpeggio, keep the buzz active between notes, like a siren. The difficult area for most players when buzzing is below written middle C. Be persistent. Always emphasize an active, consistent buzz.

Many professionals recommend the Caruso method to improve the buzz. This method, developed by Carmine Caruso, is designed to minimize jaw and embouchure motion as you warm up and to increase strength, endurance, and buzz control. Some professionals credit the Caruso method with saving their careers. Videos are available on the web.¹

Note Centering (also called “pocketing”) should be practiced daily. Every note has a sweet spot, a maximum resonance position. Long tones help while fine-tuning air speed, jaw position, support, mouth cavity, and listening skills. Once you find this resonant spot, that should be the *only* way you want this note to sound, regardless of duration.

Many professionals play with a goal of pocketing every single note. This is possible. Start slowly and play only beautiful tones. If it isn’t working, go slower. One professional, asked how slowly to practice, said, “I am embarrassed to tell you how slowly I play when I learn a new piece.” Once the notes are pocketed, increase the speed. You truly can pocket every note, even at full speed.

Note centering can be complicated. The horn has a four-octave range, and within those octaves are multiple tonal and embouchure gymnastics that need attention and control. Notes in the staff are generally the most natural and comfortable, but many shifts are necessary below the staff. Notes above the staff require a different dance with support, tongue shaping, and other factors. It may feel as though you have five separate ranges on the horn, and every one has its own centering issues and tonal goals. The ranges don’t actually sound 100% the same because of the physics of the instrument, but we still stay true to centering to find the best sound. When listeners hear your sound, they don’t care how hard it is for you, they want to be engulfed with the beauty of the horn, oblivious to your great work.

To help note centering:

- Listening!
- Lip bend exercises
- Flutter tongue
- Descending crescendos
- Open hand position
- Caruso exercises
- Supporting through arpeggio slurs
- Adjusting air speed
- Relaxing and reducing tension
- Using air, tongue shape, and mouth cavity more than tension or excessive jaw movement

Connection describes a consistent, unending buzz activated by a forward-moving and supported air stream. With good support/air energy and lips buzzing well, phrasing happens, consistency happens, beautiful tones happen.

To connect well, one note needs to lead into the next. Try slurring melodies. When you change back to the “ink,” even shorter notes feel as if they must connect to the next note. Think of counting to ten: it is possible to have each number feel like a separate air push, but we more naturally lean forward with our air into the next number with a smooth air stream, even if our voice may be punchy. Play like your voice!

To help with connection:

- Use your mouthpiece alone and listen for a very buzzy sound. Move the note up and down with great connection.
- Use arpeggios and figure out how to get the lip to connect between the notes and buzz actively.
- Try the Caruso method.
- Play sirens, hitting all pitches, with your mouthpiece.
- Play arpeggios and scales while keeping the buzz consistent though all ranges.

Tips for trying a new horn: The open horn sound is more in fashion now than when I was young. The hand position is straighter with little cupping. The horns we purchase are often made with smaller bell throats than the Conns, Kings, and Paxmans of old, encouraging a lighter and brighter tone. Be careful: the horn should have a balance between rich low overtones with the clarity of the high overtones. Whatever your choice for a horn sound, it must be even across all ranges. Practice Note Centering exercises to sense whether this horn can sound the way you want, then play your connection exercises on a trial horn to see if there are issues, particularly between ranges. Then play full ranges for tone control and evenness. You will know whether the horn is worthy for the next step.

Performance

The main areas of Performance are: **Breathing, Singing, and Emotion.**

Quality performance needs energy and momentum, which are initiated with breath. The breath supplies the energy needed to play. We then add support to the exhale for good momentum of air, buzz, and phrase. Proper breathing balances our body to perform its best. The way we breathe can give us confidence in the music we are going to sing. Feel the air revive you and encourage you to play your best. Prepare yourself before you step on stage so that your breathing is tension-free, full, and low to be ready for performing.

Arnold Jacobs is the established sage of breathing for brass. YouTube still has videos from the 80s and 90s.² His focus is on maximizing natural lung potential to perform best. Investigate his wisdom. Tuba studios often use a variety of breathing apparatuses to train students how to breathe. One of these devices could be useful for you to improve the depth and speed of air intake or steady exhale. Arnold Jacobs encouraged players to breathe at least 50% lung-full for even shorter phrases for a proper amount of air that the support muscles can drive.

The breath should prepare us for both the phrase ahead and the style of music. Wagnerian music requires a more dropped mouth cavity to draw in fat air all the way down to your toes. J.S. Bach's B Minor Mass requires a cooler, higher air draw. If you can breathe with body control – adjusting posture, relaxation, mouth cavity, tongue position, and depth of breath – your body will be set to support and phrase the music ahead. Breathing without determination can set you up for problems. Teach yourself the proper breath needed for each piece of music. Singing the music can clarify the breath needed.

The next step is to sing. Our horn is the vehicle through which we sing the music, but we must sing the music separately from the horn to learn how we naturally breathe and express the music. Singing is a natural form of communicating beauty and emotion. Don't overthink breathing or support. Sing without hinderances or concerns.

Sing out loud as though you are on a stage. Yes, the horn is different from the voice, but there are many similarities that connect directly. Take the risk and sing solos with reckless abandon. Pay attention to yourself – the breath, the phrase line, the support – so you can copy it on the horn.

On the horn, try to recreate the energy of the breath, the forward driving air, and the line that you created in your singing. Match the high point of the phrase as you sang it. Match the air acceleration and deceleration that you sang. Be as graceful and soulful with the horn as you were when singing.

Sing without the horn one more time. Notice how you naturally connect from note to note. You do not stop or bounce the air. Even if the music is short, the voice will find a way to connect. Try to recreate this on the horn. Sing

with energy from the first note to the last. Arch the phrase as before and match the air energy. The phrasing on the horn should now sound like your voice. React to the feel, the sound, the environment, the event. Don't nitpick. Go for the music.

Then add emotion, the last step, which should be the most exciting. Creativity, experimentation, tone color, character, and finesse are your focus. The beauty is that there are few wrong decisions, and the more you do it and adjust, the more you will be convinced that you are right. The audience longs for the music to be expressed with your ideas, passions, and emotions.

What does your audience want to experience? Your audience wants to feel, be excited, awestruck, or maybe just smile. You are in a battle for their attention. Take it seriously. The right notes and proper dynamics are not enough.

Or think of musicmaking in the form of a story. Do you have a story? Are you able to keep the story going through the entire piece? If not a story, what about creating beautiful moments? How can you make a phrase more compelling? Often that means to take more risk in your phrasing. I love one quote from a pro, "Minutiae is alarming." Take an aspect of your piece and put some crazy sparkle into it.

When I go to horn recitals, I love to tell the performers what they did that surprised me, that nugget of minutiae. It can be a risky soft attack, a surprise tempo adjustment, or even clean articulation. After complimenting one of my DSO colleagues on the quality of his great slur technique, I told him that I have a favorite recording with a fantastic slur. He replied he had one as well. We had both chosen a slur by Barry Tuckwell in the Weber Concertino. Embrace the minutiae!

Now the fifty professionals leave it to us to put it all together and join their ranks as great performers. Take their preparation, practice, and performance wisdom and make it work for you. The horn is the most magical of instruments and we need one more magician like you.

Corbin Wagner is the horn professor at Michigan State University. Previously he played third horn in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for 35 years and taught at the Interlochen Arts Academy.



¹Julie Landsman's website provides helpful videos and exercises for the Caruso Method. s3.amazonaws.com/julielandsman/index.html

²Through a series of interviews with many of his former students, TubaPeopleTV (TPTV) is dedicated to highlighting the pedagogy and professional stature of longtime Chicago Symphony principal tubist, Arnold Jacobs. www.youtube.com/@TubaPeopleTV

"Don't Take it for Granted"

An Interview with Barry Benjamin

by Kristine Coreil

Barry Benjamin (1934-2024) performed with the Dorian Wind Quintet and taught at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for many years. An obituary by Barry's son, Seth, and tributes can be found in the October 2024 issue of *The Horn Call*. This interview is part of the author's dissertation "The Pedagogical Styles and Practices of American University Horn Professors," published in 1999 and found in the IHS Lending Library.

Kristine Coreil (KC): Who were your main teachers? How did their teaching style influence the way you teach? Were there specific aspects of their teaching that you wanted to imitate, or any aspects that you wanted to avoid? What were they and why?

Barry Benjamin (BB): My main teacher was Morris Secon. Secon's teaching style was very, very loose. Once he said to me, "This isn't going very well. Let's go shoot baskets." And, we did! Morris talked a lot about diaphragmatic support. Morris was a great natural player, in the sense of mechanics. It just flowed out of him. He didn't know what he did. And, he would say to me, "Barry, sing! And what you sing you will play!" And I'd say, "How, Morris? What do you do with..." and he'd say, "No, no, no! Don't analyze." I'd say, "But I want to know what you're doing with..." and he'd say, "Analysis is paralysis." And, I thought, "Oh! And it rhymes, it must be right." That was the only way in which we disagreed, I think.

KC: Describe your different roles (jobs) as a teacher which led you to where you are today.

BB: During my undergraduate years, I was alternate first horn of the Buffalo Philharmonic. I played assistant to the regular horn player every other week. He had every other week off, and I'd play first horn without an assistant. I was 21 or 20, and it scared the life out of me. Then, I went into the United States Coast Guard band for four years, and also played in the Eastern Connecticut Symphony in Norwich. Then, I was freelancing in New York, and I had the best job in world. I was the horn player in the Dorian Wind Quintet. My first full-time position was at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. It was the only fulltime position I ever had. I stayed there for twenty years, and played first horn in the Milwaukee Ballet for 20 years.

KC: Did you teach beginning hornists earlier in your career?

BB: Yes. One in particular stands out. I got a phone call from a woman who said, "Hi. My name is Mrs. Rohmer. I have a son who's eight (I think) who wants to play horn because he's heard the horn, and he said, 'I've got to learn to make that sound.' Would you be willing to teach him?" Yes, of course I would! And, when his two front teeth fell



Archival image of the Dorian Wind Quintet. Left to right: Karl Kraber, Flute; Charles Kuskin, Oboe; Barry Benjamin, Horn; Jane Taylor, Bassoon; Jerry Kirkbride, Clarinet. Used by Permission.

out, we played Mozart concertos an octave down. Sure, I've had beginners! But I always have liked to take students that I wanted to take, not ones who say, "My mother wants me to play."

KC: Describe the standards for students auditioning for your studio as entering freshmen. Do you have a different standard for applied music majors versus music education majors?

BB: What you're doing is like a dentist doing a checkup. What I'm mostly interested in is how much potential the student has, in my opinion. What do they want to accomplish? Regarding the difference between music education students and performance students, and how I view that – no difference at all. Everybody should be treated like a performance student. It's safer and in many ways I feel better with a music education student. To be a performer and make a living at it is extraordinarily difficult.

I judge their potential, first of all, by the music. Some people have no music in them. Some people are horn jocks. They think high, loud, fast – that's horn playing. When Gene Jones came in and played for me, he played terribly! But there was something special about his playing. And I said to him, "Have you ever played any of the Mozart concertos?" And he said, "No," and I said, "Read this for me." So, he played the G. Schirmer edition. I don't agree with many of the phrases in that edition. Gene read the thing – fracking notes left and right, some out of tune stuff, struggling with high notes – but he changed the phrasings. And, he changed it to things that I like. I said, "Gene, you know, you didn't play the phrases," and he said, "Yes, I know." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Well, because they don't go that way, do they?" That's what I'm looking for!

He's a policeman and a minister now, in Texas. But he called me last year, and told me that he'd bought a horn. He didn't play horn anymore. He ran into the Mendelssohn *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and it scared the pants off of him. He really stopped playing. But the stuff was bubbling around inside of him, so he bought a horn and is playing again. That's what it's about! That's what I'm looking for!

KC: What factors besides playing ability would make a freshman acceptable into your studio?

BB: Willingness to work. As a teacher, I get involved, and if you're more involved with the student's playing than the student is, you can't make a dent. I had a student who was a wonderful player, and very musical, but her attention was focused elsewhere. We were working on the Richard Strauss First Concerto, and we got to [sings development of the second movement], and she didn't want to work on it. I said, "Didn't you work on it?" She said, "No." So I said, "Okay, then do it for next week." She said, "No, no! I don't want to play that." I said, "Why?" She said, "It's in the key of B natural, I don't like to play in the key of B natural." I said, "Who does?!" But, she said, "No, no. I won't play that!" Forget it! That wouldn't make for a good career. She went to live in a commune in San Francisco, and I think she's much happier there!

KC: Do you think the ability to transpose in all keys is essential for a music major?

BB: When they came in, usually they could not. We'd start transposing right away.

KC: Do you think the ability to read in bass clef is essential for a music major?

BB: They couldn't do it as entering freshman. But, to some degree or other, I'd teach them. I was teaching them to transpose, and if you're reading bass clef, you're reading horn in A.

KC: Do you think the ability to play a high B or C is essential for a music major?

BB: Some could, maybe 20 percent. But, even the ones who could, I found would do it in the (bad term) "wrong way." They couldn't float up there, but do this [speaks in a very strained, forced manner].

KC: Do you think the ability to play a lip trill is essential for a music major?

BB: I had students who could lip trill, but I don't lip trill very well! I kept getting Gail [Williams] to try to teach me to lip trill, and to some degree, she did. But, John Barrows couldn't lip trill. It's not that important to me. I try to get them to lip trill, and I can help them, and I can say, "Oh! That was a good one!" But, it's not steady with me.

KC: Do you think the ability to efficiently use alternate fingerings is essential for a music major?

BB: If they would use a fingering that is considered an alternate fingering, it was because they used it all the time. I had a student – can't remember what they used – but, it was a fingering that would drive me nuts. It wasn't even in tune! I don't care what fingerings my students use, as long as it works.

KC: Do you think the ability to play stopped horn is essential for a music major?

BB: I'd work on hand position first, if it needed it. Eventually, we'd get to stopped horn. Especially, I'd introduce them to it after a vacation, when they were out of shape.

KC: Do you have certain standards for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors?

BB: No. And, when the university imposed these standards, because of the nature of the beast, sometimes it made it hard. We had proscribed standards for graduation recitals at the undergraduate and at the graduate level.

KC: Do you have a program or regimen of exercises, or a warmup, that all levels of students must undertake?

BB: Yes! Page sixty-nine of the Farkas book. The accuracy study. The accuracy study had 115 different notes. To me, I agree with Phil [Farkas] completely, it is the most important thing to be able to start on the right note! That's the one that usually gets us. I had everybody in my studio doing this exercise. I was keeping track like this: I would take the number of notes you got correct and divide it by 115, and get an accuracy percentage. I was posting the results of this on the bulletin board without names, just social security numbers.

The kids started to get excited about that, and accuracy started to go up. Then, it just kind of leveled out. I tried to figure it out. During masterclass, I handed out blank accuracy etudes and red pencils, and set the metronome at 60, and I played it for them. I said, "You mark down my accuracy like I do for you, and we'll see how I do." And I missed two out of 115. That's about how many I usually miss. If I miss more than two, I make myself do it again, and I hate doing it again, so I concentrate very hard. So, I missed two, and I said, "Par is five in this contest, the Great Horn Accuracy Contest. We're going to do it once a month, and you do it every time you practice. Here's what we're going to do that's different. If you come in and play it for me once a month, and you miss only five, then I'll give you a dollar. If you miss four, I'll give you two bucks. If you miss one, I'll give you five bucks. If you can miss none, I'll give you ten." Do you know, the accuracy got a lot better? Oh, it got much better! They got so much pride out of that!

KC: What is the single most common technical problem of entering students that you have observed during your years of teaching?

BB: Breath support. Breathing and support. I try to approach correcting it from every direction all at once. I teach them what works for me. You'll learn from the

students. The common denominator has been weightlessness. The way I put it together – I tell them about scooping out the inside of your head with an ice cream scoop. It's like, you're sitting on a bench now, and you've just bought that dress, and I say, "That's a beautiful dress," and you say, "It should be. I spent \$500 on it." And, I say to you,

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**As a teacher, I get involved, and if you're more involved with the student's playing than the student is, you can't make a dent.**  
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"Well, we painted that bench yesterday, and I'm not sure it's dry," and you don't want to get up because you feel like you have to stay there.

So you sit there as light as possible, almost rising into the air. It's like a magic carpet. I go on and on like this. I say, "Play a note, and I'm going to sit in front of you and punch you in the stomach – not hard enough to hurt you. Have your stomach feeling [tightens up stomach and mock punches himself]. Another way – you're about to sneeze, but it isn't really happening, and you're going [wide, open mouth]. When you breathe in like that, you're breathing from the diaphragm. Another friend of mine told me that if you go [breathes in with wide, relaxed mouth], it's hard not to breathe right. I have the students sometimes lie on the floor with their hands behind their back, and just breathe deeply. You know, be a beer barrel. Take it in like a watermelon. If they get a big sound that way, then they are blowing enough air and taking better breaths.

KC: What is the most common problem that you have to correct with breathing and tone production?

BB: They breathe too shallowly. They don't use it to help themselves. Tone production will have a lot to do with hand position. It will have a lot to do with how they think they ought to sound. I ask my students sometimes, if the trombone and trumpet can all play higher and lower and louder, then what's the point of having a horn? It's the way it sounds. And, the reason people accept, probably, more wrong notes from the horn than from any other brass instrument is because when it's played well, it just sounds so good. So, if you aren't making a good sound, and you aren't making music, what's the point?

KC: What is the most common problem that you have to correct with articulation?

BB: Well, more of than anything else, I hear notes starting "nyah, nyah, nyah." It's like they are thinking, "Okay, I got the note, and now that I've got it, and I'm sure of it, I'm going to play it." They try to sneak into it. And, I hear them playing sausage notes, "waw, waw, waw."

KC: Once you have diagnosed a faulty embouchure, describe some of the methods you would use to correct the problem, not only what you tell the student, but also how you motivate them to go through an embouchure change successfully.

BB: I'd explain to them why, tell them what I see. I'd do an appraisal of what I see. I would tell them, "I think you're on a dead-end street." Sometimes the kids won't listen. When I was teaching at Brooklyn College, I had a student who was their first horn player. He could play fabulously high and loud, but not beautifully and soft. He played with one of those embouchures like this [ducks head down and motions as if pressing leadpipe into top lip], and I said, "You've got to change." He said, "But if I change, I won't be first horn." I said, "Yes, but, you're first horn at Brooklyn College. And, if you don't change, you're going to be first horn at Brooklyn College all of your life."

He went on to the Cincinnati Conservatory, and I met somebody there, and they said, "Oh, you taught so-and-so." I said, "Yes. Does he still play like [makes same gesture as before]?" "Yes." "Great high register? Tremendous loud player?" He said, "Yes." "But can't play low and soft?" "Right!"

I've probably only changed one or two embouchures in my whole career. Sometimes they will use the bottom lip by rolling it out. I keep it firm, and I tell them to speak as though they had lost all of their teeth [flattens chin], and sometimes that will help. But we keep fooling with it, tinkering with it, until we find something that works for them.

KC: What is the most common musical problem of entering students that you have observed during your years of teaching? How do you approach correcting this problem?

BB: I argued with Morris [Secon] about this a few years ago. I said, "If someone isn't musical, basically, you can't teach it to them." He said, "Well, you can to a degree." "Like what?" He said, "Well, I had a student who was playing something just terrible, it had no line to it. I said, 'Do you have any little brothers or sisters?' The student said, 'Yes, I have a baby sister.' I said, 'Play it as if it's a lullaby for her,' and it changed completely."

But basically, if you polish and polish a lump of coal, then it comes out as a polished lump of coal. But, if it's a diamond, it's a diamond! And, I find that a very proficient person who is not musical, in my mind, a journeyman horn player, a carpenter rather than a cabinet maker – they make out pretty well. Often when you play an audition, like in a contest, the judges will be swayed by incredible technique. And, if you play something gorgeous, they may be don't understand!

KC: Describe what occurs in a typical one-hour undergraduate lesson. Do you divide time equally between etudes, technical exercises, and performance literature?

BB: I tell them what the rules are. You've got to be beautiful, you've got to be reliable. Furthermore, that I am your employee and you are my employer, so if I say something that you don't understand, you must say, "Explain it better. I'm not convinced. Convince me." And, maybe eventually, "I'm sorry, I don't agree with you."

I give this illustration: You come in to play the last movement of the Strauss First Horn Concerto and you play [sings with a very slow tempo]. And I say, "No, it's usually [sings it in correct tempo]. And, you say to me, "You know, you told me that we'll have a lot of different relationships and when I go out on stage, I have to be the real me and not the second best you, and I believe fervently that it goes [sings it in slow tempo]." I have to say, "Yes. I told you that, and I believe it. But I would be shirking my responsibility if I didn't at least have you play it my way. Let's pretend I'm the conductor and you have to play it my way, so that I know that you can, and that you're not making this choice because you can't do it the other way. Then, if you want to do it that way, you can."

In a typical lesson, they warm up. Then, I usually have three segments to the lesson. First, they'll do an etude. Then, they'll do an excerpt, then a solo piece. That goes for music education [majors], performance, or minors, freshmen through seniors. Seniors probably play more excerpts. If someone's getting ready for an audition, then we work on the excerpt list. Or, they'll be playing something, and I'll say, "Stop! Let me hear *Till*." So when someone's working on an audition, we work like that.

KC: Name some of the method books that you typically use throughout a student's undergraduate study.

BB: These are ones that are different than the ordinary ones. The one that I absolutely adore is *How Brass Players Do It* by John Ridgeon. And, one that Mr. Ricci introduced me to, is a singer's book called *Rhythmical Articulation* by Pasquali Bona.

That's handy to have. Maybe I'm too considerate of the kid's pocketbooks. But, Maxime Alphonse? It's too expensive. So, the red and blue book [335 *Progressive, Technical, and Melodious Studies for Horn*, Books I and II, compiled by Pottag and Andraud], and then, get the King catalog and find the cheapest edition of the Kopprasch that you can get. If you really want, in the advanced stages, some wild stuff – the Verne Reynolds *Forty-eight Etudes*. You can laugh, because I would also use the Klosé clarinet book. If you get into method books outside the horn, the Bordogni trombone studies, and Arban's. Somebody like a horn etude composer writes an etude, and everybody says, "Oh, no. You can't do that." They have limitations, as they see the horn, in mind. And, I'm sorry, if you treat me like that, then I'm not going to learn.

KC: How often do you play your own horn as a model for imitation during lessons? Do you play along with the students?

BB: At Northwestern, that was very important. Some of the players will learn by listening. Tim Trotier. We were discussing the Shostakovich solo [sings the slow first horn solo in Fifth Symphony], and I was trying to show him how you play the note, and then withdraw, and then... His idol was Dale [Clevenger]. He came in the next day after that lesson, and said, "Chicago Symphony was on the radio last night, and they played Shostakovich Five, and I could hear Dale withdrawing and placing. It was just like you said it was! I got this lesson for free over the radio!" And, when you can learn to listen like that, then you get free lessons from everybody on every instrument you hear. It's great.

Strauss's First Concerto – I keep harking back to that piece, because it has so many wonderful problems. The top of the second page [sings the passage, triplets with a rest or tie on the first subdivision], people have so much trouble with that. So, sometimes I'd put the metronome on, and students would make these wonderful compensations by playing the rhythm wrong, and so I would have them play it by taking out the tie. That would help. But if, when they put it back in, they couldn't do it, then I'd say, "Okay, we're going to play it together." And, you can plug the electron-

ic metronome into the stereo system, and they would hear where you played that they didn't – assuming that I got it right!

KC: Do you play duets with all levels of your students?

BB: Yes, more often than not. Especially, they would have to know [sings passage from Brahms Fourth Symphony, second movement], and if they don't know what the second horn is doing, you're in trouble. Also, sometimes you're going to be auditioning for something other than first horn, and if you're a high horn player, and you only play first, then you're cutting out three-quarters of the job opportunities.

That's dumb. If you can't play jazz – read jazz – that's dumb. You're limiting yourself tremendously. And, I want to show them how a good second horn can help a first horn. We would read the Brandenburg concerto like that, so they could understand.

KC: At what level do you have students begin to study orchestral excerpts?

BB: Right away in the freshman year. The kids have to hear. Often, if I know I'm going to be giving a lesson on a particular excerpt, I'll bring along the CD to help.

KC: Do you keep a file on your students?

BB: Absolutely! I kept their accuracy etude pages. I sent out a questionnaire to all of the professional orchestras in the United States, asking them about their audition lists – about the same time that the Northwestern students did that, and Arthur LaBar took the information and made his book. Then I made a list of the most requested excerpts, and number one was Shostakovich Five. You know why? I would check them off as we went, so I would know what they had covered, and I kept this in the file, as well.

KC: How do you assign performance literature to students? Do you have certain pieces every student must play?

BB: Not have to do, but if you're a literate player, you really ought to know them. I didn't want to plow through all the Mozart concerti, and the Concert Rondo, and the Quintet, because, as delicious as they are, it's too much the same. So, we'd do a Mozart concerto, and I'd say, "What style would you like to do next?" They might say, "I have to play in church." So, I'd say, "Okay, why don't we do [Bernstein's] *Elegy for Mippy*? Have you done the Haydn concertos yet? What about something Baroque. You need something for technique – let's do Gordon Jacob." I would just mold it around the student.

KC: What other materials do you use in teaching besides horn and music?

BB: CDs. Tuner, sometimes. Metronome, a lot. Also, Frøydis gave me this elaborate brass valve that you put into the horn, and put your mouthpiece into it, and then if you use too much pressure, that valve collapses and blows the air out the side.

KC: Do you have a studio class or horn seminar?

BB: Yes, every week. We'd play for each other. We'd use my collection of excerpts to go through pieces. I have all the parts to all of the Strauss tone poems, and we'd play through that.

KC: Does your university have a jury system for students?

BB: [regarding University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee:] Yes. The whole brass faculty would have all of the brass students come in, one at a time. It would take us two or two-and-a-half days. And, they would play for 15 minutes. We would all write out comment sheets and hand them to the teacher. The teacher would get to look through them, and then give them to the student. Sometimes, it would even wind up being a lesson during that time. "Good, could you do that again? Couldn't you possibly... Relax! Why don't you use a different fingering?" Like that.

And, the kids understood that, for the most part – it depends upon the individuals who are the faculty – that we represent labor, not management. We were all players. God preserve me from ever being a "professor." I wasn't a professor. I could never get an answer from the university on how to grade, and I probably wouldn't have listened anyway. Some professors would have us assign grades for the jury, some wouldn't. But the jury grade doesn't have to be the semester grade.

KC: Describe how the typical four-year study differs for a performance major and a music education major under your tutelage.

BB: My job is to try to help them get what they are trying to get to be. So, if a music education student says to me, "But, I want to make a living playing. I want to be teaching in the high school at Wauwatosa, and subbing next to you in the Milwaukee Ballet," then I'm doing the same for them as with a performance student. When they graduate at the end of four years, they've got to be ready to take an audition. So, we're doing mock auditions and things like that.

KC: What are your views on playing on or off the leg?

BB: The rules, and this is one of the disciplines – what do you have to accomplish? It has to sound beautiful. Are you going to the horn or is the horn going to you? I have a long torso. So, if I sit and try to put the bell on my leg, the mouthpiece comes to about right here [points to upper chest]. I bought an Atkinson horn and took it out to Bob Atkinson, and he said, "Play it for me, because I didn't build this for you." I played it, and he said, "I've got to fix this. I'm going to open the wrap a little bit." So, it depends upon the person.

KC: What are your views on sitting versus standing while performing solo literature?

BB: I'd like them to play standing. I usually do. If they can't, they can't, but we try.

KC: What are your views on vibrato?

BB: I play with a vibrato, a little one. I don't even think of it as a vibrato, I think of it as a shimmer. I told Morris, "I'm going to play with vibrato." He said, "Well, don't use it like paint on a cracked ceiling, because it can hide flaws." I thought, "Good!" He said, "I tell you what. I'll show you how I do it, I'll teach you to do it, and any time I say to you 'Straight sound!' you've got to be able to do it that way."

And, he had me play [sings with huff on quarter notes for four beats, then eighth notes for four beats]. The kind of vibrato he taught was not hand or jaw – he taught what [tubist] Harvey Phillips says doesn't exist. He taught [motions to his abdomen and sings with a vibrato], pulsing from the diaphragm, like a singer would use. And, that's what I do. I teach that only when the person wants to use it. I'm playing for them, and they hear what I'm doing.

KC: What are your views on horn equipment, such as large versus small bell, large or small bore, silver or brass?

BB: Buy the best horn that you can afford. Don't buy a horn without me playing it, even if it's one that you think is great. I was talking with horn players yesterday, here. This was Bruce Moore from the Baltimore Symphony – and Bruce said he had a student who was trying horns, and they were trying them behind a screen. He played for her, and they both liked this Yamaha, but she had her heart set on a Conn. In spite of that, she bought the Conn. She loved it. The Yamaha just sounded better. She should have gone with the Yamaha, not because I think Yamaha is better than Conn, although I do. But, I'm not a Conn player. Conn players think the opposite way. Well, great! But, buy something good – don't buy anything that is going to hold you back, even two or three years from now. Buy something that's good, because it's going to appreciate.

If a student asks me what horn they should buy; first we'd find a music store where they can try Holton, Conn, Yamaha – find out what their price bracket is. I'd almost prefer that they were able to buy used – save money, maybe. Mouthpieces – get a middle of the road mouthpiece. I play on a Schilke 27. If I'm playing somewhere, and somebody steals my horn, I can go to a music store and buy a Schilke 27. I used to play on a highly modified Giardinelli. Where would I find another one of those? Well, why would you ever lose your mouthpiece? Because your horn could be stolen. You could drop the mouthpiece. Who knows?

KC: How would you define your role in your students' musical careers? Do you try to be a role model?

BB: Mentor and friend. And, advisor. If you need somebody who's going to kick your butt to be a horn player, it's not me. If you come to me and say, "Oh, a gorilla ate my music!" I'll say, "Oh, that's too bad! Take mine." So, I am not a disciplinarian. But if you're looking for insight and support – yes. Sometimes I was conscious of being a role model. Certainly, when I'm playing in a section. I love to fool around, but when I'm in a horn section with students, I act like I think a professional should act, because I want them to understand that.

KC: What was your motivation to become a university horn teacher?

BB: I was freelancing in New York, and I had the best job in the world. I was the horn player in the Dorian Wind Quintet and was making a very good living as a horn player in a full-time working woodwind quintet.

Why don't I play in an orchestra? I was asked that in an interview by *Esquire* magazine, and I said that I would rather drive my own beat-up Volkswagen than be a passenger in a deluxe bus. But then there was the budget crunch in New York City. The Dorian Quintet was in residence at Brooklyn College, City College, Hunter College, the entire State University of New York, and we were managed by Columbia Artists management. We were doing very, very well. And, all of a sudden, the city's and state's economies went down. New York almost declared bankruptcy. Our residencies were canceled, although I was kept on as an adjunct teacher. That meant that I was getting something like whatever the hourly lesson fee was at Brooklyn College, instead of half a professor's pay that they were paying me every month.

I was also teaching 30 private horn students in addition to all the other stuff. I was teaching at the 92nd Street YMCA. It was a good music school! But they would call me up and say, "We've got another student for you." It wasn't a case of me being able to say, "Let me hear them. No, I don't want them." They were often wealthy kids who didn't want to practice. And, I had to play a Broadway show. It wasn't the life I wanted to lead. So, when the university said, "Would you like...?" I thought, "Yes!"

KC: In your opinion, are the musical and technical abilities of students declining or increasing since you began teaching?

BB: Increasing. No question about it. I remember sitting next to Phil Farkas, who was my idol. We were sitting at a contest together. We became friends. He was conducting the masterclass, and a student came out and was playing the Glière Horn Concerto, the middle of the third page [triplet section]. Phil turned to me and said, "Remember when we thought this concerto was impossible and nobody could play it?" You see this everywhere. I was in the original Eastman Wind Ensemble. Nobody could play like the Eastman Wind Ensemble then. Everybody can play like them now!

There used to be major orchestras in the United States, and then there were second line, and third line. You could always get a job somewhere. But, then, after the second World War, with the GI Bill, things changed. I went to college from 1952 to 1957. I'm 63. We lived a privileged life. You went to an audition and 20 people showed up, not 300.

We watched the American players getting churned out of factories getting better and better and better. We watched them fill up our orchestras, then we watched them fill up South American and European orchestras. Talking with Randy Ulmer, who plays in the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra and freelances in New York – Randy says he doesn't teach at all. He says, "Where are these kids going to go? You've got to have a conscience about this." I asked Dale [Clevenger] about that, and Dale said, "There's always room for really good ones, and we let them sort themselves out."

KC: What advice do you have for a person just starting a career as a university horn professor?

BB: Take good care of the students. You'll take a couple of knocks if you get too involved, but that's okay. The way things are now, when you check their breathing, never check it with your hand like this [hand flat with fingers out]. Check it like this [hand in a fist]. I always did, and it worked out. See if you can find out what's really going on. Watch out for faculty politics. But, to be a university teacher – it's really a privileged position. You'll hear university teachers gripe about hours and whatever. Get out of here! It's a wonderful job, it's a necessary job. In some ways, it's a privileged job. And, it's disappearing. To be a fulltime faculty member, wow! Don't abuse it. Don't take it for granted.

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.



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Mozart's Approach to Writing Cadenzas

by James Nicholas

Cadenzas written by the author for the horn concerti K.447 and K.495 are included with this article, and printable PDFs can be downloaded at hornsociety.org/publications/horn-call/extras.

Mozart's own cadenzas to a number of piano concerti and the Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola, K.364, have been preserved, and they are paragons of what a cadenza for a High Classical piece should be.¹ Analysis makes clear the principles according to which he approached their composition.

"First, do no harm." Mozart's cadenzas are the final, satisfying ornamental fillip for a first or last movement. They enhance, provide additional commentary, surprise and delight us while remaining concise. In other words, we never suffer in silence waiting for them to be over.

- They never comprise more than approximately ten percent of the movement proper.
- Rarely do they begin by quoting a principal theme. If they do, it is only a fragment of a couple of measures (K.414, 453, Rondo of K.595) which he uses as a springboard for improvisation.
- More often, Mozart begins with a few bars from the opening tutti (K.271, 450, Rondo of K.459), or touch briefly on a secondary theme (middle of the cadenza of K.415). In the first movement cadenza of K.459, he briefly references both the principal and secondary themes, but only momentarily. The third movement cadenza begins with a brief quotation of the fugue subject; toward the end, a witty

progression makes use of the rhythm of the principal theme without stating it outright.

- Sometimes, he begins with non-thematic passage-work (K.364, 488, first movement of K.595)
- He does not modulate. He does make use of secondary dominant and diminished chords to temporarily tonicize the subdominant or submediant, for example, but these diversions are very fleeting (3rd movement cadenza of K.595). Exception: The first-movement cadenza of K.271 in E-flat major, in which he does briefly but definitely modulate to C-flat major.
- There is generally some sort of brilliant or whimsical wrap-up. This may be an extended chromatic scale (K.488, first movement of K.595), or we may be teased with suggestions of the final trill (last movement of K.595).

Note that it is not Mozart's custom to place a fermata on the 6/4 chord preceding the cadenza, and therefore there is no need to precede this with a ritardando. In the case of the horn concerti K.447 and K.495, in fact, an unmotivated ritardando necessitates a very awkward and laborious slowing down of the sixteenth-note motion and also destroys the inherent energy and excitement.

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Cadenzas for Concerto No. 3, K.447

1) $\text{♩} = 126$ James Nicholas (2024)

4

8 *mp*

13 *dim.*

18 *cresc.* *f*

21 *trill*

2)

1

6 *sf* *ten.* *ten.* *ten.*

11 *ten.*

16 *trill*

Cadenzas for Concerto "No. 4", actually No. 2, K.495

1) James Nicholas (2024)

7 *dim.* *rall.*

12 *p* *dolce* *ten.* *ten.* *ten.* *simile*

17 *trill*

2)

1 *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

4 *dim.* *mp* *p*

7 *cresc.* *f*

10 *trill*

3)



3)



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James Nicholas received his doctorate and two master's degrees in music from Indiana University, where his cello instructors were Éva Czako-Janzer, János Starker, and Helga Winold, and where he also pursued the study of the languages, cultures, and history of Central and Eastern Europe. He is interested in historical performance styles and has collaborated with authorities in early music performance today. He has published several original works for the natural horn as well as articles on historic performance styles, scholarly editions of Baroque and Early Classical music for strings, and reconstructions of two unfinished Mozart horn concerti.

¹K.271, 414, 415, 449, 450, 451, 453, 456, 459, 488, 595, and the Rondo in D major, K.382.

Embouchure Basics for the Horn

by Margaret Tung

The initial set up of an embouchure can often determine the success of a beginning student, because a properly functioning embouchure will make it more efficient to play overall. It is always possible to adjust an embouchure after starting the horn, but old habits can

make it challenging to adjust later. Incorporating these embouchure basics has made a positive impact in my playing and led me to being a much more well-rounded teacher. Below are some basic takeaways for horn embouchure:

Placement of Mouthpiece

The mouthpiece should be centered on the lips. Aim to center the mouthpiece on the middle of the lips. Exceptions to this might include teeth structures that prohibit the mouthpiece from resting comfortably the middle. If possible, place the mouthpiece in the middle of the lips where both sides of the face can work equally to form an embouchure. If the mouthpiece favors one side, the lips/muscles are not working equally and there can be tension created because one side is working harder than the other. Symmetry in the mouthpiece placement is important.

The ratio between the lips is 2/3 top lip and 1/3 bottom lip in the mouthpiece. Essentially, more top lip needs

to be in the mouthpiece than the lower lip. The bottom of the mouthpiece can rest on the lower lip. This is crucial in the initial set up of a horn player, particularly if they are switching from trumpet, which uses a 1/2 top and 1/2 bottom mouthpiece placement. If set up correctly, this will lead to better fluidity of registers, endurance, and overall sound.

When forming an embouchure, the lips should remain generally flat. Some common improper practices I have seen are puckered lips (when the lips are rolled out) and lips that roll in. This could happen to the top and bottom lips or just one lip.

The Trio of Support: The Support System for the Embouchure

Firm corners are essential to an effective horn embouchure. I think of it as the outside walls that hold up a house. If the corners are firm, the house or embouchure will be stable. If the corners are weak, then the house can eventually fall. One of the simplest methods to find the corners to is say, "Mom," then hold the M at the end: "mmmmm." That is where the corners will form naturally. Notice, when we say "Mom," we don't stretch the corners. They are in a natural placement. This will gently engage the corners. To start to actively engage the corners, think about the lips hugging the teeth, particularly the canine top teeth. Continue to hug around the back of the teeth through the premolars and molars. The idea is that the corners are firm and that the lip inside the mouthpiece is relaxed so that it is free to vibrate.

The chin should be flat when playing the horn. This helps to support the embouchure in conjunction with the corners. I think of the chin as an upside-down triangle, where the chin comes to a point at the bottom. The chin can become bunched, where the bottom of the chin can rise up, compromising the embouchure. Most often a bunched

chin shows itself in the high and low register. I have found that when a horn player has unengaged corners, the chin will bunch more readily in an effort to support the embouchure. Unfortunately, this help is not genuine. Always strive to keep the chin flat in all registers of the horn.

Just like how an anchor on a boat is meant to keep the boat in one place, the anchor for an embouchure is a point of contact on the lip that brings stability to the embouchure. There is some gray area here. There are versions of anchors (top or bottom lip anchor) that work for many horn players. Here is my observation: A good starting point is to anchor on the bottom lip. This is especially true when playing in the lower register. Some horn players anchor on the bottom lip throughout the entire range of the horn, some horn players anchor on the top lip, and some switch throughout the registers. I have found that anchoring on the bottom lip for the middle and low register works extremely well and to anchor on the top lip for the high register. Again, some gray area here, but the point is, there needs to be an anchor when we play the horn for stability on the embouchure.



Margaret Tung is Associate Professor of Horn at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and a member of the IHS Advisory Council.



The Best Seat in the House: An Interview with Robert Ward

by Katy Ambrose

Robert “Bob” Ward was born in Schenectady, New York in 1955. His father worked for General Electric, and his mother was a nurse. While neither of his parents were musicians, his father was a music enthusiast and attended concerts at Tanglewood beginning in the 1940s. His father used to say he “played the stereo” and had an incredible memory for programs he had heard throughout the years. Bob took horn lessons from local band directors and went to the Oberlin Conservatory, where he studied horn with Robert Fries. He graduated from Oberlin in 1977 and was a Tanglewood

Music Center Fellow in 1977 and 1978.

While at TMC, he won an audition for the Atlantic Symphony in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. After two seasons at Atlantic and one season with the Denver Symphony, Bob joined the San Francisco Symphony in 1980 until his retirement in 2023, first as Associate Principal then as Principal Horn. He recently also retired from the faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. I interviewed Mr. Ward over Zoom on May 14, 2024.

Bob Ward surrounded by his San Francisco Symphony section colleagues in their first meeting post-pandemic: front (l-r) Jessica Valeri, Daniel Hawkins; rear (l-r) Mark Almond, Bruce Roberts, Jon Ring.



Katy Ambrose (KA): When did you win your [first] job in Halifax?

Bob Ward (BW): I started in Halifax in September of 1977. I graduated from Oberlin in May of 1977, and was going to get a Masters at Northwestern with Dale [Clevenger] but first I went to Tanglewood. The Atlantic Symphony in Halifax was just getting a new conductor, Victor Yampolsky. They had auditions at Tanglewood and I won the job. I had to instantly scramble and tell Dale I wasn't coming [to Northwestern] and that was that. Northwestern still has my \$50 deposit. So, I was off to Halifax, foreign country and everything. Really fun. We rehearsed in a church basement and toured all over the maritime provinces – New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island – and played tons of repertoire. We recorded for the CBC, and I made the grand total my first year of \$9,000 Canadian. But my rent was only \$100 a month, so I was good!

KA: That's amazing! Other great horn players have gone through that orchestra too, right?

BW: I think Phil Myers was there, and Jamie [Sommerville] also. When I was there, we played a concert every week or we were on tour, but we didn't play in the summer.

KA: And how long were you there before you moved to Colorado?

BW: Two seasons, and the second was marred by a labor problem. There was never any money, so the second year we were locked out or on strike and I would go over and practice at Dalhousie University so I didn't have to practice in my apartment and bother people. I also taught at Acadia University. There were two auditions that I had my eye on that year, one of them was the Detroit Symphony second horn, and one was Denver Symphony fourth horn. My position in Halifax was third, so I was a high player at that point. I practiced six hours every day and turned myself into a low horn player with a huge diet of octave-down

Kopprasch and Neuling, I won the Denver Symphony job. I was there for one year and auditioned here in January of 1980, in the opera house because Davies Hall was not yet finished.

Davies Hall opened the following September, and I played the first concerts in there, which were devoted to the workers. It

was interesting to audition in the opera house, a venerable old building built in the 1930s, and then walk into a brand new spiffy, slightly unfinished around the edges, hall in September.

KA: I read that you played a super-final round that ended with the Long Call?

BW: There was plenty of other stuff too; it probably lasted a half hour. I don't think I had to play an ensemble round, but Edo de Waart conducted me in some things. I had to play all my rounds that day because they let me come a day late. In fact, when I auditioned that day, I called in sick in Denver. It's not nice, but I did it anyway because one of my colleagues, John Keane, who is now no longer with us, was also taking the audition, so I knew that they weren't going to let both of us out. So, I just called in sick and flew back with a contract in my pocket. It didn't feel totally ethical but you gotta do what you gotta do.

KA: And you were Associate Principal for 18 years?

BW: Yes and no. Dave Krehbiel, my predecessor here, who is still doing well on his farm in central California, had gotten into the orchestra in the mid-70s and retired in 1998. We had an audition for Principal Horn, which I took but didn't do super well and John Zirbel was hired. He couldn't come for a year, so I was Acting Principal for the season starting September 1998. John came for a year, and I went back to Associate, then John left to go back to Montreal, and I went back to Acting Principal.

There was a lot of transition in the section and no one was sitting in their real seat, we were all Acting. I was Act-

ing Principal, Jon Ring was Acting Second, Bruce Roberts was Acting Third or Associate, it was all confusing. I tried to reconstruct those sections and I'm trying to remember exactly who was doing what when. But we played great concerts during those years and it was really fun.

The orchestra held a couple more auditions and no one was hired, and then finally in 2007 I decided, all right, I've recorded all the Mahler symphonies except Number 8 and it was on the season for the next year and I was like "well dammit, I have got to finish this off." I decided I would take the audition, and won. I auditioned during a week when we were performing Mahler 7 so that was a heavy lift, but I won the position and served until last December as Principal, so that's 16 or 17 years as principal. All told I have 43 years and change in the orchestra, and that's plenty.

KA: In one of the articles I read, you said that some of your favorite memories were the Mahler cycle and a Britten Serenade performance.

BW: We did Britten in 2014, and I've played it a couple times. I played it on my senior recital at Oberlin and then with the Stockton Symphony one time, so Michael [Tilson Thomas] asked me to do it. He had never conducted it, and I had a wonderful tenor for that performance, Toby Spence. He was great, so fun and unpretentious, and we had a great back and forth. The classical music critic tabbed it as one of his favorite concerts for the season, which was nice.

KA: Something that struck me in reading articles about you and your career is that you seem to approach the big orchestra as though it's chamber music as much as you can. Hearing you talk about the Britten, I wonder if you feel as though you are a chamber musician at heart.

BW: You have to listen, you've got to play with your colleagues. So many people get locked into their own deal about how to play certain things. You've got to be flexible. I sat behind Steve Paulson, our principal bassoon, for all those years so we knew what we were going to do. In the long B-natural section in Brahms's second, the bassoon joins you, and he had this way of doing it, and we would always just blend in.

Once I visited Karl Hill, the horn maker, and I took him a couple of recordings to listen to, and his comment was interesting. There was some chamber music, the Thuille sextet for winds and piano, a really sweet Brahmsian piece, and his comment was "You really know how to step to the front when it's your turn and recede into the texture when it's not and you are part of the texture." That's so much of our lives as horn players in orchestra, knowing what our role is in any given moment and not stepping out too far or receding too far back. And to play expressively and beautifully all the time. Sometimes how you do that is with other people, we don't exist in a vacuum in the orchestra ever. Unless you're playing the beginning of Brahms's Second Piano Concerto, in which case the vacuum seems very strong. [Laughing]

In some ways it's weird to think that I won't be do-

ing it anymore. But on the other hand, I was also ready to leave. It was getting harder to do. I'll be 69 in December. That's well past how long they let you play in Europe. In the Vienna Philharmonic you have to get out at 65. Had it not been for Covid, I might have retired earlier, but I wanted to stick around and see what Esa-Pekka [Salonen] was going to bring to the table, even though he's now leaving, sadly. It was good [for me] to stick around. When I came back to the hall after Covid, one of the first things I had to play was that little Strauss wind serenade. Such a lovely piece, and then a couple months later we played that big tangle of a piece, *The Happy Workshop*, and that's a hard one. But I was inspired by my colleagues every day, and to sit in the middle of a wind and brass section like it was and still is, is such a treat.

I always say I have the best seat in the house because I'm right in the middle of everything. You can hear everything. Going to concerts is different because it's not as immediate, it's not surround sound.

KA: The SFSO came to Ann Arbor when I was a student there, and you gave a section masterclass. I remember thinking that I wished all orchestra sections could give section masterclasses that way, as a unit. You worked with us on *Der Freischütz*, and I tell all my students to tune down the flat 7 F-natural because of that class.

BW: That's one of the things that we tried to do consistently, and it is shockingly uncommon in horn sections to do that. The year that the IHS was in San Francisco, we gave a section class, and talked about intonation with specific fingerings, and people came up to us afterwards saying they had never heard any of that before. It makes a huge difference in how in-tune your section sounds. People just accept horn intonation. Horn intonation is terrible! You have to work with it and use different fingerings really intentionally on different parts of the chord – it makes all the difference.

Whenever we play in the key of E-flat in the orchestra, we're always using B-flat third valve on concert Gs, fourth line written D, when it's the third of the chord. It makes a huge difference! If you're playing *Eroica* and use these fingerings, Jon will even use B-flat second valve for the A-flat at the end of the call, or he even experimented with F horn first valve on the seventh harmonic just for yucks. It sounds amazing. Obviously, you've got to play in tune with your colleagues too, but still, it's remarkable how many people don't understand this or utilize it.

One time long ago we were playing Dvořák's Serenade with Edo de Waart conducting, and we got into a huge hassle because he wanted all the thirds high and we're saying "What are you talking about?" We set up three tuners that played a tone and tuned a fifth and we said, "Edo, you put the third where you want it on this middle one." It went "we, we, we, we" [imitating the sine waves you hear with a dissonance pattern]. And that's what he wanted! I got into an argument with Gunther Schuller one time at Tanglewood about this very thing! He wanted high thirds.



Jon Ring and Bob Ward with their Webb Natural Horns.

KA: That's so funny!

BW: It's really interesting. String players hate low thirds, they think that they're leading up, or it's a leading third. I once asked someone in a period orchestra, what do the string players do? Do they tune thirds high? He said no, the strings all play low thirds. I think that's one of the reasons it sounds really different. My hypothesis is that there's a period of time where expressiveness in intonation became paramount and actual in-tune playing ceased to be as important in certain ways. So, there's this conflict between melodic and harmonic intonation.

You as a horn player have to keep that in mind, too. If you're playing in an exposed piece and you're playing the thirds kind of flat and you're not playing with anybody, maybe that's not going to work as well. You have to be sensitive to those things. Still, when you're playing in a brass section, you would never find anybody playing high thirds, ever. It's fascinating. Of course, if you're playing with a piano you have to make accommodations.

KA: Did you ever play natural horn in the orchestra?

BW: Yes, Jon and I have done it. We did Handel's *Royal Fireworks* one time, and one of the *Water Music* suites with Tom Koopman. He was so happy. Most American orchestras don't do that at all, and I have to give Jon credit for giving me a kick to do it because it's fun. It feels like you're really out on the edge when you're not used to it, but it's super fun. We did a Haydn symphony with Bernard Labadie, the "Drum Roll" Symphony No. 103. Jon and I have a matched pair of Webb natural horns, in addition to the hundred other horns that we own between us. Jon had to build an entire storage place in his backyard to hold them all. I have several over by the piano.

[Shows me a Kruspe Horner model from early 20th century, a Jungwirth Vienna horn, an unmarked German single F horn from late 19th century, and a single F Kruspe from 1880.]

KA: Which is the favorite of all your horns?

BW: Hard question. The horn I sounded best on in the orchestra is probably a Geyer horn I bought from a student at Eastman. I did a story on Facebook about tracking that horn back to its original owner. That horn has just the biggest, most wonderfully gorgeous solo horn sound, and it's a tremendous instrument. I got the best results out of that horn. I have a sentimental attachment to a C.F. Schmidt horn that I won my job in Denver and my job here on, so when it was time for me to retire and play my last few concerts, I played on that horn. I played the same horn at the beginning of my time here as at the end. That's a lovely horn, it has a great sound. Jon brought his Schmidt in for those weeks, too, and Jesse Clevenger is playing third horn here and he is playing Dale's original Schmidt, so we had some serious Schmidt energy going on, which was fun. Jon and I put together an exhibit of old instruments at Davies Hall for patrons to wander through. I think we had 25 or 30 horns, and we had everything from alphorns and Tibetan horns to natural horns and trompes de chasse. The audience loved it – no one had ever done anything like that before at the hall. It took a little organization of course, but it was super fun to do.



L to R: Jesse Clevenger, Jon Ring, and Bob playing their C.F. Schmidt horns during Bob's final weeks with the SFSO.

KA: You and Jon went to IHS in Ghent, right?

BW: Yes, that was fascinating because I got the feeling that the horn lives in the world of music there in a different way than it lives in the United States. There are players there who I really enjoyed hearing; someone I'd met before was a guy named Jukka Harju from Finland. He played a Bach cello suite at one of the recitals and his playing is tremendous. And Jean-Pierre Dassonville, whom I had never heard before; what a beautiful, musical, tremendous player he is. It's hard to find recordings of him because there are not that many of them, but just terrific.

And then there's Johannes Hinterholzer, whose Mozart concertos, if you haven't heard them, it's time you did!

He's visiting at the end of this week so I'm about to see him here. But there are so many wonderful players outside of the United States. When I was growing up in a tiny town in New York State, I didn't hear any [European horn players]. I heard the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Boston Symphony in the summertime, but I never heard European horn players. It's been a great pleasure to get to know some of those people and to get to know Frøydis, she's just tremendous.

KA: She sure is! You grew up in Schenectady, is that right?

BW: I did. It's a good place to be from.

KA: Did you have horn lessons before you went to college?

BW: Yes. There was a local horn player who had gone to Indiana University as a music education major and been a student of Farkas. He was a band director at a different high school, but I studied with him, and then also with a guy at my high school who had been a member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. The circumstances of him landing at my high school after being a member of the Met Orchestra seem peculiar, but I don't know much about him and I studied with him only briefly; he and I didn't get on that well. Dale, who I never took a lesson with but crossed paths with at summer festivals, called me "teacher proof." He thought that I was going to succeed no matter what, it didn't really matter who I studied with. In some ways, a lot of what I had to learn, I learned on my own.

KA: What advice, or words of wisdom do you have for young players?

BW: The world of music now is a much more challenging place than it was when I was trying to break in. It almost feels like you're not even doing the same thing as I did. Back in the day, you went to school, you learned how to take auditions, you took auditions, and you got a job. That's what you did, that was my entire focus. Playing good music, learning the repertoire, broadening your technique and expressiveness and sound, all those things.

Now there's this other layer of social media and more students chasing fewer jobs. Back then, there were more

orchestras, even in the Bay area; when I moved here the Oakland Symphony gave weekly concerts. Now it's still a good orchestra but it gives only four or five pairs of concerts a year, so it's seriously, seriously less [work] than it used to be.

San Jose Symphony is the same thing; it's now called Symphony Silicon Valley, and they used to give weekly concerts. The whole culture of classical music has changed, and sadly not for the better. It feels like it's less relevant to people's lives. If you are a student, you better really love what you do, because you're going to be challenged in ways that I was not challenged when I was growing up and learning the business. There's always room at the top, but it's way more difficult to get to the top now than it used to be. There are lots of opportunities, but the standards are high, and it's conflicting with declining school music programs.

Someone asked me the other day what was school music like in high school for me. We had two bands, an orchestra, two choirs, jazz band, and music theory classes. Admittedly I grew up in a well-off neighborhood, and in a lot of ways Schenectady was built around the General Electric Company (my dad was an engineer building nuclear submarines there). A lot of smart people were floating around for whom culture was important. I was super fortunate and not to mention living near both Saratoga Performing Arts Center and Tanglewood, it was a good convergence. But today, Proposition 13 destroyed music in California public schools and is in the process of destroying other things, too. If people don't get involved when they're young, it's not going to happen. These changes affect things everywhere in the music business.

It's all about what's important. Where do people think their music is going to come from? It's tough in challenging economic times to fund music adequately.

KA: It's frustrating, in part because it's nothing new.

BW: No, it's not. When I was in high school, I wrote a paper about the death of classical music. And this was 1972 or something – when I read that paper now, it's so naïve yet so familiar sounding.

KA: It's hard to think of the San Francisco Symphony horn section without thinking of you and Jon as the dynamic duo!

BW: Jon and Jessica are the last. A year ago, I took a picture before Bruce retired, May of 2023. It was me, Jon, Bruce, Jessica, Mark, and Daniel. Now Daniel is in Dallas and Mark's in Chicago and I'm retired and Bruce is retired. Big changes are ahead. I mentioned Davies Hall, which opened in 1980. The reason that is significant is before Davies Hall opened, the symphony and the opera and the ballet all shared the opera house, and some people played in both the opera orchestra and the symphony orchestra. But when Davies opened, you had to choose [one or the other] and a lot of the older players were encouraged to stay with the opera. So, a whole layer of fresh young faces showed up in the Symphony in 1980, but 40 years later what happens? They



Jon Ring and Bob Ward playing French piston horns

all retire at the same time, and so during Covid I think we had 20 retirements.

Now more are retiring because we're all the same age. It's causing difficulties in the organization because there are so many vacancies. They gave golden parachutes during Covid to get people to retire, and we're slowly filling jobs but mine is unfilled, Bruce's is unfilled although they had an audition for it. Daniel and Mark leave two more positions to fill and that's just in the horn section, so it's super challenging organizationally at the moment.

KA: And Nicole [Cash Saks] left a few years ago, too.

BW: Nikki left six or seven years ago. That was one of the saddest things ever, she was such a great player and such a wonderful person, and I loved having her here. She added so much and to have to give up the instrument like she had to, dystonia is a terrible thing.

KA: I interviewed her recently too, and she adores you so I can see that the feeling is mutual.

BW: Who wouldn't adore her, she's terrific. She's starting a new career in audio books narration. She has a wonderful voice, just exactly right for reading. No one more perfect to do that.


KA: You have a good radio voice, too!

BW: I'm not too bad, I used to do radio when I was at school, actually. I hosted an hour-long weekly program on WOBC, the college radio station, which had about 10 Watts of power. If you drove outside Oberlin, you couldn't hear it anymore. The show was about wind music; I'd play Strauss's Oboe Concerto and this and that, just really fun. Somewhere I have embarrassing recordings of myself announcing these things. My voice is good I know, although it's gotten a little gravelly since I was young, but I used to sing well.

Bob still lives in the Bay Area and plays regularly on the many historical instruments in his collection. His approach to pedagogy will be the subject of another article in an upcoming issue of The Horn Call.




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COR Values

Brad Tatum, Column Editor

Steve Lewis and Legacy Horn Experience

A recent addition to the horn community, Legacy Horn Experience, offers a variety of mouthpieces and publications on their website, legacyhornexperience.com. Owned and operated by Steve Lewis, LHE is working with several prominent hornists to produce and sell mouthpieces and sheet music that have become difficult to find or access. Here we learn more about his plans, business approach, and concepts of mouthpiece design.

Steve Lewis and Martin Hackleman



Brad Tatum (BT): Please tell us about your own experience with the horn and your career as a musician.

Steve Lewis (SL): I started playing the horn in middle school band, and then in high school I auditioned for the North Carolina School of the Arts, where David Jolley was teaching. I studied with him for a couple years, and then went up to Queens College in New York, and studied with him there for another year. After that, I earned a theory and composition degree at East Carolina University. This is close to where I'm from, and I later completed my master's degree in orchestral conducting at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. I've always been interested in the horn, but also theory, conducting, and arranging. I'm sort of a chameleon; I enjoy doing all kinds of different things. I was almost finished with my conducting degree and then Martin Hackleman started teaching at UMKC. I was fortunate to study with him during my last year there, and we've been friends ever since. I also conduct a community orchestra here in town [Kansas City, Missouri]. I started a group called the Midwest Chamber Ensemble, which is a small chamber ensemble. I conducted that for ten years, and now I've handed it off to somebody else.

BT: So you're no longer leading the Midwest Chamber Ensemble?

SL: No, I think my official title is principal guest conductor. I conduct once a year and play some chamber music, but am no longer in charge. I do not have to answer five hundred emails every week anymore.

BT: So when and how did the idea for Legacy Horn Experience come about?

SL: It was about a year and a half ago. One of the many things I do is work in an instrument repair shop. Unfortunately, I've seen a lot of smoke and mirrors in the retail industry. We also see it online. A lot of "information" is available, but most of it is hollow, so starting this business was in the back of my mind for a few years. Especially with mouthpieces, we have preconceived notions about what should or shouldn't be, and new innovative stuff as

well. I often wonder what's wrong with the basic things that we've had in the past. I was talking with Marty one evening about this, and he had some publications that he wanted to get out into the world. We started with the idea that we wanted to make things available that were time-tested by real pros in the industry. Everything that we offered would be held to an incredibly high standard. We weren't going to make different products for different price points. We weren't going to have any quotas that we had to meet as far as number of products or size of business. Instead, the goal was to find intriguing ideas that have stood the test of time and are endorsed by well-known players. That's the basic idea behind Legacy Horn Experience.

BT: Early on, was your primary focus on mouthpieces or sheet music?

SL: Mouthpieces were the direction when I had my original conversation with Marty. I had always admired the old Reynolds mouthpieces, and felt that would be a good place to start. At the beginning of the Farkas book, he recommends five mouthpieces, basic middle of the road mouthpieces, and most of them aren't available anymore. I thought about starting with the Reynolds because I enjoy those memories. Even before the business got started, I was picking Marty's brain, seeing what he thought of the Reynolds mouthpieces over his career. Then the idea of publications came up, and these things ended up happening in tandem.

BT: Besides Farkas mentioning them, why did you feel they would be worth adding to the horn community?

SL: I'm a big fan of simple, middle-of-the-road equipment. As personalized and specialized as equipment can be, the physics and the mechanics of what we're doing is pretty simple, so it's best to keep the equipment that way. When I started with the Reynolds mouthpieces, the first thing that I ran into was their inconsistency. Being handmade on a manual lathe, we had to sort through and figure out what exactly we were going to offer. Now, we have three bore

sizes, two-junction points, and three different rims. The original Reynolds mouthpieces were a #16 bore, but the #14 bore we carry is by far the most popular. I wonder how many of the decisions about mouthpiece sizes came down to their choice of tooling and the options available at the time. I wonder about playing characteristics at the time; when I went from a #16 bore to a #14 bore, that one change really made that mouthpiece work for a lot more people.

BT: A #16 is small.

SL: It's small, but when you think about the horns that Pot-tag would have been playing, the Reynolds doubles, they're just squirrely sometimes and, having that smaller bore, I guess it was helpful in balancing out their large throat bells.

BT: What was involved in getting the business started?

SL: Most of owning a horn-related business has nothing to do with playing the horn. It's getting your tax ID, your website, and forms all sorted out. I tried to build a system that I can run and let the business take care of itself and automate the boring stuff. With mouthpieces, I work with two companies. I started working with Peter Pickett in Kentucky; he makes a lot of brass mouthpieces for many different companies. There are a lot of horn players who have a mouthpiece in their case that Peter made and they may not even realize it. I talked to a couple people and several potential business partners on the manufacturing side and ended up going with Peter. Marty and I sorted through these original Reynolds mouthpieces and would send them to Peter to be copied. They would come back to us, then I would play them and Marty and I would talk through them. It was a round-robin process of prototyping until we got settled on what we wanted. That's also the process that we are repeating for any new mouthpieces that come out.

Hopefully, by the time this article appears in print, we will have finished collaborating with Randy Gardner on a mouthpiece and with David Jolley on a rim. Prototypes for those are being plated right now and should be at my doorstep next week.

BT: Tell me more about those upcoming mouthpiece projects.

SL: Let's start with Randy Gardner. When he was studying with Farkas, Farkas had a giant box of rejected mouthpieces that were made for him that he didn't like, and Randy was told to take this box, go through it, and find a mouthpiece. Randy's mouthpiece is a modified Farkas mouthpiece. With David Jolley's rim, he's had a few different rims made for him over the years, and as a student of his, I played some of them, and we looked at a few different things. We're trying to narrow it down to something that's really going to work for him and his playing.

Another collaboration in the pipeline involves Lisa Bontrager. We are working on creating a tenor horn mouthpiece that we can put a regular horn rim on. Geometry isn't really on our side, but we're going to see what we can come up with. That's going to be tricky and it will take a lot of prototyping unless we get lucky.

BT: While you're talking about them, I've noticed you have numerous prominent hornists helping you collaborate in your business. Can you talk about their influence? How have they been able to contribute?

SL: I started this with Marty. I studied with him and we live less than ten miles apart, and we're friends. In my relationship with David Jolley, it had been ten years or so since we had really been in close contact, but during the pandemic I had lessons with David over Zoom. It was fun to reconnect with him. It was just a year or so later when we started talking about Legacy and what he might want to contribute. I had always admired David's arrangements. In horn class, he would bring manuscripts of pieces for horn choir that he had arranged while on the plane. We would read all these interesting pieces and composers. I had never heard of Marenzio, Palestrina, or whomever. He was also doing this for his quintet, brass trio, and more. He's good at it. I told David, "I know there are basketfuls of this stuff, let's get as much as possible out." He was eager to do that.

Randy was the next one I got on the team. We are working on a project now around the Kling Etudes and making a new edition of them. Not for the sake of making a new edition, but with commentary accompanying each study by David, Randy, or Marty. Marty and I were kicking around ideas about who else we might get involved with, and it didn't take long for Randy Gardner's name to come up. We reached out to him and he was interested in doing this. So that's a long-term publication project that's in the works. It's special having three horn players of that stature contribute to a single volume on horn playing. It's exciting.

BT: When I was younger, I just played through all this music. I didn't necessarily have any insight on what I was reading and developed many bad habits. Having that extra insight on how to approach it, and what to be thinking about would have been invaluable!

SL: Yeah. It's great that we have the internet and that there's so much information available, but a lot of information clogs up everything. It's my hope with Legacy that you can drill down to the nuts and bolts of horn playing. We've just started working with Michelle Stebleton and Lisa Bontrager, and I'm excited to have both of them involved. Their work together with the album *Mirror Image* and what they did for the horn duo repertoire is amazing. Their teaching careers at large state institutions are different from what David, Randy, and Marty had as teachers. Plus, Lisa's experience as a horn player playing tenor horn in a brass band, that's another set of experiences, something no one else on the team does. It's about gathering up a group of people with specific sets of experiences that complement each other.

Lastly, we're just starting a relationship with Rick Todd. He has yet another set of experiences with what he did in the commercial music world and the jazz world. It's important to memorialize what all these people have done and have contributed. Because when you look at these six horn teachers, it's hard to find a working horn player that hasn't been influenced in some way by one of them.

BT: You've really covered your bases with the solo, chamber, orchestra, commercial, and collegiate realm. This leads into the sheet music side of your business. Tell us more about that.

SL: A lot of research has to go into every piece that we offer due to copyright issues. Then you proofread and edit and proofread ad nauseam. You hope it comes back from the printer and send out the first copy and no one says "Hey, you missed all this stuff." We've avoided that so far, but it is something you go through with every new publication.

BT: Are you offering digital editions or just print right now?

SL: It's mostly print, only a couple of digital offerings. Years ago, I worked in a sheet music shop, and I understand the convenience of digital downloads. I use an iPad, but there is something about the tangible object that has value. I try to hang onto the things in life that are not connected to a screen.

BT: I don't use digital versions for my own gigs. When I get something digital, I always print it out.

SL: Some of it comes down to the particular items we're offering, as there are often copyright limitations. For example, with the Verne Reynolds *Hornvibes* and *Elegy*, I was able to get permission to reissue those, but only in print. I couldn't do digital. It's dicey to do digital. It only takes one rogue PDF for everyone to be able to access it. We offer quite a few pieces and publications that we brought back from the dead. The two Verne Reynolds pieces are chief among them, and also the Wendell Hoss Etudes.

Many horn players my age had no idea who Wendell Hoss was except that he arranged the Bach Cello Suites. Having studied with David, we heard stories about Mr. Hoss, but when I asked David to write the preface for these, he had no idea they existed. They were collected from different students' notes from his lessons and then put together. They were in print for less than a year and then the original company went out of business. We got permission to pick those back up.

We also offer works that are difficult to obtain. We keep the Barboteu Etudes and Ceccarossi Studies in stock. Yes, you can order those from a lot of different places, but we can get them out quickly. The Ceccarossi studies are great, but it took me six months to get a hold of them, even as a vendor ordering in bulk. I keep those on hand because once people see them, they really like them.

BT: I'll check those out. I've never heard of them.

SL: The first volume, which I don't carry, is a very basic method. The second volume has etudes for stopped horn almost exclusively, and the third volume is etudes based on orchestral excerpts. Marty really enjoyed these etudes, so that's the reason I got them and made them available.

BT: Is there a specific area in sheet music that you want to focus on in the future?

SL: Print is one of the areas where I am open to working with the new team members. I asked them, "How do you

want to cement your legacy within this company?" It's dependent on the team members I'm working with. Not just respecting what they have to offer, but making sure that the horn community has access to what this generation of teachers wants to offer.

BT: Going back to mouthpieces, how did you develop a relationship with L'Olifant mouthpieces?

SL: It was an accident. I was on vacation in Paris with my wife and she wanted to visit a landmark that I didn't care to visit. She went off and I was wandering around Paris and thought "I'll stop at L'Olifant." I had to get on three different buses and was close to giving up, but I eventually got there and started chatting with Jeremy at the front desk, telling him who I am and about my idea to start the company. I was there for three hours testing out mouthpieces and horns.

Talking to Bertrand and Arthur Jeannoutot about the history of the company and seeing their entire workshop was amazing. It was a great experience. I stayed in touch with them once I got my own company up and running and asked them about becoming a dealer, and they were excited to do that. I asked them to make our V cup mouthpieces because that mouthpiece was very similar to what they were making already. I've been happy with their work and it's interesting how the #14 bore is the most popular size in both our R and V series models.

BT: Would you say that the bottom line is it's best to stay on a middle ground? That 90% of horn players don't need an extreme mouthpiece?

SL: It is interesting when talking to people over email, on the phone, or at conventions, 99% of the time it's better to move toward normal, middle-of-the-road equipment. I think we all have this strange idea that we're special and need some special equipment. Occam's Razor, keep it simple. I can't stress that enough. People often ask me about a mouthpiece and they'll say, I have these five mouthpieces, I'm looking for this or that, but they already have that mouthpiece. They don't need a new mouthpiece, but there's nothing like new equipment to inspire somebody to practice. There's a lot to be said for having as many tools in the arsenal as possible. I'm reluctant to make absolute judgments. I think every person and situation is different when it comes to choices about mouthpieces.

BT: Every hornist has their own habits and way of playing, and every designer has their own way of approaching the horn. I always have to tell people that just because you try a high-quality horn at a convention and it doesn't feel good, doesn't mean it's a bad instrument. It just means you're not playing it the way it was designed to be played.

SL: My biggest pet peeve in the mouthpiece world is the inner diameter of rims. I have so many conversations with people who say they only play 17.5 mm or whatever, but there's no standard point at which that inner measurement is taken. The high point or contact point on the rim is different based on the shape. There is no standard depth at

which the inner diameter is measured. Within a particular manufacturer, we're going to assume that the measurement point is consistent, but when comparing a 17.5 by one manufacturer to the 17.5 by another manufacturer, it may not even be the same at all.

It's something I run into often, and I encourage people to be less dogmatic and more open-minded about rim inner diameter. I've heard people say that inner diameter is where you start your journey of figuring out what mouthpieces work for you, and that's not necessarily wrong. For me, the conversation I like to have with someone is: What do you want to sound like? What do you actually sound like? Are you addressing those differences in the practice room? Then we can start having a conversation about equipment. I think too often we just dive into the numbers and measurements of the mouthpiece. When I'm at conventions and events, I try to have that conversation about their awareness of their own playing goals.

It's important to understand that everybody's going to be at a different place in their journey. For the young student, they're going to be tied to what they've heard from

their teacher. For the seasoned professional, they have a good idea of how they want to sound in a specific hall. Sometimes, people come in who play in an orchestra; they have specific things in mind, but freelancers have to be more flexible.

BT: This has been an enlightening conversation, and you've given us a lot to think about! Thank you so much for your time and information! I think hornists will be glad of your work to keep these products available to the horn community.

Brad Tatum is a freelance hornist on modern and historic horns based in the Washington DC and Baltimore area. He is principal natural hornist for the Washington Bach Consort, Bach Society of Minnesota, and The Thirteen Choir and Orchestra, and a member of the Apollo Orchestra, the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, and the Washington Concert Opera Orchestra. He is Band and Orchestra Director at Elizabeth Seton High School and teaches at his private studio.

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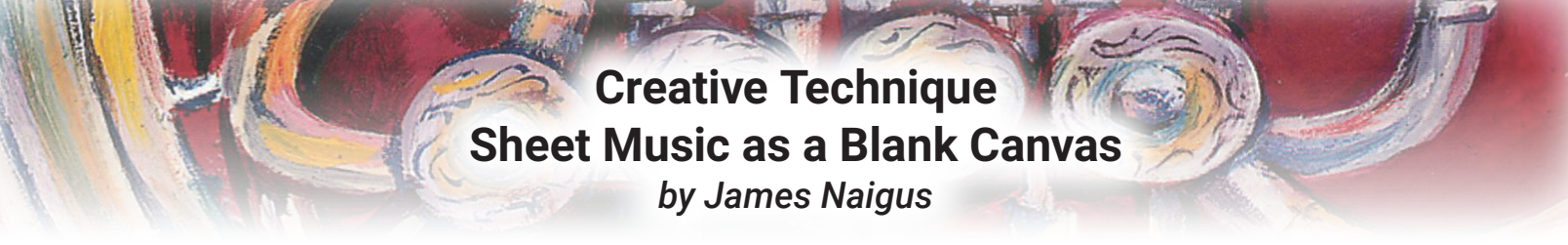
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Creative Technique

Sheet Music as a Blank Canvas

by James Naigus

What is our job as musicians? This is of course a complex question with a variety of answers depending on the surrounding circumstances. But ultimately, our job is to *play the music*. So, what exactly does this mean in relation to reading the sheet music? Is it diligently and dutifully following every dynamic, phrase indication, breath mark, etc.? Do composers intend for a level of specificity based on these musical expression marks? Further, do editors of various editions have the authority to designate or supersede a composer's intent? Are we as performers allowed to stray from the page? Is this different depending on whether it's for a lesson, on a recital, for an audition?

Again, these questions do not all have direct answers, but they are important ideas to think about as we reflect on our job of *playing the music*. In talking about phrasing and musicality with my students, I often ask "What does the music want?" and "What do *you* want to do with the music?" rather than prescribing a single approach. However, regardless of our artistic intents, often times when we perform, we end up reacting to what we see on the page, which frequently is antithetical to good musical choices.

Case in point is a very familiar edition of Richard Strauss's Horn Concerto No. 1, Op. 11. Anecdotes aside, most would agree that the number of breath marks is not conducive to good phrasing. Furthermore, the inclusion of many hairpins also may contribute to unsupported air or interrupted melodic direction. As far as dynamics are

concerned, I like to remind students that dynamic markings are simply to ensure variation of sound (which could be of a volume or timbral variety) rather than a particular decibel level. Thus, adjusted dynamics may assist in a developmental and pedagogical approach while learning and performing works as well.

To help students craft a musical approach to the exposition of this work, I recreated the first page, note for note, line for line, but removed all dynamics, slurs, breath marks, and articulations. This is the *blank canvas* approach to sheet music. With sheet music on tablets, we can now more easily erase or "white out" markings to achieve this, but sometimes a complete re-engraving makes this process easier, especially if one wanted to make their own edition purely within the refinement of music notation programs.

Note: A recent horn audition for the United States Army Field Band contained excerpts of J.S. Bach's Cello Suites that likewise were "notes only," as in the Bach original, so the performers have the freedom to express their musicality without any preconceptions or unified frameworks.

Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to use this version of Strauss 1 to make your own edition, focusing first and foremost on good phrasing. You could also make editions based on your favorite recordings! You can download a clean copy from the following link: <https://shorturl.at/eSzxw>

Remember: don't just play the notes – play the music.

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 current research involves expanding the compositional possibilities of instruments limited to the overtone series through creative reharmonizations and abundant use of the Lydian dominant scale. You can reach him at jamesnaiguscomposer@gmail.com.



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HORNKONZERT

Richard Strauss, Op. 11

Horn-Solostimme in F.

Allegro M.M. ♩ = 112

Solo

Tutti 20



Richard Strauss, Horn Concerto No. 1, mm. 1-106, edited by James Naigus

Mental Fitness: Resilience Training for Musicians

Rusty Holmes, Column Editor

In a horn player's career, learning the skills needed to master the instrument and land a job is only a small part of creating a fulfilling, passionate career as a musician. In this recurring column, Rusty Holmes offers strategies to build resilience by addressing topics related to musicians' mindset. Similar to how an athlete trains specific muscles in the gym, musicians can strength-

en various aspects of their mindset through specific exercises and consistent practice and training. The intention is that you feel empowered to invest in your mental fitness through the perspectives and exercises offered in this column to have a fulfilling, energized, and impactful career as a musician.

Compare and Despair

We are all so familiar with the gut-punched feeling of defeat when we hear another horn player play the exact music we are working on, only ten times better, faster, or more musical than we can. What a deflating feeling! One moment we feel pride and a sense of accomplishment for the work we've put in, and the next we feel utterly incompetent on the horn. As soon as we compare ourselves to someone else, our minds race with the old familiar script: "I'll never be able to play that cleanly. My sound isn't even close to that pretty. My high range will never feel that effortless. I've been working at this forever and it's not even close to being that good. I was stupid to think I was even playing it well in the first place. I might as well just give up now." That downward spiral can take us to an abyss of negativity ending somewhere along the lines of "I'm a total loser, and I should just hang up the horn."

This downward spiral doesn't just happen when we

hear someone else play the same music we are working on; that would be too kind! These thoughts can be triggered by hearing others play in a masterclass, practice at school, perform at live concerts, warm up for an audition, or recorded on social media accounts. A minor mental meltdown is basically just around the corner anytime you measure yourself against anyone else's playing, no matter where you hear them. In the coaching world, we call it "Compare and Despair." It's the cycle of comparing yourself to others, entertaining a downward spiral of negative thoughts, and feeling hopeless in your abilities.

Does this sound like you? Don't sweat it. We all go through it at one point or another. But gaining some perspective on this and working towards not comparing yourself to others is crucial to having a career in which you feel confident and worthy of your abilities and successes.

~~~~~  
**Taking others out of the picture and looking at the progress on your own timeline is a great place to start.**  
~~~~~

Mindset Workout

So, how do you lift the spell of "compare and despair?" Taking others out of the picture and looking at the progress on your own timeline is a great place to start. Here are four exercises you can use to gain some perspective and feel empowered on your own journey without comparing yourself to others.

Gaining Future-Self Perspective

1. Set a timer for five minutes, and write down all of the differences in how you are as a musician now compared to how you were five or ten years ago. If you are a college student, maybe just write the difference between now and five years ago. If you are older, maybe think back to ten years ago. Don't overcomplicate this; be playful! Make notes on growth in musicality, technique, sound, comprehension, life experience, or perspective.
2. After writing for five minutes, it's likely that you realize that significant changes can occur over five or ten years. Your Future Self can also be wildly different from who you are now. With this in mind, set another timer for five minutes and write about where you would *love* to be in your musical career ten years from now. Where do you want to be performing? Where do you want to be teaching? How do you want your relationship to music to be? How do you want to feel towards the horn? And how do you want to sound on the horn? Again, make this exercise playful; think big! Don't limit yourself in any way, and don't feel overly committed to what you write down. This is just an exercise.
3. Set a timer for five minutes. Write a letter from your Current Self to your Future Self ten years from now. Write about your commitments, intentions, and anything else that you'd like to share. Start with "Dear Future Self,..." and see what flows.
4. Set a timer for five minutes, and write a letter from your Future Self to your Current Self.

The point of these exercises is to give yourself perspective on your journey as a musician. Getting in touch with your Future Self will empower you to accept where you are now and help you progress to the version of yourself you would like to become. Identifying with your Future Self will also help you to see your path forward, creating a sense of self-efficacy, or belief in your capabilities, rather than comparing your inadequacies to others.

What insight did you gain from this exercise? What advice may have come from your Future Self? What were your commitments from your Current Self? Feel free to share feedback with the author at mentalfitness@rustyholmes.com.

Quote to remember:

"I am exactly where I need to be to get to where I want to go."

Rusty Holmes is a horn player, teacher, and licensed Mental Fitness Coach based in Austin, Texas. He is passionate about helping students, teachers, and fellow horn players live happier, healthier, and more fulfilled lives through using practical mindset tools and exercises in and out of the practice room.



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MILITARY MATTERS

Erika Loke, Column Editor

Music in the Military: Thoughts from a Retired US Army Bandsman by Master Sergeant Alan G. White, Ret.

MSG Alan G. White, Ret. served as a performer and clinician with The United States Army Field Band for nearly three decades. Alan continues to perform and teach in the Maryland/Washington DC area. Before joining the Field Band, he performed in a variety of ensembles, including The American Wind Symphony, La Orquesta Sinfonica del Estado de México, and the Nico Malan Opera House Orchestra (Cape Town, South Africa). Alan is a firm believer that music can make a difference in the lives of people of all ages. He is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory and the University of Cincinnati.

As I look back over my career as a United States Army musician, there is plenty to reflect on: so many remarkable moments as a horn player and a soldier. When I was a conservatory student, I never would have imagined I'd enlist in the military, but I now feel blessed that I had the opportunity to serve! Here are a few reflections on my unforgettable journey and some personal thoughts on the importance of music in the military.

Though much has changed in my life since the fall of 1989 when I enlisted, I still remember the anxiety I felt when I shipped off to Basic Training at Fort Dix, New Jersey. I enlisted in the Army Bands Program, now known as the Army Music Program. The individual musical organizations are still called "Bands," but they now consist of groups of musicians referred to as "music performance teams," which encompass marching bands, ceremonial bands, woodwind and brass quintets, brass bands, rock bands, and other ensembles. Besides playing music, all band members are expected to adhere to military-wide entrance, fitness, training, and preparedness requirements. Additionally, as they spend more years in uniform, soldier-musicians are expected to assume ever-increasing administrative and managerial responsibilities. Though many soldiers enlisting in the military are unsure of where they may be assigned over the course of their service, I was fortunate to have a consistent duty assignment, under the privileged moniker "Special Bandsman." After completing Basic Training, I served as a member of the United States Army Field Band, which is the Army's official touring musical organization.

As part of this one-of-a-kind assignment, I spent over 100 days out of every year traveling around the country for almost three decades, performing in the concert band and in a chamber ensemble for all manner of concerts, recitals, inaugural parades, memorial services, and ceremonies. I've performed in all 50 states, at D-Day memorial festivities and military tattoos¹ in Europe, and in some of the nation's finest concert halls, colleges, high schools, amphitheaters, and other non-conventional performance venues.

I had many memorable musical experiences as a member of the US Army Field Band. In addition to leading the Pentagon Winds quintet for over 15 years, I performed in recitals with the horn section on the main stage at two International Horn Symposiums (Los Angeles and Ithaca). A few years back, I had the privilege of standing in front of the band (in a horn quartet) performing an arrangement of Chick Corea's *Spain* on two concert tours. My final concert tour with the band featured the entire six-member section premiering a commissioned



Pentagon Winds: Natalie Boyd Kinzey (flute), Jennifer Bishop (oboe), Melissa Johnson Lander (clarinet), Daniel Bowles (bassoon), Alan White (horn)

work by Kerry Turner, which honored the heroic accomplishments and spirit of the 26th United States President, Theodore Roosevelt. What a way to conclude a musical journey, as a soldier-musician and a horn player! With so many top-notch music schools across the country, music majors would do well to remember that despite reductions in personnel (and the deactivation of numerous bands), the Army remains the nation's single largest employer of musicians, and the United States military is the single largest employer of musicians in the entire world.

In the last decade, the United States military bands have experienced cuts. Between 2012 and 2019, 10% of all bands were eliminated, and then last year, all the Air National Guard Bands were disbanded.² Over these years, there has been much discussion on social media concerning the condition, responsibilities, and worthiness of military bands. Despite the high costs of running these bands, a strong case can be made for the value of music in the military. As a recently retired Army Bandsman, I can attest that military musicians play a vital role in both the military community and for the entire country. I'm no psychologist, but I know enough about human nature to understand the importance of motivation, feelings, spirit, and that music touches all these elements.



The Army Field Band premiering Kerry Turner's Theodore's Anthem. L to R: Selena Maytum, Becca Bainbridge, Becky McCloughlin, Alan White, Robert Cherry, J.G. Miller

I
s a w
countless
veterans in tears
during our perform-
ances of patriotic music.
Many of them said our perform-
ance (and presence) took them
back to their days of military service.
Some said it enabled them to revisit some
of the painful memories buried deep within,
and it helped them to find healing and redis-
cover a sense of pride in their military service.

In the face of scrutiny over their budgets, military bands continually need to address accountability concerns by consistently articulating goals, utilization of required resources, and increased quantification of tangible achievements. Yet, how precisely can we quantify their true value? How do we measure success in the task of providing music for the military, communities, and family members? Can we really quantify things like smiles, hugs, tears, and handshakes? How about applause? Or maybe

the number of veterans who were physically assisted up to a standing position during our performances of the Star-Spangled Banner?

Quantifying the impact of any arts organization (especially when it is government funded and tasked with representing soldiers) is no small task. How is success defined in a concert given by members of the military? The Government Accountability Office tracks numbers of audience members, high-ranking officials in attendance, purposes of events, and other metrics, but the human factors that matter most are



*Horn Section of the Virginia Grand Military Band (May 2024).
Back Row, L to R: Jennifer Sorgatz, Jack Hufnagle, Cheryl Sager, Aaron Cockson.
Front Row, L to R: Alan White, Lora Katz, Jerry Brubaker, Leslie Mincer.*



Army Field Band horn section playing Alan's arrangement of "The Star Spangled Banner" (which was chosen by the first SpaceX astronauts for their Tesla ride to the launch pad). L to R: Selena Maytum, Alan White, Rebecca Bainbridge, Rebecca McCloughlin, J.G. Miller, Robert Cherry.

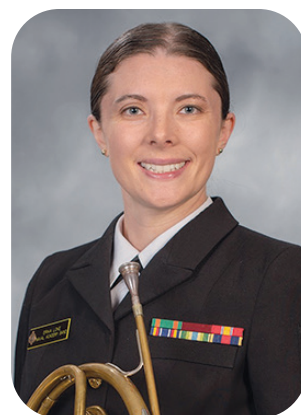
difficult to quantify. For example, these musical organizations represent all Americans, and the performances must speak to people from wildly different backgrounds. Some have mixed feelings regarding the military, whether it is the culture it represents or the pain it can trigger from the memories of family members lost in battle or injured during a deployment. Music has the unique power to stir the soul and bring people together in a way that nothing else can.

As musicians, we can sometimes get so wrapped up in our craft that we forget about its power to inspire the best in us, sooth the wounds of loss and pain, and help us remember and re-experience significant events in our lives. Music has the ability to renew, remind, and accompany us in our lives, in good times and in bad. Let's hope the music doesn't stop. Our very lives may depend on it!

I once came across a t-shirt while perusing a local record shop, with the following phrase emblazoned across the front: "Music: The Weapon of the Future." The military bands are an effective tool for peace and international collaboration, and I hope that their traditions will continue to live on.

Now, as a retired military musician living in the greater DC metro area, I am privileged to perform (following the Covid pause) in two distinguished wind ensembles: The Maryland Winds, and the Virginia Grand Military Band (VGMB). Both are extraordinary ensembles; however, the VGMB has special notoriety, as it has been in existence for 30 years, and is made up of retired members of (mostly) the DC area premier bands. Though it largely occupies a patriotic niche with its programming, this stirring ensemble presents the type of performance experience that every live classical music concert should strive to emulate. The band's founder and conductor, Loras John Schissel, brilliantly engages the audience with his captivating introductions, telling the story of the music and the composers, much as a tour guide would enlighten a small audience. Every performance is memorable and allows the members of the ensemble to continue serving the community with their music and spirit of military service.

Corny as it may sound, as a college student, I never could have imagined there could be so much spirit and value in playing the offbeats in a military march. Yet, playing traditional marches is merely one facet of life as a horn player who proudly wears the uniform of the United States.



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

¹A performance of music or display of armed forces in general. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_tattoo

²americanhomefront.wunc.org/2017-09-01/a-swan-song-for-some-military-bands-budget-cuts-stop-the-music

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The "Student Corner" column features content by and for horn students. Students of all levels are invited to submit material to the Column Editor at laurenantoniolli@gmail.com.

Failure Redefined

by Inman Hebert

Every horn performer must learn to cope with failure because everyone experiences setbacks. How we respond to these moments can define both our developmental process and our professional lives. Reframing requires understanding that failure serves as an opportunity for growth. New strategies for improvement emerge from thoughtful reflection on our experiences. Transforming the potential negativity we as performers encounter when we inevitably fail into a positive mindset that seeks to find space for improvement in our most humbling moments can help lessen the distinctions between success and failure and enable us to grow from the subjective nature of failure.

What is failure? Failure is a temporary setback on the road to achieving your objectives. We often think of the result as the sole measure of success. But in that world, failure may be more commonplace than we think. After all, everyone has failed. Even the most respected and admired performers cannot meet the expectations of perfection night after night. Many respected orchestral horn players had unsuccessful audition stories before their successes. The best performers understand failures begin and end as opportunities, regardless of the outcome, and can measure the opportunity to grow personally and professionally. As musicians, we can start by reconceptualizing that putting ourselves in front of potential critics, peers, and audiences is a successful course of action.

The hardest lesson might be learning not to take failure and criticism personally. Remember, only your immediate circle of supporters shares in your goals. In many situations, your performance may be one of many nameless, faceless, and otherwise unmemorable tryouts in a sea of equally ambitious competitors. Framing feedback as an opportunity for growth redirects our efforts to the future.

How can we best learn from our failures? Regardless of the outcome, a positive attitude transforms a potentially negative situation into a constructive experience. Far too often, performers become mired in a revolving state of negativity when receiving criticism. Sometimes, we shy away from future opportunities because of past perceived failures. This mindset can be crippling. Instead, the best performers see failure as an opportunity to learn from their mistakes, channeling their newfound knowledge into future performances. Value feedback received from reviewers as you plan for the next steps. Seeing failure as

a chance to improve can make all the difference as we prepare for the next challenge.

While researching for this article, I reached out to professional orchestral horn players in the United States, asking them how their experiences with failure and the lessons learned from those enabled them to inhabit their positions today. A willingness to recognize the potential for improvement emerged as a common theme. Haley Hoops, the current second horn player of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and recently a featured guest artist at IHS 56, commented that her experiences of failed auditions enabled her to understand the necessary preparation levels for success. For example, in an audition for the second horn position of the Cleveland Orchestra, she "only learned the 'popular' excerpts and was asked a 'not so popular' excerpt in Brahms's Variations on a theme of Haydn." When asked to play the 4th horn part and transpose to the key of H (B natural), she faced a setback, learning the hard way that "every measure is considered fair game in Cleveland."

While such an experience can be frustrating, her story serves as a testament that even the most successful horn players encounter setbacks, and the lessons discovered from those moments are what matters. From her experiences, she learned that "preparation is key." The more prep she does, the more confident she is and the more success she has. By carrying that mindset into future auditions, she won a spot in one of the finest orchestras in the United States, proving the merits of a growth mindset.

Alberto Suarez, the recently retired principal horn of the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra, also shared a valuable setback that propelled him to his current role. In the fall of 2005, he took his first audition with the Kansas City Symphony, reaching the final round but ultimately losing the job to another player without being named runner-up. After the winner accepted another position, Suarez had another chance at the Kansas City position in January of the following year. From his previous "failure" to win the position, he refined his preparation and reached a more comfortable audition mindset. "What I learned at the first audition was that I needed to move my bar, my expectation, and know that I can achieve more. At the second audition, I was so prepared I felt connected to this mantra: 'Allow yourself to be great.' This mantra assumes that you have greatness already, and you are empowered to accept this

reality. Release your greatness!" With this mindset, he won the position he occupied for much of his career.

Sometimes, setbacks are just as fleeting as success. Principal Horn with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Jennifer Montone, speaks to the musician's mindset, "strive, put in the work, and give it over to the universe." We never really know when one door might open in the aftermath of another door closing. A successful performer once commented that horn players rarely know what happens behind the scenes at auditions. They seldom understand the intricacies of a particular orchestra or collegiate program. Again, the people who reviewed their work have no personal biases towards them. Learn from and incorporate the comments into your practice routine. Remain prepared because circumstances change as often as the weather, and what may have appeared to be a closed opportunity has reappeared. By addressing the feedback, rather than taking it as a personal attack, you can reenter the next opportunity more confidently to "allow yourself to be great."

What can we learn from others? Failure can often feel like a personal burden. Everyone you know has experienced failure. Plus, how horn players measure success remains highly subjective. Success for one performer may look different from your goals. Measuring yourself against the achievements of others can be demoralizing if you are struggling with your confidence. Instead, we should use failure as an opportunity to engage others in conversations about their perceived shortcomings. Sharing our stories will be equally helpful to your peers and yourself. Talking about failure will help normalize your feelings. Finding others with similar experiences will help you build community and depersonalize your emotions. Moreover, these interactions often help us contextualize our own experiences of failure, helping to channel one's negative thoughts into positive growth.

Embrace failure as an opportunity, understanding that no criticism or rejection is personal. Realize that everyone experiences failures and that success is subjective. Failure is an opportunity to improve our skills, strengthen our support networks, and become more confident performers. Haley Hoops puts it best when she says, "Failing is the only way to really learn and improve to a new level."

Inman Hebert studies horn performance at the University of Alabama under the direction of Professor Charles "Skip" Snead. Throughout high school, he studied with Dr. Brenda Luchsinger, the IHS Area Coordinator for Alabama. He was an inaugural member of the IHS's Student Advisory Council, serving since its founding in 2021. Additionally, he writes the student column for the IHS's Horn and More online newsletter under the guidance of editor Dr. Michael Harcrow.



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Rhythm Fixes Melody: Use Your Metronome to Find the Music Between the Notes Part 3: Break it Down, Build it Back Solid

by James F. Wilson

Let's define "solid" as in tune, in time, with a basic sense of musical direction. In tune is not just pegging the meter and getting a smiley-face, but rather includes an understanding of basic formal harmony. Kopprasch is great for learning how this works. In this article, we talk about how to learn to play in time with musical direction.

In time demands precise and mathematical evenness of pulse and subdivision. As we showed in Part 2 [See the February 2024 issue], we should be accurate and conversant to 12 beats, or 4 over 3.

Basic musical direction is groove, metrical stresses, pick-ups and downbeats, lilt, and dance character. This demands complete focus and attention to always be moving forward.

The Fresnel Lens

Up until 1819, lighthouses had been working to shine their beam further out to sea by making their glass lenses larger and larger. Fresnel's idea was that the mass of glass was not as important as the optical curve, which can be re-created in small sections (notes and subdivisions of notes) representing their function in the optic curve. This is why your car headlight and brake light lenses look jagged. See Image 1.

I use this image to visualize the arch of the phrase, and the function of each note in that progression. The conventional arch is what the overall effect in the room should be: the complete sentence or sequence. It may already be printed as a phrase mark in the music, and it is a graph of the proper progression of energy that my horn sound must create in the room to make a satisfying and understandable musical statement.

For each note, I must care for the Start, the Body, and the Finish or Pass – an X, Y, and Z. Each note must contribute to the shape of the phrase arch. Likewise, any group of notes must be connected and conjoined to contribute to the overall phrase arch shape.

It is important to remember that, as we begin to care that every Start, Body, and Pass is in its proper shape and

Solid constitutes a clear presentation of musical information (the notation on the page), mood, character, and rhetoric. These things themselves constitute the form at the motive and phrase level. Once understood, forms must be preserved throughout: same should be same, different should be different.

Let the metronome help you discover the musical form. The metronome used as we've learned – offbeat or cross-rhythm to establish evenness of pulse, and to allow us to hear the connections between the notes – becomes a tool. Like a microscope, it helps us truly understand the component pieces of our music so that we can then construct passages with greater integrity and storytelling thoughtfulness.

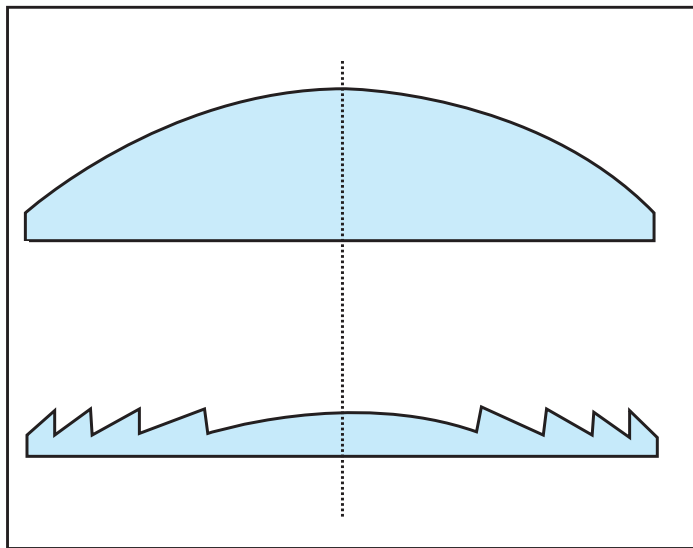


Image 1. Cross-sections of a Fresnel lens (bottom) and a conventional plano-convex lens of equivalent power.

direction, all of our production mechanics are clarified by the musical demand to fulfill the phrase. This is one way Rhythm begins to fix Melody.

Put it into Practice: Break it Down

Let's put what we've learned into practice with a standard audition excerpt, the first-horn solo from Brahms Symphony 3, movement 3, Poco Allegretto.¹

My purpose is not to play the excerpt; in fact, I deliberately plan not to play the excerpt! What I want to do is intense polishing work, digging in to discover the basic

forms that Brahms used to build his beautiful melody. I am after the understanding of what must happen for me to re-create Brahms's forms on the horn out of my own sense of the beautiful, and how to make it happen just about every time. It is a satisfying musical form, even at the smallest level: the individual bricks of the phrase.

To keep this focus, I deliberately construct my exercises note-by-note, and with metrical rest in between. We are demanding that everything be intentional to the phrase – no happenstance whatsoever.

Looking at the excerpt as a whole, we can see that the music is in 3/8, and we are in c minor concert (g minor for horn in F). The horn, cellos, and other instruments have already played the tune together and now Brahms brings us to a full stop before we focus on the melody played by the solo horn.

A glance at the score shows that the accompanying lower strings play triplets over duplets, so this is an inte-

gral rhythm that needs to be clearly acknowledged and understood. The main motive (or sub-phrase) is the dotted rhythm. Notice that it appears as both a pick-up figure and as an appoggiatura downbeat figure, in a two-plus-two progression.

In the second phrase, a sequence of three pick-up dotted figures with a subsequent turn elides into a scale with chromatic passing tones. This leads to the top of the whole phrase – three full-bar appoggiaturas, the third with a quintuplet turn figure on the downbeat – all leading to a surprise or false resolution on the dominant (rather than tonic).

Build it Back: The Microscope (Examples 1-14 are shown together in the image on the next page.)

Let's begin by putting the microscope on our 4-over-3 dotted rhythm subdivision.

- Metronome at 90 BPM marking triplets. This is about half tempo, a very slow pulse of eighth-note equals 30 BPM.
- Play four over three on a single note until the form is exactly even and flowing, making sure that every note has direction and really passes to the next. Let the rhythm fix the melodic flow (Example 1).
- Play four over three on a scalar passage in the key. Here we are in c minor concert, so let's use that key (Example 2).
- Play the first three notes as written (Example 3). Strive for only one thought, one pick-up motion, perfectly subdivided, and moving strongly to resolution on (and through!) the downbeat. Pay attention that the smallest note itself must also carry the promise of the metrical direction and energy across the bar line. Let the rhythm fix the melody.
- Play the figure in repetition, but with rest built in (Example 4). This is to practice passing into rest, breathing in time and character, restarting in motion, and maintaining focus in a defined way across the empty space.
- Move to the appoggiatura of measure 100. How must this similar rhythm be stressed correctly and in contrast to the pick-up gesture? Be immediately demonstrative of the difference (Example 5).
- Move to the appoggiatura figure of measure 102 (Example 6). Using measure 100 as a model, recreate the form exactly, while also appreciating its heightened emotion, expanded and interesting intervals, and its function in a sequence.
- Play the first four dotted figures in succession, with rest in between, arranging them in a clear progression (Example 7). Create "pass" across the rest by staying focused and keeping your playing posture upright, ready to start the next sub-phrase in motion.
- Moving on to the next phrase, Brahms uses the pick-up motive three times in a sequence. Use what you have learned to create three solid pick-up motives in an obvious progression (Example 8). Only the sequence, though, do not play the first turn yet! You may have to make yourself stop!
- Play just the first turn figure, playing out to a strong resolution with an exactly subdivided turn (Example 9).
- Skip the scale for now.
- Use what you learned about appoggiatura stresses to create the full-bar appoggiaturas of measures 107 and 108 in sequence (Example 10), but separated. Be precise with the dotted rhythm, and consider how it must be passed to the next downbeat to feel correct. Now put the two measures together (Example 10a).
- Isolate and learn to play the quintuplet-turn figure precisely. On single notes, go back-and-forth between four and five until you understand and experience perfectly even flow and groove and sense of One (Example 11). Maybe do threes (with the metronome), fours and fives interchangeably.
- Play the quintuplet as written, just to the second beat. This, too, is an appoggiatura figure, and must be stressed correctly. Play in repetition, rest in between (Example 12).
- Play the entire measure 109, but do not play the last downbeat note. Get the motion going correctly in this bar, loading through the bar, ready to pass into the last note satisfyingly (Example 13).
- Finally, play measure 109 into measure 110 strongly and sustained as written, passing through to the first bassoon in measure 111 (Example 14).

Each double-barred section should be practiced, repeated and polished to a point of satisfaction before moving on.

Metronome c. 90 BPM (about half tempo)

Ex. 1 Ex. 2 Ex. 3

Ex. 4 Ex. 5 Ex. 6

Ex. 7

Ex. 8 Ex. 9

Ex. 10 Ex. 10(a)

Ex. 11 Ex. 12 Ex. 13 Ex. 14

Examples 1-14, based on Brahms, Symphony No. 3

Congratulate yourself! If you have done this work, you've done a lot and learned even more!

The instant feedback and corroboration of your metronome will help you learn more at a faster pace, and show you the delights of mathematical near-perfection in your rhythm. Keep all of that in place as you begin to play the entire excerpt. Notice your threshold for focus and understanding, and be aware if and when you start to leave some music behind. Go back and pick it up! Play what you can render satisfyingly – better bricks make stronger walls – to gain authority over longer and larger forms.

¹hornsociety.org/brahms/brahms3#excerpt-2

James Wilson is principal horn of the Houston Ballet Orchestra and a member of the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra each summer. Previously, he was principal horn of The Florida Orchestra (Tampa Bay) and acting associate principal horn of the Utah Symphony. He attended the Interlochen Arts Academy, earned his bachelor's degree from Northwestern University, and a master's degree from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music.



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Tips from a Pro Supercharge Your Practice Time

by Randy C. Gardner

The suggestions mentioned below are powerful practice habits that will supercharge the outcomes of your time in a practice room. They will develop and maintain your musicianship and technique with the greatest possible simplicity in the least amount of time.

Record yourself regularly. The powerful process that follows is designed for use when recording targeted components of your practice sessions. It is also a powerful process to follow as a regular practice routine when not recording.

Evaluating recordings is especially impactful when preparing excerpts for an audition, solos for a recital, and when targeting a specific area of technique. I suggest writing your comments using pencil and paper to engage an additional area of your brain.

On a piece of paper:

1. Write your musical goals. What feeling(s) do you want your performance to elicit from your audience? What do you want your music to communicate?
2. Write your technical goals. What technical considerations will enable you to achieve your musical goals?
3. Record
4. Write an evaluation of your recording in an *objective, non-judgmental, computer-like manner*, honestly acknowledging positive attributes and areas needing improvement. A rhythm is correct or not. Intonation is excellent or not. Avoid adding any subjective responses, negative self-talk, or dredging up negative emotional baggage.
5. List the positive qualities.
List the areas needing improvement.
List strategies for improving each area needing improvement.
6. With the awareness gained from your evaluation, audiate (mentally hear) your ideal performance
7. Re-record and repeat this process.

Rhythmic elements, in particular, are brought into the light by conducting while you listen to your performance. As you conduct, you might also want to speak or tap subdivisions. This process may seem slow at first but, like the story of the tortoise and the hare, you will ultimately cross your goal line faster by following this process.

Apply aural skills to your horn by following the sequence of SING-BUZZ-PLAY (SBP). Fine-tune your ability to audiate then sing a musical passage, buzz the passage on your mouthpiece with excellent intonation, and

play it on your horn. Practice sight-singing exercises and interval patterns to sounding tonic drones following this SBP sequence. Passages of repertoire that present accuracy challenges can be quickly improved by following this SBP sequence.

Compound the benefits of your warm-up exercises. Practice arpeggio patterns to tonic drones in order to develop and maintain excellent intonation, as well as intense mental focus. Multiple tongue, as well as single tongue, articulated scales and arpeggios.

Develop your ability to maintain a perfectly steady pulse. Using a metronome that has a “tap” function, tap a target tempo for at least one minute without stopping. Allow yourself a fluctuation in tempo of only plus or minus two beats per minute (bpm). This is most easily accomplished if you subdivide. Subdividing is the key to maintaining a steady pulse and playing correct rhythms. Initially, set a moderately quick tempo such as 120 bpm. As your skill increases over weeks and months, progressively slow your target tempo. Subdivide, subdivide, subdivide. This absolutely essential musicianship skill is learned effectively without a horn in your hand.

Eliminate all distractions from electronic devices or people. *Uni-task*. Be completely in the moment, mentally absorbed by the music you fully intend to create. Establish specific goals for your practice sessions. Practice with the same mind-set as you perform and perform like you practice. Have fun making music!

These are only a few of the ideas I discuss in detail regarding effective practice techniques, empowering attitudes, “time savers”, and organization in “The Foundation” chapter, and throughout, my book, *Good Vibrations: Masterclasses for Brass Players*. I wish you every success!

Randy C. Gardner is Artist-In-Residence at Temple University, Retired Second Horn of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Professor Emeritus of The University of Cincinnati, and author of *Mastering the Horn's Low Register*.

¹A one-page Recording Worksheet that may be copied and distributed freely is Appendix C in Randy C. Gardner, *Good Vibrations: Masterclasses for Brass Players*, self-published, third edition, 2023 and also available at randygardnerhorn.com/Reading%20and%20Resources%20List.htm.

²See Randy C. Gardner, *Good Vibrations: Masterclasses for Brass Players*, self-published, third edition, 2023, pgs. 112 and 113 for a series of ascending and descending interval patterns to practice in this manner.

³*Ibid.*, pg. 11

⁴*Ibid.*, pg. 12. See a number of additional exercises designed to discipline pulse and rhythm.

⁵*Ibid.* pgs. 3-10. Also see Randy C. Gardner, “Plan your Work and Work Your Plan,” *The Horn Call*, No. 26/2, February 1996, pgs. 33-36 and randygardnerhorn.com/publications.htm

Unlucky Chops:

Nick Fife and Joseph D. Johnson, Column Editors

Embouchure Syndrome

by Gabriel Radford

The contents of this column 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 column should not be construed as medical advice or a replacement for consultation with a healthcare provider.

Introduction

I have been a professional horn player and teacher for 25 years. From 2018 to 2023, I navigated the challenges of Embouchure Syndrome (ES) and emerged on the other side, eventually founding The Embouchure Project. I hope

this article will assist you, whether you're struggling with ES or are healthy and want to be a better teacher, colleague, or medical professional.

What is Embouchure Syndrome?

ES is a progressive disorder marked by the loss of control of the embouchure muscles, leading to a significant decline in playing ability. ES encompasses a spectrum of disorders, from mild embouchure dysfunction to embouchure dystonia. ES has no single solution because it manifests differently in each individual. However, there is reason for optimism. Our understanding of ES has advanced, and some treat-

ment methods have shown promising recovery rates, with up to two-thirds of patients experiencing improvement.

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**Our community's  
reliance on simple  
solutions alienates  
those who suffer.**  
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Neurologist Dr. Xenos Mason of the University of Southern California proposed the term Embouchure Syndrome in 2023 to widen the scope of treatable embouchure dysfunction conditions and allow for further research into more than just embouchure dystonia.

The problem is us

The culture around ES is one of fear and ignorance. We often blame the condition on a lack of proper "fundamentals." We advocate that good air, efficiency, and eliminating tension will solve any issue. While these are vital instructions for a healthy player, those affected by ES frequently feel like outcasts, stigmatized and dismissed when these strategies don't work. Even prominent musicians sometimes deny the existence of ES, writing it

off as purely psychological.

There's no one playbook or center of excellence to consolidate research and provide a clear path forward. Expertise spans many disciplines but remains inaccessible or overwhelming for most musicians. Meanwhile, therapists often have conflicting views on the root causes, and their financial interests can mislead them.

Why you should read this

Athletic coaches once treated a blow to the head as "getting your bell rung" and prescribed a "walk it off" approach. Today, we recognize this as a concussion, with well-established prevention techniques and treatment protocols for Post-Concussion Syndrome.

"It's all in your head. Just relax and blow" is as harmful as "walk it off." Our community's reliance on simple solutions alienates those who suffer. When people hear the same advice repeatedly and do not improve, they assume it's their fault. To extend the concussion metaphor, the coach's message is: "Get over it." Our equivalent is: "Forget about your chops. Just blow."

The solution for a musician suffering from ES may range from a brief period of guided practice to months of defying conventional pedagogy to carefully create new habits before finally returning to a primary focus on

music, sound, and air. ES has many potential causes, and we at The Embouchure Project are working on categorizing and quantifying them so that we can guide people toward the appropriate treatment for their specific symptoms. While much work remains, learning about ES cannot cause it. Moreover, while psychological stress, fear, and trauma are contributing factors, "relaxing" is far from a complete solution.

Learning about ES may empower you to interrupt the patterns of behavior and symptoms common to the condition in your own playing, as well as in your friends, colleagues, or students. Furthermore, reading this article will help you better understand the syndrome and contribute to a necessary cultural shift. To solve this problem – and I believe it is solvable – such a shift is essential.

What happened to me

I won my first full-time orchestral job in 1998 at age 23 and moved to my current position as third horn of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO) in 2002. In my mid-thirties, my career flourished. I frequently performed chamber music on prominent stages. The TSO was at its busiest, and I also maintained a large studio of students. Every week of summer was filled with teaching or performing. Life was busy, stressful, and wonderful.

Around 2016, I noticed that my chops had less stamina, and I sometimes found myself scared to play prominent parts. I played some of the best concerts of my life, but what was happening in my head was new. It's hard to determine whether the change in technique caused fear or if fear came first. Perhaps my big-mouth, high-mouth-piece pressure technique, which sounded great, was something a young person could get away with – but not someone entering middle age. Perhaps I had just taken on too much for too long, and my body was rebelling.

Fast forward to 2018. I hadn't had more than a few days break in years. The TSO schedule was in overdrive. I had toured with the Boston Symphony and continued playing at multiple summer festivals. I was also preparing for a tour featuring Schumann's Adagio and Allegro and Brahms's Horn Trio. Suddenly, I was stuck. The Schumann wasn't improving – if anything, it seemed to be getting worse. I increased my practice, practicing obsessively in every spare moment. It wasn't working. I was scared. The stress and fear peaked when I invited my wife and kids to listen to a mock performance of Adagio and Allegro two weeks before the tour. It was a disaster. The last page was a mess. I panicked.

Even though I hadn't taken three days off from the horn in a decade, I decided to take three days off for a planned hike the week before my tour. When I returned, playing was a disaster. My chops felt stiff, unresponsive – somehow too big for the mouthpiece – unlike anything I had felt before. I called the organizers and changed the repertoire.

Despite the panic, I played the best Brahms Trio of my career. Two days after the tour ended, I left for Europe with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, where we performed Mahler and Shostakovich. I was desperate to "figure it out." As a long-established professional and teacher with many successful students, who could be more qualified than me to sort this out?

When I returned home, I had three days before starting my 15th season with the TSO, performing Mahler 5. It only took a day to realize I needed help. It's hard to describe what I was experiencing other than to say that something had changed...in my brain.

If I could return to that moment, I would put the horn down and rest for a month. I would recognize that I had done myself damage and that I needed to pause and heal

before continuing. I would visit my doctor to treat the stress, then sleep, exercise, meditate, and call in sick. Only after that would I reach out and begin the healing process. I wonder if these actions could have solved the problem in weeks instead of four years. I have spoken to a few wise souls who have done a version of this, appearing to stop ES from progressing.

Instead, this moment marked the beginning of a months-long descent into questions and doubt. I played as many weeks as I could at work, but I called in sick for many others. I practiced obsessively, hoping to "figure it out," but I got worse. I went to my doctor, who referred me to a dentist. The dentist "diagnosed" me with dystonia. He handed me a master's-level music student paper as if it were definitive. I was angry and upset. How dare he? I pulled strings and got into a highly regarded neurological movement disorder practice in Toronto, where the doctor merely stated: "We don't know what this is." At this point, I received the first of two formal diagnoses of focal dystonia.

By spring, I had worked with many pillars of the embouchure dysfunction world. They were each helpful in their own way, but too often, they promoted their techniques as complete solutions rather than as a small piece of the puzzle.

My symptoms had progressed to the point where I was now experiencing swelling in my lips when I played. My jaw always felt out of place and started involuntarily closing when I began a note. One day, while practicing in an office, I noticed pencil erasers on the desk. I shoved one between my teeth, and it was like a miracle – I could play. My jaw bit down on the eraser, stabilizing it and alleviating 90% of the problem.

A neurologist might think they've just confirmed their dystonia diagnosis – I changed the stimulus (made it feel different), and the symptoms disappeared. I have my doubts. It felt like the equivalent of a crutch for an injured leg. Whatever it was, it made a huge difference.

What I eventually called my "teeth dampers" became the molar section of a sports mouthguard. It gave me my sound back and allowed me to play reliably from about written low G to high G – the range where that jaw position was approximately correct. This temporary solution allowed me to play full-time through the fall of 2019. *Please don't try putting things between your molars. It is a choking hazard, and biting down is the wrong thing to do before starting a note.*

I sought a more permanent solution, so I contacted Professor Bronwen Ackermann¹, specialist musicians' physiotherapist, musculoskeletal anatomist, and musicians' health researcher at the University of Sydney, who was conducting research in Hannover, Germany with neurologist Dr. Eckart Altenmüller.² I arranged to spend an intensive week rebuilding my embouchure from the ground up.

My solution emerges

Over several days, Professor Ackermann patiently guided me through the proper formation of the embouchure: cheeks hugging the molars, upper lip lifted, chin pointed to the floor, and lips forming an “Oo” shape. She reminded me how to breathe and use my core to support the air – skills I had lost through the months of obsession with my chops. She also helped me with posture.

I had already seen Professor Ackermann for a few sessions online, but many competing outside opinions made it difficult to trust her strategies fully. It was clear she knew her stuff – her expertise in anatomy and physiology and her years of analysis meant that she understood the embouchure on a level I had never encountered.

One practitioner I saw frequently over several years believed that disengaging all muscles and focusing solely on air would naturally form the most efficient embouchure. This practitioner was unwilling to share evidence of the efficacy of their work, but the idea was seductive: play effortlessly! This work may have particular benefits at the beginning stages of ES. Many people who try to “relax everything” see immediate improvement; no wonder, since excess tension makes the horn harder. How-

ever, it was far from a solution for me and made my path to recovery longer. Professor Ackermann’s method (The Ackermann Protocol) took a different approach:

- Physical therapy exercises to feel, coordinate, and strengthen crucial embouchure muscles.
- Learning how the cheeks, chin, and lips form the embouchure most fine players use.
- Employing good biomechanics for breathing, support, and blowing.
- Playing music, not just individual notes.

The Ackermann Protocol never implies that everyone must have the same embouchure. It is about forming a structure that individuals can interpret as they return to health.

I made significant progress during the week I spent with Professor Ackermann and returned to Toronto on March 9, 2020, excited to head back to work. However, we never got to perform as the first COVID lockdowns took hold.

Three steps forward, two steps back

I adjusted poorly to pandemic reality. I practiced plenty; I returned to the horn after some weeks off and never stopped. However, I never truly committed to what I had learned.

I knew the Ackermann Protocol worked – it generated my first genuine progress – but I didn’t fully trust it. In hindsight, this fact is impossible for me to explain or justify other than to say I was still romanced by the concept of disengaging all of my face muscles; I just needed to relax!

In my best moments, I worked on the Ackermann Protocol with Frankie Lo Surdo, from Western Australia, who

has since started Brass Rehab.³ Frankie helped align the Protocol with familiar terminology and exercises. He also gave me the courage to finally get rid of the “teeth dampers,” pointing out that biting down was a movement in the wrong direction to begin a note healthily. He has since built up a wealth of knowledge, assisting countless players to return to health.

In hindsight, I realize I already had the solutions, yet I failed to put it all together. After relapsing, I returned to my pattern of hours and hours of practice with no genuine progress.

The path to health emerges

As the pandemic abated, work began to ramp up. My first week back was a disaster, but it gradually got better. My music director allowed me to play fourth horn temporarily. In the TSO, we have a player on fourth who was willing and more than able to play third.

Eventually I encountered a device called Stratos, invented by trombonist Marcus Reynolds. Stratos attaches to the mouthpiece shank and includes an adjustable rod with a suction cup that supports the chin while playing. Stratos helped me feel more secure, especially when initiating a note under the stress of work, but it is not a quick fix for ES, nor was it my cure. I have shared the device with others; they have not seen the same (or any) benefit.

What Stratos did was allow me to feel the benefits of the work I had been doing in the Ackermann Protocol – to feel the chin and cheeks as a source of stability for the embouchure mechanism, with the lips free to form an “Ooo.” I like to say, “If you can feel it, you can fix it.” Peo-

ple who have suffered from ES often explain that they can’t *feel* what is wrong. A recent term for this ability to feel individual muscles is *body mapping*. Stratos allowed me to complete my body map.

Additionally, it acted as a crutch similar to the pencil erasers but with a healthier, more sustainable motion. I used Stratos for several months, but eventually I no longer needed it. My muscles had developed, and I did not need the support. As I got stronger, my jaw stopped wanting to close. I had to summon my courage and experience as I transitioned back to third horn. I had to trust that I was healed and could return to focusing on the music. As can be imagined, this was a bumpy road, but most of the time at work, I could do it. When the TSO toured, playing an extensive program in 2023, I found myself thinking about sound, music, colors, blend, and intonation – not my embouchure. I knew it was time to put this all behind me. More recently, just a few weeks back, I played Mahler’s Third Symphony the best I had ever played it.

What worked

Looking back at what I've been through – from the height of my career as a player, touring the world with great orchestras, performing recital tours, and recording chamber music, to barely being able to make a sound, and then back again – I can say that the most important contributing factor was persistence. I persevered until I found solutions that worked for me. I stayed patient and positive more often than I felt defeated, and I never let the idea of giving up enter my mind. I needed persistence because of the many wrong turns I made. The conflicting information outweighed the generosity of colleagues who helped along the way. I made mistakes daily and flailed for years without making noticeable improvements. I hope that future sufferers of ES will not need to be nearly as persistent as I was.

When it was time to get back on stage, I was patient as I managed and coped while finding my feet. The great gift of losing everything is that there's nothing left to lose. I realized that my best had to be good enough. Before long, I was playing better than ever.

Without Professor Ackermann's work, I would not

have recovered. I credit her work with creating an embouchure that has significantly lowered the stress of playing the horn. I also would not have gotten better if I had not been honest with physicians about my need for help. I was prescribed an SSRI medication to make my brain more receptive to change by increasing plasticity, and it also helped with emotional regulation. I was also prescribed a benzodiazepine, which helped with the stressful transitions and high-pressure moments.

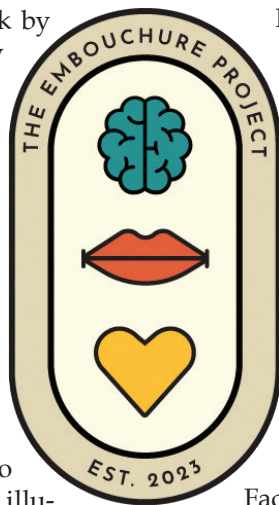
Marie Luise Neunecker generously gave me her time. Her philosophies aligned with the Ackermann Protocol and helped me trust my work. I still think about her concepts in my daily routine. She beautifully explains her thoughts on embouchure in an interview with Sarah Willis on YouTube, which I recommend.⁴

At the best of times, we need our colleagues to thrive. In the TSO, Neil, Chris, Audrey, and especially Nick were patient and kind beyond all expectations. Thank you. Finally, I wouldn't have stood a chance without my wife, Sarah, who endured years of awful-sounding playing and the emotional roller coasters that ensued.

The Embouchure Project

Throughout this journey, I have been struck by the lack of knowledge. Physicians generally view ES as an untreatable mystery. Doctors are vital for diagnosis but not for treatment. Important work has already been done by the Leon Fleisher Foundation for Musicians with Dystonia, led by Glen Estrin, and by Dr. Stephen Frucht, who has advocated for research and support of dystonia for decades. Physicians like Dr. Eckart Altenmüller have spent their careers researching and treating dystonia. However, this knowledge has not yet permeated the music business or the allied health professionals who treat us.

I knew I needed to do something about it – to bring together the finest minds in the world to illuminate a path to recovery for those who come after me. We need musicians talking to physicians and other researchers, and potential solutions researched, measured, studied, reviewed, and published.



In the spring of 2024, I launched The Embouchure Project with Professor Ackermann, Dr. Xenos Mason, and Frankie Lo Surdo. We are supported by leaders interested in a better future for ES, including musicians on each wind instrument, physicians, psychologists, and physical therapists. In July 2024, we attended the Performing Arts Medicine Association conference in London, England, where Dr. Mason presented *Beyond "Dystonia": A Grounded-Theory Study of Musicians with Embouchure Syndrome*, and I presented *The Embouchure Project: A Community-Based Advocacy, Education, and Research Organization*.

We launched The Embouchure Project on Facebook and Instagram and have a website and podcast. These platforms support ongoing work, help build a community around solutions, connect musicians with assistance, connect researchers with subjects, and connect allied health with clinical data.

My advice

Advice is tricky because each case is unique. However, I have gleaned these observations through my experiences, conversations with musicians, and 25 years of teaching and playing. This advice is not a solution, but it may help you create solutions or avoid common pitfalls.

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How to lower risk of ES

- **Treat anxiety.** Do not suffer. Do not “power through.” Get help. Be proactive. See your doctor. Actively de-stress.
- **Accept that your best is your best.** Passionately disassociate yourself from what others might think of your playing. Play for yourself and for the music. From David Krehbiel: Play with “creative not caring.”⁵ Fall in love with the process of practicing and performing, and be indifferent to the results
- **Take breaks.** Take big breaks away from the horn. Take small, strategic breaks frequently during practice. If you enter an obsessive or fearful practice state, stand up, get a cup of tea, or go for a walk
- **Do not change equipment or embouchure under stress.** Wait until you are in a calm mental state. Practicing while stressed and making changes is a recipe for confusion and fear. Dr. Mark Edwards of King’s College, London, refers to this contributing factor of dystonia as the “new tool dynamic.”⁶
- **You don’t need to be a hero.** If you are overwhelmed, take a break or call in sick.
- **Stop worrying about things going wrong.** If you fear change, your response could be panic. Act like a scientist interested in change. If you are unsure if a change is positive, reach out to someone you trust or The Embouchure Project.

Finding the path to health

- **Fix the fear.** There are many proven ways to lower stress. The key is to reframe your relationship with playing. If you have been suffering from dysfunction, you have likely picked up a pattern of fearful thoughts. This needs to be addressed. Proven strategies include optimizing sleep, exercising, seeing a therapist, seeing a physician for medication, yoga, meditation, or any other technique that allows you to calm your body and mind. You must practice the horn in this calm state. Without this step, it is very difficult to get better.
- **Address the injury or deficiency with an expert.** Avoid practitioners who claim to have a cure or a complete solution. This does not exist. Find professionals with extensive experience in the field willing to submit their techniques to research and public scrutiny. Reach out to The Embouchure Project for help. Your problem may be related to technique causing pain, numbness, or other issues, or it may be ES, where you have experienced a gradual deterioration of your playing. In all cases, there is a potential path to recovery. An excellent professional can help illuminate that path for you.
- **Practice strategically to create new habits.** I’ve heard countless times when someone resists the intentional formation of an embouchure that, “I didn’t learn that way; I was a natural.” You’ll need the building blocks of what used to come naturally, and you’ll need to practice them repeatedly to make the neural pathways we call *habit*. Build new habits, one step at a time. Use proven techniques such as timers to do focused work with intentional rest. Practice before and after a nap. Do short, frequent sessions where you work on one aspect of the embouchure.
- **Take your time.** As one teacher told me, “The shortest path is patience.” Consider stopping for a while. Put the instrument down and address the stress. When you are ready, enter each practice session with a plan. Get your mind in a learning-ready state. Set a timer, and work for a few minutes. Do this a few times daily, and you’ll be on the right track. That may mean recovery in a few weeks, months, or years. That will be different for each player, but hoping for your recovery to be faster will slow you down.

Gabriel Radford was born and raised in Toronto, Canada. He has been third horn of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 2002. He teaches at the Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory and at NYO Canada. In addition to his performing career, Gabriel founded The Embouchure Project in 2023. He was recently named Music Director of Camp IMC, Canada’s largest music camp. See theembouchureproject.org/.



¹sydney.edu.au/medicine-health/about/our-people/academic-staff/bronwen-ackermann.html

²htm-hannover.de/de/hochschule/personen/a-d/univ-prof-dr-med-eckart-altenmueller/

³Lo Surdo, Frankie, Brass Rehab, facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063928100243

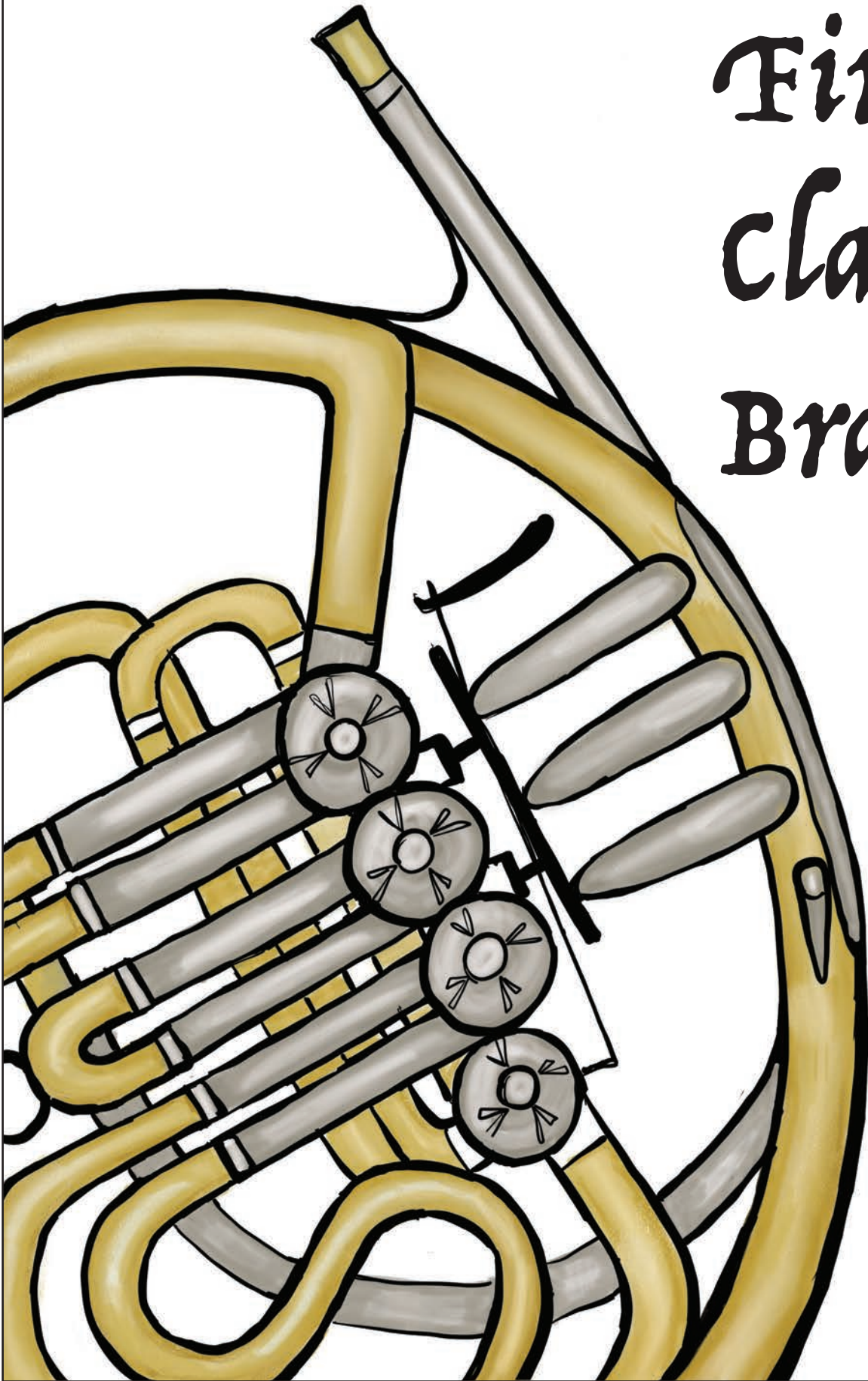
⁴youtube.com/watch?v=59jHJhLf2O8

⁵Krehbiel, David, with R.A. Krause, *Through the Door: A Horn-Player’s Journey*, ©2020, ISBN 978-0-578-73972-4, PO Box 905, Reedley CA 93654

⁶Dr. Mark Edwards, Keynote Presentation, Performing Arts Medicine Conference, London, UK. July 20, 2024

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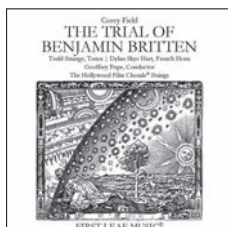


Recording Reviews

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 amazon.com, or distributors or artists listed in the reviews.



The Trial of Benjamin Britten.
Dylan Skye Hart, Horn; Todd Strange, Tenor; Geoffrey Pope, Conductor; The Hollywood Film Chorale Strings. 2024.

Corey Field, *The Trial of Benjamin Britten*: I. Prologue – The Many-Sided

Man; II: The End of the World; III: The Answer of the Sea; IV: A Letter from an R.A.F. Pilot Officer, Age 19; V: What to Say, and What Not to Say; VI: Love Song in Time of War; VII: The Unfathomable Deep; VIII: More Lives Than One; IX: Epilogue – Now Voyager.

Composed by Corey Field in 2022, *The Trial of Benjamin Britten* is a dramatic song cycle in nine scenes written for tenor, horn, and strings. The song cycle is set within the mind of Britten during his court hearing, where he publicly testified as a Conscientious Objector during World War II. This trial could have resulted in Britten's imprisonment for objecting to military service, as well as for his then-illegal relationship with Peter Pears.

The instrumentation pays homage to Britten's *Serenade*, not to imitate it but rather to "evoke Britten's persona." Field's program notes state:

The horn solo becomes a "character" that comments on the tenor and the text, expressing the composer's innermost feelings. The poems and texts were selected as vehicles to convey the dramatic arc, following Britten's conceptual example of structuring poems into a dramatic narrative. Although the poems sung here are sometimes heavily edited for dramatic purposes, the original unedited texts are provided in the Appendix to aid in their interpretation and understanding.

Many of the scenes open with lyrical horn passages, such as the beginning of the song cycle – Hart's horn sound soars across the string orchestra, setting a dramatic yet optimistic tone for the ensuing performance. However, optimism turns sour in Scene II: The End of the World, where horn and voice are set in unison atop unstable harmonies in the strings. This movement, however, ends with a beautiful

horn solo, winding the scene down in consonant calmness. The album showcases a variety across the horn's tessitura, which Hart navigates with ease, particularly in the higher, lyrical passages. This comprehensive work calls for immense flexibility from the hornist: picking high notes out of the texture, executing low and sustained passages, playing muted, performing unison solos, and delivering exposed lyricism over harmonic progressions. The composer's use of colors exquisitely honors the horn's capabilities, contrasting jarring stopped horn with effervescent string textures and soaring, heroic lines above the ensemble.

This song cycle presents a unique method of music-making for hornists – this setting of two soloists over an ensemble resembles a secular oratorio, highlighting the narrative and the exposed nature of being at the forefront of the music, as well as the interaction with the ensemble and other soloist(s). The availability of this recording serves as a reminder of non-standard instrumentation and could be an excellent catalyst for performances outside the traditional canon.

–Maddy Tarantelli, University of Northern Iowa

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Conversation Pieces. Lin Foulk Baird, horn. Helen Lukan, piano. Centaur Records CRC4115.

Betty Roe: *Conversation Piece*; Yvonne Desportes: *Sicilienne et allegro*; Darleen Mitchell: *Sonatine for Horn and Piano*; Shanyse Strickland:

When I'm Older; Monic Cecconi-Botella, *Automne*; Laurel Zucker, *Elegie*; Lydia Lowery: *Moon Lilies*; Judyth Knight: *A Candle on a Cake*; Judyth Knight: *A Candle in a Church*; Adrienne Fox: *Two Chrome Vignettes*; Elena Firsova: *Three Pieces for Horn and Piano*; Legend; Eileen Clews: *Nine Pieces for Horn and Piano*; Mabel Hardy: *Moody Horn*.

American hornist Lin Foulk Baird's deeply musical phrasing and rich, warm tone will be musical inspiration for many who listen to her latest recording, *Conversation Pieces*. As Professor of Horn at Western Michigan University, Baird has done remarkable work championing music by women composers throughout her career. This recording furthers her work by introducing underrepresented works that are appropriate for young horn players. Baird and her collaborative pianist, Helen Lukan, who also performs beautifully on this recording, have compiled several engaging, stylistically varied works that will surely become favorites for professionals and students alike.

The title track, *Conversation Piece*, by English composer Betty Roe, offers a joyful work that would be lovely on a recital. This piece is colorful, filled with character, and would be of great use in a pedagogical setting. *Sicilienne et allegro*, by French composer Yvonne Desportes, has a classic French style and is filled with colorful harmonies and musical lines. The piece opens dramatically in the horn, exploring stopped horn. The *Allegro* is lively and rhythmic. The work is a fantastic study in contrast and features Baird's dramatic phrasing and rich musicianship.

Sonatine for horn and piano, by American composer Darleen Mitchell, was new to me, and has strong musical impact. The three-movement work has evocative titles such as *Games in the Park* and *A Jovial, Bouncy Dance*, setting the mood for the wonderfully characteristic performances captured by Baird and Lukan.

Shanyse Strickland is an American composer, and her contribution to this album, *When I'm Older*, is a powerful,

contemporary work. *When I'm Older* juxtaposes energy and calm in a wonderfully musical and balanced way. It would be excellent for student and professional recitals. *Automne*, by French composer Monic Cecconi-Botella, is a short and sweet piece with long, musical lines and harmonies. As the title suggests, the harmonies and flow of the work seem to evoke an autumn day.

Laurel Zucker is an American composer and flutist, and her *Elegie* is filled with musically compelling lines and harmonies. Baird performs this work with the flexibility of a woodwind instrument, which highlights a fresh and appealing side of horn repertoire. Baird breathes life into *Moon Lilies* by American composer Lydia Lowery. The soaring lines are energized, and the work flows forward with a constant sense of direction. This work, though known by many hornists, is worth revisiting and deserves continued programming.

A Candle on a Cake and *A Candle in a Church*, by British composer Judyth Knight create a lovely set of contrasting works for horn and piano. Baird and Lukan beautifully capture the personality of each work, from the frivolity of *A Candle on a Cake* to the beauty and depth of *A Candle in a Church*. *Two Chrome Vignettes* by British composer Adrienne Fox is another terrific study in character and contrast, captured so well by Baird and Lukan.

Russian composer Elena Firsova is featured twice on this recording with *Three Pieces for Horn and Piano* and *Legend*. Baird captures the musical line of these two works with captivating direction and tone. *Nine Pieces for Horn and Piano* by British composer Eileen Clews is a charming piece for recital and would be a wonderful character study for an aspiring hornist. This piece would be particularly audience pleasing as it embodies so many styles and rhythmic variations.

Baird completes this wonderful collection of works with *Moody Horn* by British composer Mabel Hardy. This wonderful piece is filled with energetic playing by Baird and Lukan and rounds out this collection perfectly. Whether you are looking for new works for young horn players or looking to diversify your own repertoire, this extremely musical and expertly played recording has something for everyone. I hope that you will give *Conversation Pieces* a listen. —Katie Johnson-Webb, University of Tennessee

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Golden Horizon – Works for Horn and Orchestra by Richard Strauss. Christoph Eß, horn, Sonia Gornik, soprano, Sinfonieorchester Aachen, Christopher Ward, conductor. Naxos 8.551473.

Richard Strauss, Concerto No. 1 in E-flat, Op. 11; Andante, Op. posthumous, arr. Lars Opfermann; Four Last Songs, Op. posthumous, arr. Eberhard Kloke; *Das Alphon*, TrV 64, arr. Lars Opfermann; Concerto No. 2 in E-flat, TrV 283.

Christoph Eß, solo horn of the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra – prizewinner of numerous international competitions, and sought after chamber musician and soloist – has recorded another excellent CD, together with the Aachen Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Christopher Ward. This recording features Richard Strauss's first and second horn concerti, staples of the repertoire and old friends to all hornists, plus three new arrangements for chamber orchestra of the Andante, *Das Alphon*, and Four Last Songs.

Both concerti are performed expertly with intense muscularity, musicality, and great flexibility. These record-

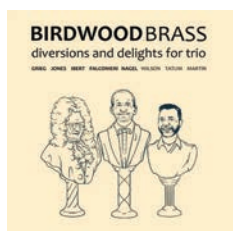
ings rival any of the great ones available today.

The arrangement of the Andante, a work published posthumously, originally scored for horn and piano, is decidedly dramatic. Even with the somewhat sparser resources of a chamber orchestra, arranger Lars Opfermann manages to bring out deep drama, magnifying the intimacy of this sweet, short piece into something larger than life.

The arrangement of Strauss's Four Last Songs brings an air of intimacy to these achingly beautiful pieces. Soprano Sonia Gornik sings these works with incredible depth and heart. The arrangement of *Das Alphon* by Lars Opfermann, a work also originally for horn and piano, brings forth a deep sense of narrative and playful drama.

This luminous recording is a wonderful, deep dive into the shimmering, transcendent beauty of Richard Strauss's writing for both horn and soprano. The works reimagined from piano into chamber orchestra are delightful in their depth and imagination. This recording is highly recommended for anyone new to works by Strauss or for anyone who wants to hear how some of these works have been reimagined and orchestrated by skilled arrangers. Eß's performances are consistently strong, brilliant and moving.

– LVD



Diversions and Delights for Trio. Birdwood Brass. Brad Tatum, horn; Doug Wilson, trumpet; James Martin, trombone. Available on youtube and other streaming platforms.

All arrangements by Doug Wilson: Andrea Falconieri, *A Renaissance Suite*; Edvard Grieg: *Musings*

from Grieg; Jaques Ibert: *5 Images from Petite Suite*; Robert Nagel: Brass Trio No. 1; Roger Jones: *Diversions for Brass Trio*.

Made up of musicians from the Washington DC area of the United States, The Birdwood Brass Trio is dedicated to original music and new transcriptions for the traditional brass trio instrumentation. The arrangements on this album are all expertly crafted, extracting the musical essence of the larger arranged works and somehow making three brass voices sound like more than three. Brad Tatum, hornist, is nationally recognized as both a Baroque and modern hornist. Additionally, he is the director and founder of the DC Horn Choir Camp and maintains a large private teaching studio. Trombonist James Martin has performed extensively with orchestras in the US and Europe and is currently principal trombone with the American Pops Orchestra, seen frequently on PBS. Trumpeter and arranger Doug Wilson has performed with the New Haven Symphony and the Tulsa Philharmonic, and in early music performances with Fanfare Barok, Tempesta di Mare, and the North Carolina Baroque Orchestra.

This album opens with a suite of four works by Renaissance composer Andrea Falconieri. Originally composed for two violins and basso continuo, the movements are Canciona, Fantasia, Gagliarda, and Aleman deta la circulia. These works translate beautifully for brass, and the trio performs them with light, artful lyricism. Even though

they are playing on modern instruments, their stylistic interpretation evokes the qualities of early instruments.

The works by Greig, originally for piano, are Waltz, At the Cradle, and Grandmother's Minuet. These simple, elegant pieces translate beautifully to the brass trio. Similarly, the five short movements from Ibert's *Petite Suite* work well for the brass trio with Doug Wilson's clever arrangements. The Cheerful Winemaker, Prelude, Rondo, Berceuse, and Quadrille all come out sounding like more than the sum of their parts.

Robert Nagel's Trio for Brass instruments is deeply rooted in the American mid-century tonal language and expressive phrasing. Robert Nagel can be considered one of the most important figures in American brass chamber music, having founded the New York Brass Quintet, and serving on the faculties of Juilliard, Yale, and the Manhattan School of Music during his impressive career.

The *pièce de résistance* is Roger Jones's *Diversions for Brass Trio*. The Birdwood Brass Trio describes this recording in their liner notes as "a heavy undertaking that we all believe should become a recital standard. The angular composition takes unexpected harmonic turns using familiar styles all derived from the statement found in the initial movement. [...] We were amazed at the variety of texture, clever voicing, and Jones's persistent creativity across the five movements." Indeed, this five-movement work would be well-suited to join the Poulenc trio as a foundational piece for the brass trio canon. Bravi to the musicians of the Birdwood Brass Trio for an excellent, innovative recording of lesser-known works for brass trio and brilliant arrangements!

– LVD



Open. Stockholm Chamber Brass. **Annamia Larsson**, horn; Urban Agnas, Tom Poulson, trumpets; Jonas Bylund, trombone; Dirk Hirthe, tuba. GENUIN (GEN 24891).

Djuro Zivkovic: *Quintet Byzantine*; Cathy Milliken: *Espiral*; Molly

Kien: *Variations on a Haircut*; Mike Svoboda: *Open Circle*; Francisco Coll: Brass Quintet.

Founded in 1988, the Stockholm Chamber Brass is an award-winning brass quintet committed to developing new and original repertoire for brass quintet. They have recorded six albums and have commissioned over 50 compositions, many of which have gone on to become the most frequently performed original works for brass quintet around the world. The works on this album were all commissioned for the Stockholm Chamber Brass.

Djuro Zivkovic, a Serbian-Swiss composer, wrote *Quintet Byzantine* as a work in six movements. *Ceremony 1, Mosaic 1, Procession 1, Ceremony II, Mosaic II, and Procession II*. The composition is inspired by the imaginary music of the Byzantine empire. The composer describes his music as unfolding organically, like a flower blossoming.

Cathy Milliken's *Espiral* features a rapid-fire staccato theme that gets passed around the ensemble. Inspired by Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Spiral* for soloist and short-wave radio, which Cathy recorded with Stockhausen himself.

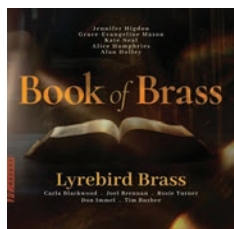
The work plays with space, breath, silence, and extreme timbral qualities of brass chord clusters at all variations of dynamics.

Molly Kien's *Variations on a Haircut* is inspired by Frida Kahlo's self-portrait with cropped hair. In the background of the painting is music from a Mexican folk song which forms the theme for Kien's rich, dark, complex, and provocative work.

Mike Svoboda's *Open Circle* was commissioned in celebration of Stockholm Chamber Brass's 30th anniversary and premiered by them in 2018. A longtime collaborator with the brass quintet, this 20-minute work features cadenzas for each instrument.

Francisco Coll's Brass Quintet has five contrasting movements, Prologue, Chorale, Fanfares, Canzona, and Sequenza. A massive work of incredible virtuosity from this sensational Spanish composer-conductor, this piece was commissioned in 2017. A former trombonist, Coll writes complex, challenging lines for every instrument in the ensemble.

Stockholm Chamber Brass have put together an incredible collection of new works for brass quintet, and each composition is a unique, spirited, evocative work stretching the expressive potential of the brass quintet in new and exciting directions. Expertly performed, this is a great disc of new works for brass quintet not to be missed! –LVD



Book of Brass. Joel Brennan, trumpet; Rosie Turner, trumpet; **Carla Blackwood**, horn; Don Immel, trombone, Tim Buzbee, tuba. Navona Records #NV6651.

Jennifer Higdon: *Book of Brass*; Grace Evangeline Mason: *As Bronze*;

Kate Neal: *Fanfare*; Alice Humphries: *Uncertain Meditations*; Alan Holley: *The Goodchild Canzonas*.

Book of Brass is the newest offering of Lyrebird Brass, an ensemble comprising some of the top brass players based in Melbourne, Australia. This is the group's third album, and follows the trajectory of their second album by showcasing newly-composed brass quintet works by five living composers.

Jennifer Higdon's *Book of Brass* contains four "chapters" that may be performed in any order. This is followed by

two shorter works by Grace-Evangeline Mason and Kate Neal, and the album concludes with multi-movement works by Alice Humphries and Alan Holley. The compositions are unified by their lush harmonies that explore dissonances of pitches juxtaposed with blended tone colors, and jumpy motives passed across the ensemble. Each composer's unique voice is immediately apparent, but the album also stands as a cohesive whole due to these overarching structures.

Throughout, Lyrebird Brass's strengths as an ensemble are on full display. The blend among various members of the ensemble is immaculate, despite the technical difficulties of the works. Even when the music calls for difficult rhythmic composites, these are seamless and unified. Altogether, this is an album not to be missed for brass quintet players. – Lauren Hunt, Interlochen Arts Center



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***The Golden Age of the Horn – Concertos for Two Horns.* Jacek Muzyk, Daniel Kerdelewicz, horns, The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, JoAnn Falletta, conductor. Naxos 8.574646.**

Friedrich Witt, Concerto No. 3 in F Major for Two Horns and Orchestra; Franz Anton Hoffmeister, Concerto No. 3 in E-flat Major for Two Horns and Orchestra; Leopold Mozart, Concerto for Two Horns and Strings in E-flat Major; František Xaver Pokorný, Concerto for Two Horns and Orchestra in F Major.

Jacek Muzyk and Daniel Kerdelewicz, principal and associate principal horns of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, respectively, are both Polish-born American horn players who have recorded this incredible CD with the Buffalo Philharmonic and JoAnn Falletta conducting. Muzyk and Kerdelewicz play with exquisite clarity and virtuosity, as the demands of this 18th-century repertoire, originally written for hand horn, require incredible lightness and facility when performed on modern instruments. Their ease of blend and fluidity as they fly through the range of the instrument on cascading arpeggios and scales seemingly effortlessly renders a joyful, exuberant listening experience.

The concerto by composer Friedrich Witt, whose first

instrument was the cello, was written for the famed horn players Joseph Alois Anton Zvierzina and John Nagel. Thought to have been published in 1795, the concerto has the horns playing in the extremes of each register.

The Concerto No. 3 in E-flat Major for Two Horns and Orchestra, thought to have been written by Franz Anton Hoffmeister in the 1780s, is featured here in a world premiere recording. This work has the primo horn part going into the extreme high register. Again, Muzyk's mastery of the horn's high range is evident, as only horn players will understand how difficult it is to play these notes, as he delivers them with such effortless aplomb.

The Leopold Mozart concerto is a charming work dating from 1752. The final work on the album, by Bavarian composer Pokorný, is scored for two flutes, strings, and two horn soloists. Again, because of the nature of the hand horn, the melodic material is in the highest range of the horns. The performances, ornamentation, and style, while played on modern instruments, is grounded in a deep understanding of the era this music comes from. These more obscure concerti for two horns from the 18th century should be as familiar to hornists as the Mozart concerti and other canonic works for horn from this era. This is a great recording and should be a part of any hornist's collection.

– LVD



***Brazilian Favorites.* Radegundis Feitosa, horn; Eduardo Taufic, piano. Eduardo Taufic Studio, 2024.**

Glorinha Gadelha and Seveino Dias De Oliveira: *Feira de Mangaió*; Alfredo da Rocha Pixinguinha: *Rosa*; Waldir Azevedo: *Brasileirinho*; Zequinha De Abreu: *Tito Tico no Fubá*; Alfredo da Rocha Pixinguinha and Benedito Lacerda: *Naquele Tempo*; Hermeto Pascoal, *Forró Brasil*; Waldir Azevedo, *Carioquinha*; Severino Araújo, *Espinha de Bacalhau*; Severino Dias De Oliveira: *Frevo Sanfonado*; Joana Batista Ramos and Matias da Rocha: *Vassourinhas*.

Brazilian Favorites is a playful and comforting album by producer/arranger Eduardo Taufic and hornist Radegundis Feitosa; the further I listened, the happier I became. From the first track (*Fiera de Mangaió*), I noted the strengths of Taufic's arrangements. He and Radegundis sound like good friends, trading moments in a way that feels instinctual. Taufic utilizes strengths of both instruments, especially in tone, range, and articulation. *Brasileirinho* features some slick low horn playing and a last-minute presto that verges on insane. Taufic's ornamentation is great throughout, and

I took particular note of that feature in his version of *Tico Tico*. *Forró Brasil* uses the horn's low register as a rhythmic pedal for an effective piano solo. The horn's more romantic qualities were put to good work in *Rosa*, the only true ballad on the album.

This album is well-paced, building in rhythmic intensity over time. The longest track comes right in the middle: *Naquele Tempo* (in English, "in this tempo") is a moderate-tempo dance with a more-complex form that features key changes and several themes. After that, the songs get quicker and more playful. *Carioquinha* features Feitosa's flexible and commanding middle register. *Espinha de Bacalhau* has fiery and fast articulations in piano and horn. *Frevo Sanfonado* is in the style of frevo, a fast-paced street music that originated in 19th-Century Carnival, and the arrangement lives up to the hype. *Vassourinhas* was likely chosen to close the album because of its magical ending.

One small criticism is the recording production. The piano track sounds intensely vibrant and crisp, while the horn feels less closely recorded. It has the effect of the horn sounding distant and the general dynamic range small. It's a small gripe on an otherwise enjoyable album. Bravo to Taufic and Feitosa!

–Justin Stanley, Tennessee Tech University



Hornscapes. Ricardo Matosinhos, horn; Isolda Crespi, piano. MusicTobi LC 06701.

Fernando Morais: *Mosaico No. 3*; Emma Gregan: *Rose-Coloured Glasses*; Kerry Turner: *Abide With Me, Op. 79*; Ricardo Matosinhos: *Pastoral, Op. 81*;

Mirage, Op. 83; Improviso, Op. 82; Siegfried & Fafnir, Op. 77a; Song without words, Op. 80a; Song for Emma, Op. 75; Jeffrey Agrell: Gallimaufry Suite: I. Odd March, II. Quirky Waltz, III. Angular Variations, IV. Blue Caccia.

The horn community is full of creative and productive individuals, and it can be difficult to keep track of all the wonderful books, articles, recordings, compositions, and other contributions out there. Recently, Ricardo Matosinhos sent me an advance copy of his new recording for review. The album was recorded in Mindezell, Germany as part of the "Ring of Engelbert Schmid Horn Soloists" series. Ricardo is active as a performer, composer, teacher, and author (of horn-related articles and children's books), and is well-known for his solo horn works and his series of jazz-inspired and other etude books published by Phoenix Music Publications.

His playing – and that of his collaborator Isolda Crespi – is agile and expressive, combining technical brilliance with satisfying phrasing. These works are fresh and fun, showing off the best of what the horn (and Wagner tuba on two of the compositions) can do.

The complete program notes and a nice promotional video are available online: ricardomatosinhos.com/index.php/en/blog/781-hornscapes-en. The subtitle of this recording is "Music for Horn Composed by Horn Players," and 6 of the 10 works on this album were composed by Matosinhos. Ricardo is an incredibly creative musician, both as a performer and composer. His compositions span ev-

everything from Neo-romantic to Jazz and modern extended techniques. Works by Fernando Morais, Emma Gregan, Kerry Turner, and Jeffrey Agrell fill out the rest of the recording.

The Morais is a fantastic opener for an album, lively and attention-grabbing. Australian horn player Emma Gregan's works are always enjoyable, and her *Rose-Coloured Glasses* is no exception. Kerry Turner's *Abide with Me* is a substantial ten-minute tour de force of modern horn-playing techniques, commissioned by Matosinhos for his doctoral research.

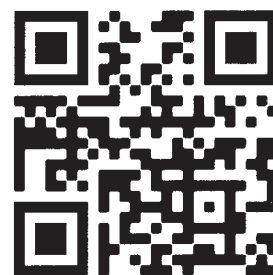
The next several works are by Matosinhos, who carries on a long tradition of horn-player composers. These works are as varied as they are fun and interesting, and any of them would make exciting additions to a recital program. It's worth noting that several of Ricardo's compositions, including his etudes, make use of multiphonics, which he has honed to an incredibly high level. Having heard Ricardo perform live, I can say that yes, his multiphonics sound just as good in person as they do on the recording!

In this, and everything else on this album, Ricardo sets a high standard to which we can all aspire. Also worthy of mention are the two works for Wagner tuba, which are welcome additions to a growing repertoire of solo music for the instrument. If you're accustomed to hearing the Wagner tuba in an orchestral or operatic context, you are in for a surprise! Matosinhos's Wagner tuba playing is exciting, at times bombastic and at others lyrical and delicate.

Jeffrey Agrell's *Gallimaufry Suite* finishes out this fine recording. This virtuosic multi-movement work makes extensive use of the low register and is quirky and fun to listen to. Bravo to Ricardo Matosinhos, and everyone else involved, on this new recording!

—James Boldin, University of Louisiana Monroe.

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CD515: **Four Mozart Concertos.** CD775: **Lyrical Gems for the Horn by Fauré, Strauss Concerto No. 1.** CD676: **Beethoven, Reinecke, etc.** CD773: **Hindemith, Heiden, Ewazen Concerto, Beckel, Sargon.** CD679: **Songs for Soprano, Horn, & Piano by Schubert, Berlioz, R. Strauss, Sargon, etc.** CD512: **w/Richard Giangulio, tpt. L. Mozart, Hertel, Beethoven, etc.** Hustis was principal horn with Dallas Sym. for 40 years. "technical mastery and superb interpretive insights" Fanfare



Screamers by Robt. Schumann, Haydn, Kraft, etc. Cerninaro was New York Philharmonic principal horn 1969-79; Los Angeles Phil 1979-86; Seattle Symphony 1996-2011. Leonard Bernstein called John Cerninaro "the greatest horn player in the world."

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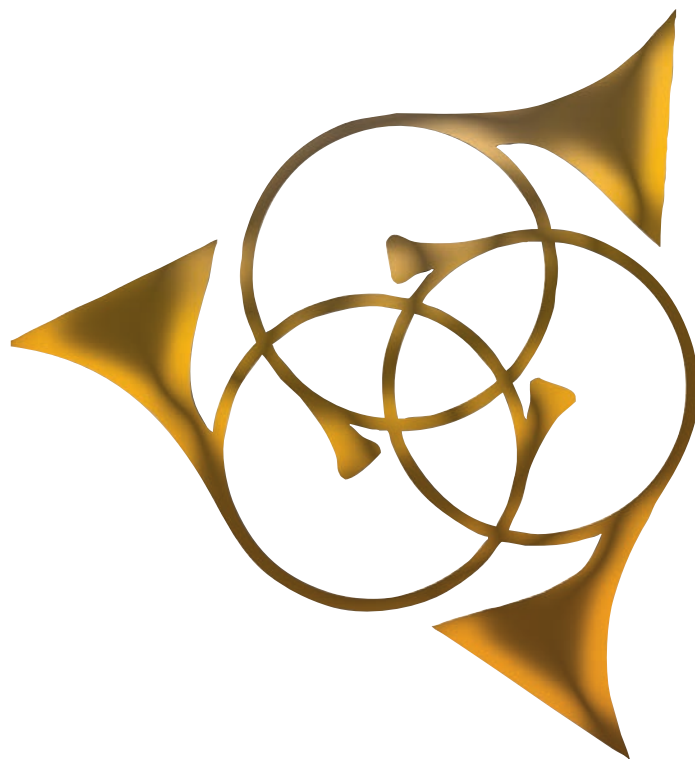


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Horn Duets

***Long Tone Duets for Horn, Second Edition* by Jena Gardner.**
Mountain Peak Music; mountainpeakmusic.com, MPM 11-040, 2024,
\$24.95 available as PDF download or hard copy.

David Vining is the founder, owner, and frequent composer (and collaborator with other authors) of Mountain Peak Music and the vast majority of the works it publishes. Vining has a long history of creating and facilitating all manner of pedagogical materials for brass players. Fundamentals, musicianship, and ensemble skills development are just a few of the topics his materials cover. Vining has editions of *Long Tone Duets* available for trumpet, trombone, euphonium, and tuba; Jena Gardner partnered with Vining to author the second edition for horn, which includes horn transcriptions of Vining's original duets, and some of Gardner's own original compositions.

As stated in the book's introduction, this work most definitely provides idiomatic writing for horn, which facilitates meaningful musical dialogue. Available in pdf download and hard copy formats, the book has quickly become a staple of my private lesson work since I received it a few months ago. It is equally effective in lessons with beginning, developing, and advanced players, and I've also enjoyed reading through the book with my colleagues and have had success in introducing it to students enrolled in secondary instruments methods courses. There's truly

something for everyone in this book!

The book begins with simple duets, which help the player to establish a framework for being aware of intonation and ensemble playing (tone and breathing) through exercises that embrace a series of intervals over a slow-moving pulse (the author has been careful to note tempo, dynamic, and expression markings throughout). The duets progress through a variety of keys and tonalities, gradually becoming more complex and demanding. Towards the end of the book, a few of the duets reference well-known orchestral works, in some cases providing a simplified version of the harmonic motion of the primary horn excerpts (as in Beethoven's Third Symphony, movement three). Other duets focus on the development of additional skills, such as lip trills. One of my favorite duets is the "Frøydís Flexie," which overlaps the parts in stretching out both ends of the range. Perhaps the book itself states things best, "Through the exchange of musical ideas and the pursuit of common goals, players will develop a deeper understanding of ensemble playing and the art of horn performance." I most certainly have found this to be true, even in a short time! –HL

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<https://linktr.ee/hornsociety>



Horn and Piano

Dichterliebe. Robert Schumann. Transcribed by Layne Anspach.

Songburd Music; songburdmusic.com, 2022, \$30.00.

Layne Anspach's transcription of Robert Schumann's *Dichterliebe* [A Poet's Love] works well for horn and piano. This transcription of the sixteen songs includes carefully chosen articulation markings that follow both the sound and spirit of the text, helping the hornist to create a musical setting similar to the original. Anspach also included the German lyrics in the horn part, facilitating the connection between musical thoughts and feelings with the text and serving as a guide to help with phrasing and musical choices.

The horn part has a range from A \sharp 3 to G \sharp 5 (optional A5), making this piece accessible to horn players of varying abilities. This piece could be performed in its entirety or only select songs,

on a recital or other performance. If performing the entire work, endurance may be a consideration for some performers.

It should be noted that the transcription is not in the original key. While this does not pose an issue for the hornist, a collaborative pianist might appreciate some forewarning, especially if they have previously studied and/or performed the work. There are three non-musical editorial errors: the wrong composer is listed on the cover, and the title "Dichterliebe" is misspelled on the cover and title page. The score includes a page with informative program, editorial notes, and the German text with the English translation. —Sarah Schouten, Pennsylvania State University

Six Romances Without Words, Op. 76 by Cécile Chaminade. Transcribed by Ralph Sauer.

Cherry Classics Music; CherryClassics.com, 2023, \$25.00 (Digital Download), \$25.00 (Hard Copy Mailed), \$37.50 (Both).

Six Romances Without Words, Op. 76 by French composer and pianist Cécile Chaminade (1857-1944), has been arranged by Ralph Sauer, former trombonist with the LA Philharmonic, and one of hundreds of transcriptions in his catalog of works for brass. It is worth one's time and effort to learn about the life of this accomplished female composer who has a career full of praise and awards. Six Romances, originally written for solo piano, is a piece also worth one's time to learn.

The first movement, *Souvenance*, at first glance appears complex and intimidating but is truly lovely and easily melodic at a completely manageable tempo and range of only two octaves (F \sharp 3 to F \sharp 5). The second movement, *Élévation*, presents a meandering melodic line in 6/8. There are tricky spots that will require diligence as the key signature is B Major. Again, an accessible range similar to the first movement. The third movement is *Idylle*, which means a happy and peaceful moment. Interestingly, this movement is marked "Allegro Moderato" which gives a more playful feeling, as do the many grace notes peppered throughout. *Idylle* is a charming movement.

The fourth movement, *Églogue*, translates directly to "Eclogue" which means a short pastoral poem. True to the inference, this movement is short, light, and fast at quarter=120. The rhythms and melodic line add to the idea of perhaps a beautiful

French countryside. The range is still in relative line with the first three movements; however, extra care will need to be given with the key signature of D-flat Major/B-flat minor, as well as a trill on Gb5 while over a decrescendo. This trill is presumably to be executed as a half-step trill up, which will require great strength and control. The fifth movement is a *Méditation* in the key of E-flat Major. The tempo is marked *Lento*, which encourages the performer to take time for beautiful moments. The range here expands a bit, D3 to G5, but it's so well written that there's unlikely to be a terrible struggle. The sixth and final movement is *Chanson Bretonne*, a song from the French region of Brittany, which has Celtic influence. This last movement is energetic and frolicking, in C Major, and deceptively tricky. There are wide leaps and intervals, dramatic dynamic changes, and varying articulations. The music is similar in feel to perhaps a sea shanty or boisterous drinking song.

Overall, Six Romances Without Words, Op. 76 is an excellent arrangement for horn and piano. Recordings are available online of other variations of performers (such as euphonium and piano). This fun and interesting work adds yet another opportunity for horn players to celebrate compositions by women.

—Abigail Pack, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

Six Little Pieces, Op. 19 by Arnold Schoenberg. Arranged by Ralph Sauer.

Cherry Classics Music; CherryClassics.com, 2023, \$25.00 (Digital Download), \$25.00 (Hard Copy Mailed), \$37.50 (Both).

Six Little Pieces, Op. 19 by Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) were originally composed for solo piano. Someone hoping to program this concise work should investigate the compositional style and expression of Schoenberg to help with interpretation. Each movement, marked 1-6 respectively, has a tempo, key signature, and some text guidance on style. Otherwise, Ralph Sauer has created an accessible opportunity in this arrangement for the horn player to take a deep dive into Schoenberg's music without too much commitment.

The greatest investment will likely be into its musical form and motive. The first movement is perhaps the most daunting of

the set in technique and the longest at 17 measures, while the second movement is the shortest at only 9 measures. Although the first movement is slow in tempo, the range is wide from Gb3 to C \sharp 6 and will require solid accuracy, as the intervallic jumps are tricky at times.

The other movements all contain various challenges (some bass clef, rhythmic complexity, continued accuracy challenges), but this work is appropriate for the advanced student and/or professional who is interested in modern tonalities and 20th-century writing. —AP

Horn and Electronics

Living with My Donkeys for Horn and Donkey Bray by Jewel Dirks.

Available from the composer: jeweldirks16@gmail.com, 2024.

Composer's Note (from the composer's website: jeweldirks.rewardmusic.com):

"The *Living with My Donkeys* score is 11 X 14, covered and bound, stiff card stock pages, with music photos and story line. I also send a thumb drive, SDHD card, and/or CD which has the Donkey Bray part for performance."

Professor Dirks, from Riverton, Wyoming, composes electronic music using a multitude of interesting electronic software programs and with a conspicuous sense of humor. She composed this work for horn and donkey braying in appreciation of Sarah Willis for "the extraordinary joy and musical wonder she so generously shares around the globe."

Dirks began her musical career as a hornist, earning a BM degree at Colorado State University, then an MM and DMA in composition at the Eastman School of Music. After completing an MA in psychology, she became a counselor for the seriously mentally ill, followed by a career teaching brain anatomy and neurology, and eventually retiring from Central Wyoming College. She lives on an Indian reservation near Riverton where she raises goats – and donkeys to protect the goats from wild dogs.

While written for an amateur or student hornist, the performer needs wide pitch and dynamic ranges. The 11x14-inch score is 41 spiral-bound pages, with 21 of them containing colored photos of her donkeys in the mode depicted by each of the nine movements. Most of the movements are only one to two minutes with the entire composition, including the space between movements, totaling about nineteen minutes. The player can perform a selection of the movements. The work comes with an electronically-created file saved on a CD, SD card, and thumb drive with the performer selecting the format most appropriate for the performance space. The score is hand-written with a graphic representation of the electronic sounds above the horn part.

The titles of the movements capture the humor and wonder of the music: 1. Donkeysauris and the Farrier Have a Quiet Conversation; 2. Donkeys Have Such Soft Noses; 3. Donkeys Love Their Peanuts; 4. They Graze as the Magpie Rides Along; 5. Mother and Son, They Share the Same Dream; 6. The Cat Naps on the Donkey's Back; 7. They Stand Guard Over Their Friend Nook as He Waits to Die; 8. Donkeys Are Slowly Eating Their Barn; 9. Donkeys Protect Their Goat Friends.

This is a unique work with a bit of difficult horn writing (movement three includes both a low and high horn version). In the fourth movement, she admittedly erred: while attempting to create the sound of a Magpie (a very intelligent but noisy bird) she inadvertently recorded the call of a Thrasher. Because of the confusion, the hornist must decide whether to copy the Thrasher, and hope no-one in the audience is a bird specialist, or create the sound of a Magpie – possibly by raucously flutter tonguing a pitch stopped to open. Poignant moments include a young donkey quietly following his mother, and the donkey clan patiently standing by a dying sheep. In the first and final movements, depicting the donkeys at their noisiest, the hornist can blast away!

This is a unique work written with both humor and capacity to love our furry friends with all their good-natured quirks. The hornist must multi-task while carefully staying in time with the recording by both counting carefully and noting the pitch and rhythm cues. It is not an easy work to assemble but ultimately rewarding for both the audience and performer.

–Bill Scharnberg, *University of North Texas*
(Emeritus Faculty)

Brass Quintet

Editor's Note: My thanks to the University of Delaware Fellowship Graduate Brass Quintet, The Sassafras Brass: George Mayo III and Becca Wertenberger, trumpets, Ellie O'Hare-Goman, horn, Alex Mizroch, trombone, and Andrew Baker, tuba, for their assistance in reading and contributing to the reviews for the following three works for brass quintet.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Aria from Mass in B Minor, Credo, No. 7 by J.S. Bach. Arranged by Daniel S. Augustine.

Cherry Classics Music; CherryClassics.com, 2024, \$25.00 (Digital Download), \$25.00 (Hard Copy Mailed), \$37.50 (Both).

Daniel S. Augustine is an Austin, Texas-based tuba-player, who holds a PhD in music theory. He has a large catalog of works for brass, including arrangements and transcriptions in a wide variety of styles of music. His thoughtful and nuanced rendering of this lovely aria from Bach's Mass in B Minor is versatile and accessible to a developing (early college) and more advanced quintet.

Augustine offers the possibility of using cornets and euphonium (rather than trumpets and trombone), if available, presumably because all conical instruments would blend beautifully in this Aria setting. The opening of the work calls for muted trumpets, which provides a unique color contrast with the lower brass, and especially the tuba, who has the melody line. Balance may be

a challenge for a less experienced group here.

A few minor engraving inconsistencies (rests and notes printed closely together), may make a first read more involved. The tenor voice is perhaps more idiomatic on euphonium, and when played on trombone, presents the greatest challenges of all of the parts; the rest are of a more intermediate level. Both trumpet parts are in a similar range, spanning a little less than two octaves. The horn part is similarly written, and primarily in the staff; the trombone and tuba parts each span over two octaves.

A great choice for offertory, wedding, and other incidental music occasions, this arrangement is a beautiful setting of this Bach aria. –HL

A Moorside Suite for brass quintet by Gustav Holst. Arranged by Mark J. LaFratta.

Cherry Classics Music; CherryClassics.com, 2024, \$45.00 (Digital Download), \$45.00 (Hard Copy Mailed), \$67.50 (Both).

Mark J. LaFratta is a low brass specialist and native of Virginia. A frequent euphonium soloist and collaborator on trombone and tuba, LaFratta has also arranged a variety of works for brass.

Holst's *A Moorside Suite* is an oft-programmed, transcribed, arranged, and beloved classic, especially for larger brass and mixed brass and wind ensembles; several versions exist for a variety of instrumentations. LaFratta has largely stayed faithful to the original in this version, and has included helpful indications which may largely benefit less experienced performers, especially with regards to matters of notation. For example, he indicates performance practice staples like "no repeats on the DC" in the score.

A few notational inconsistencies include some missing beats

and articulations, unintuitive rehearsal letter designations, and missing measures in certain parts. In some parts, measures are squeezed close together, which may also make a first reading difficult. At times some of the parts look cluttered: the watermark appears over part of the staff on one of the pages, and some sections would benefit from a marking of "simile" to designate a continued articulation. Some of the rhythms are also notated in a way that is slightly different from the original, which may temporarily befuddle a performer.

Some of these challenges might make this piece a bit unexpected if sight-reading it on a gig, but it is fun to play and gives each part a moment to shine throughout the three movements. It can certainly be a great way to introduce players to the work!

– HL

Zwei Männerchöre arranged for Brass Quintet by Anton Bruckner. Arranged by Ran Whitley.

Cherry Classics Music; CherryClassics.com, 2024, \$25.00 (Digital Download), \$25.00 (Hard Copy Mailed), \$37.50 (Both).

Per his Cherry Classics website biography, Ran Whitley is Professor of Music at Campbell University, where he also holds the Alma Dark Howard Endowed Chair. In a career spanning over 35 years, Ran's experience includes public school teaching, theory instruction, teacher education, church music ministry, and professional jazz performance. He holds the DM degree in music ministry, the PhD in music education, and Master Level Certification in Orff-Schulwerk.

This arrangement of the *Zwei Männerchöre* by Bruckner offers a wonderful introduction to the composer and his works and could be navigated by a burgeoning high school brass quintet.

The trumpet parts are the most accessible, and perhaps the easiest to navigate; the trombone part is less idiomatic in its writing, and the tuba part may lie better on bass trombone than tuba. Best of all is the way this work introduces shifting tonalities (and sometimes unexpected chord shifts), which really promotes the development of ensemble skills.

The scoring is thick and may provide an endurance challenge for some groups, especially those choosing to program both movements in the same outing. That said, this is a beautiful piece that works well in the brass quintet setting and it is sure to provide a nice contrast on a variety of programs.

– HL



Woodwind Quintet

Four Third Streams for Wind Quintet by Douglas Hedwig.

Da Vinci Edition; davinci-edition.com, DV 12211, 2021, \$25.75.

Douglas Hedwig (b. 1951) is a Chattanooga, Tennessee-based composer, with a long and varied career as composer, performer, and teacher. His compositions have been performed throughout the US and abroad, and he has won a number of awards and honors, including the Gaetano Amadeo Prize (Italy) and the American Prize; *The Dr. Douglas Hedwig Papers*, which contain the entirety of his musical works, are permanently housed at the American Music Center of the International Center in Prato, Italy. Prior to focusing his attentions on composition, Dr. Hedwig was a trumpet player with the Metropolitan Opera for 27 years. He is Professor Emeritus at the Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College and was formerly on the faculty of the Juilliard School. More information about him and his works may be found on his website: douglashedwig.com

Four Third Streams for Wind Quintet is a fun and unique work, featuring moments of unexpected harmonies, and a wide variety of meters and styles, which combine to make a thoroughly engaging piece. It shows off each instrument, not just from a melodic point of view, but also in how it utilizes the full capabilities of all five instruments. The engravings are clear and well-notated, the writing is idiomatic, and there are many places where the writing is quite intuitive (especially in the second movement). Satisfyingly lush moments are present in every movement.

The University of Delaware Graduate Fellowship Wind

Quintet, The Easterlies, read through this work and provided some observations from a performer perspective for this review.

Movement 1 is the most complex. While stylistically accessible to most listeners, it is perhaps the most harmonically advanced. The second movement is gorgeous and musically intuitive in terms of scoring and interpretation for the performers. In the third movement, Letter 'G' through the end of the movement features a sixteenth note motif shared between the flute, oboe, and clarinet that is incredibly exciting to play. There are perhaps a few difficult rhythmic elements in the fourth movement, but nothing that wouldn't be ironed out with good rehearsal time.

Overall, the page turns and other logistical considerations were easy to navigate. The work is best suited for collegiate level quintets and above. While the composer has been meticulous in notating interpretative details, there are moments that offer the performers room to create as they see fit. Hedwig also imbues a sense of humor throughout the piece, which may be interpreted in the work's title and several of the styles implied throughout, as well as in the title of the first movement "DoDec Shuffle" and its corresponding time signature: 12/8 time.

Many thanks to the members of The Easterlies Woodwind Quintet: Miracle Johnson (flute), Axel Ferguson (oboe), Joe Gonzales (clarinet), Noah Farnsworth (horn), and Austin Perry (bassoon). –HL

Mixed Chamber Ensemble

Pantheon for Horn, Violin and Piano by Elizabeth Raum.

Cherry Classics Music; CherryClassics.com, 2024, \$45.00 (Digital Download), \$45.00 (Hard Copy Mailed), \$67.25 (Both).

Elizabeth Raum (b. 1945) has added a fantastic piece for horn, piano, and violin to the body of chamber music for this combination that will surely become a standard. *Pantheon* (1999), was commissioned for Philip Myers, Erika Raum (Elizabeth's daughter), and Peter Allen. This 25-minute work comprises seven movements based on Greek mythology, each entitled with the name of a god or goddess. 1. Eos: Goddess of the Dawn, 2. God of Fates (Moirae), 3. Aphrodite: Goddess of Love and Beauty, 4. Zeus and Hera, 5. Artemis (Diana) Goddess of the Moon and the Hunt, 6. Hermes (Mercury) of the Winged Sandals and 7. Apollo: God of Sun and Light.

The programmatic nature makes for an exciting and interesting work that displays all the things a horn player hopes to show off in a work of this size. Luckily for anyone programming *Pantheon*, after an easy search on the internet, a remarkable recording exists to follow and assist in preparation. This advanced work is listed at Cherry Classics where a valuable description is also available for each movement as they pertain to the god or goddess for whom each movement was written.

The range of B♭5 down to F3 is conservative for a work of this size; however, the amount of dedication to musicality, collaboration, preparation, and endurance makes this trio a substantial addition to the genre. –AP

Media Reviews

Matthew C. Haislip, Editor

This 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.

Music Video: Kazimierz Machala: Concerto for Horn, Winds, and Percussion; March 18, 2008;
Patrick Hughes, horn; Jerry Junkin and the Dallas Wind Symphony;
youtube.com/watch?v=S1AI7qZrLFg

Polish-born teacher, player, and composer Kazimierz Machala is the former principal horn of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the first recipient of a doctorate in the instrument at Juilliard. In September 2002, he premiered this Concerto for Horn, Winds, and Percussion with the Wind Symphony at the University of Illinois.

The timbre and rhythmic pattern at the beginning of the first movement is reminiscent of the sound of The Augurs of Spring/Dances of the Young Girls from Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. In the meantime, one of the themes introduced by the clarinets, later played by the solo horn, has similar rhythmic and melodic elements to the first movement of Victor Ewald's Brass Quintet No. 3. Despite the frequent meter changes and large leaps, soloist Patrick Hughes made those challenges sound fluent and smooth. The middle section features musical conversations between the harp-oboe duet and the solo horn. The challenging cadenza requires the soloist's mastery of techniques such as secure high range, flutter tonguing, and hand-stopping.

The second movement showcases the sound and sing-

ing quality of the horn and the band. The opening features harps, flutes, and muted trumpet. Hughes and the ensemble had a well-balanced musical conversation throughout this movement.

The timpani and brass reintroduce the eighth note motive at the beginning of the third movement. With the percussion instruments and the high-pitched woodwind parts, this movement brings a brighter sound. Its basic rhythmic patterns create a dance-like atmosphere. The use of hemiola also creates much forward motion in this movement. Maestro Junkin and the Dallas Wind Symphony set up a solid musical and rhythmic foundation for Hughes to "dance" with the music. The Rondo structure of this movement demands consistency from the soloist in pitch and rhythm.

The solo horn part covers the range from C3 to D6. The piece challenges the player's technical, musical, and rhythmic flexibility with large intervals, frequent meter changes, and a wide array of emotions. It is an exciting piece for horn players, ensemble members, and listeners.

—Vivian Chang, Coastal Carolina University

Live Performance Video: Meridian Arts Ensemble - The Library of Congress – 2004; July 25, 2024;
Meridian Arts Ensemble: Daniel Grabois, horn;

Jon Nelson and Brian McWhorter, trumpets; Benjamin Herrington, trombone;

Raymond Stewart, tuba; John Ferrari, percussion; youtu.be/Wtve2dG-fks?si=cg797UOkfPq6WPZ1

Stravinsky: *Fanfare for a New Theatre*; Stravinsky: *Fanfare* from the ballet *Agon*; Don Carlo Gesualdo: *Beltà poi che t'assenti*; David Sanford: *Corpus*; Elliott Sharp: *Beyond the Curve*

The Meridian Arts Ensemble has long served as a vehicle for exploring unique programming of works old and new with familiar and avant-garde sounds in the realm of brass chamber music. Their recordings are ear-stretching breaths of fresh air that celebrate the brass ensemble in fearless artistic virtuosity and joy. Projects include notable arrangements of music by Frank Zappa, commissions from such well-known composers as Milton Babbitt, and original compositions by group members. They tackle any challenge with palpable ease and have expanded what is possible on a brass instrument.

This video of a live performance of the ensemble at the Library of Congress in 2004 is so much fun! The pro-

gramming is captivating, with enthralling music by Stravinsky and Gesualdo juxtaposed by new adventurous music by Elliott Sharp and David Sanford. The dynamic and stylistic range on this concert was incredible. Pitch, blend, and balance were spectacularly unified. The modernistic outbursts, pitch bends, and other extended techniques were employed comfortably and effectively. Each player brought their absolute best to this performance. It must have left an immense impression on the audience.

Daniel Grabois's horn playing with this ensemble is always a masterclass in the role and possibilities of the horn in a brass quintet. He shines in the stunning high wire moments and blends beautifully with his colleagues in a highly colorful program. It is inspiring to have a concert of such artistry performed live from two decades ago archived for posterity. A must-watch concert experience for all brass players. Enjoy!

—Matthew C. Haislip

Equipment Reviews

Practice Mutes

Johanna Yarbrough, Editor

This column provides opinions and professional tips on the use of specific horn-related products. It will explore categories of equipment and recommendations from a wide variety of users. To request the review of a specific product or to submit a review, contact Johanna Yarbrough at johannayarbrough@lsu.edu.

Foreword

A practice mute can be a useful tool, with limitations. For me, a practice mute is a last resort in times when I don't want to disturb others but need to maintain a minimum level of endurance late at night or on the go (like at an airport terminal) or staying warmed up backstage before a show. Using a practice mute is an exception, not the rule. Anything that feels and sounds different from the normal open horn needs to serve a clearly defined purpose. Things like free buzzing, mouthpiece buzzing, playing with mutes, etc., can all be interesting ways to diversify a practice routine, but having accomplished their purpose, one should move on quickly.

A practice mute, by closing the bell, creates extra air resistance, which we feel in our bodies all the way from the abs to the embouchure. Therefore, a little can go a long way endurance-wise. If I would normally play a 1-2-hour session on open horn, I might only play 20-30 minutes with a practice mute in. I focus on playing the full range of the horn with scales and flexibility exercises on the harmonic series, at moderate dynamics.

To safely use a practice mute, I take frequent short breaks to avoid tightness in the chops, cognizant that with a mute in, I am not getting reliable feedback from my sound to tell me when to take a break. For articulation, I emphasize air attacks rather than tongue, since it is tempting to counteract the extra resistance by too heavy an approach with the tongue. However, extra resistance can actually help build strength when it comes to multiple-tonguing. Also, with a practice mute in, I must be aware that I am not learning to expand my sound to fill a large space such as a 2,500-seat concert hall. Overall, this general approach to using a practice mute has helped me on those days when I simply could not get enough "face time" on the open horn by maintaining my strength so I can come back the next day ready to work. Every horn player should have a practice mute...and then aspire not to use it much!

– Jay Ferree, Principal Horn,
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, American Horn Quartet

Balu Musik Practice Mute (\$209.95-349.95);

balumusik.com/product/french-horn-mutes/

As a freelance horn player, travel is an integral part of my life; I find myself moving between cities for various gigs and services. This dynamic lifestyle is rewarding but also presents challenges, particularly when it comes to maintaining a consistent practice routine. To meet my unique needs, I chose the Balu Musik Practice Mute as my sole practice mute, and it has proven to be an invaluable tool.

The Balu practice mute's lightweight design makes it easy to pack into my horn case, ensuring that I can take it with me wherever I go. One of the most important features to me is its ability to maintain the warmth of my sound. Many mutes tend to produce a metallic tone, which can be discouraging during practice. The Balu practice mute, however, allows me to



Balu Musik Practice Mute

achieve a rich, full tone that provides essential, more realistic feedback. This feedback in sound quality is critical; without it, playing feels pointless.

Additionally, the Balu practice mute offers a reasonable amount of back pressure, contributing to a more natural playing experience. This is coupled by a remarkably responsive feel, enabling me to execute passages with precision and ease, which is particularly important when preparing for performances or auditions on the road.

Overall, the Balu practice mute has transformed my on-the-go practice sessions. Its fantastic blend of warmth, responsiveness, and portability easily makes this mute my first choice."

– Dillon Bryan,
University of West Georgia,
University of North Georgia, Freelance Artist

Yamaha Silent Brass (\$335)

usa.yamaha.com/products/musical_instruments/winds/silent_brass/index.html

Pampet Practice Mute (\$28)

available through Amazon and other online retailers

Asking which practice mute is “the best” is, for me, like asking which pair of shoes is the best. Sandals may be the most comfortable during the summer in Florida, hiking shoes for mountain climbing, and running shoes for exercising. I have three practice mutes that have found a place in my life, each serving a different purpose. These are primarily the original Yamaha Silent Brass and the Pampet Practice Mute. Additionally, I frequently use the Balu Musik Practice Mute.

A general comment about practice mutes is that they can be both a wonderful tool and a terrible detriment to one’s playing. I find that occasional use of a practice mute yields worse results than regular use. If I know that I will have to practice with one, perhaps on an upcoming trip, I need to build up my practice-mute endurance ahead of time. The added resistance makes my chops overwork and can cause stiffness even (especially) in just one use. If I need only a slight dampening of sound, I prefer to use my most free-blowing straight mute.

The Yamaha Silent Brass was my only practice mute for decades and has gone around the world with me. Pros include the extreme sound-dampening quality and the ability to use the midi system to play along with recordings and adjust my volume in an attempt to not overblow. This mute is perfect for hotel stays and townhouse/apart-

ment living. Cons include the great amount of resistance on the embouchure and intonation discrepancies from low to high. The original mute is also quite bulky, though the new version is smaller. The Personal Studio system requires cables and corded headphones, which may prove unhelpful in today’s wireless world. I typically take this mute on trips where the noise of practicing is my main consideration.

I recently discovered the Pampet practice mute and find it useful as well. The pros include its very small price and very small size. It is the easiest to take on flights, by far, and offers a moderate amount of sound-dampening. The biggest con is the intonation, though I have turned this aspect into a pro for myself on occasion. The octaves are compressed, making the low register a half step too high. I used this mute on a trip where I needed to play low only in the fundamentals and did not have concerts to consider during my stay. By using a tuner and lipping low long tones down, I found that my low register became stronger during the week. It could be an educational tool for students if used properly. Putting a straw in the end of the mute and sealing it helps the intonation somewhat. the price and size keep this mute in my rotation.

—Michelle Stebleton, Florida State University,
Principal Horn, Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra



Yamaha Silent Brass System



Pampet Practice Mute



Stomvi UpMute

Stomvi UpMute (\$150)

stomvi-usa.com/product/UpMute/

I have tried several practice mutes and the one I believe has the greatest sound-dampening ability with the fewest side effects is the UpMute by Stomvi. The UpMute is a bit different from most practice mutes I've tried. It produces a buzzy sound that reminds me a bit of a trumpet Harmon mute, and while it will not achieve quite as low a decibel level as the Balu or the Yamaha Silent Brass, I think it has plenty of dampening power for any hotel room or airport. In return, you get a practice mute that feels quite a bit closer to normal horn resistance than most others I have tried, particularly in the outer registers of the horn. I find that I do not encounter the same endurance difficulties as I do with many other practice mutes, and for the most part, the intonation is true to my horn.

One quirk that I had using this mute is that one or two notes – for me it was mostly the D above written middle C – lack a functional center and I have a hard time slot-

ting it into place. What I discovered though, is that this problem completely disappears when I take my bell off the horn. Basically everything else about the playing experience is unchanged, whether I have the bell on or not.

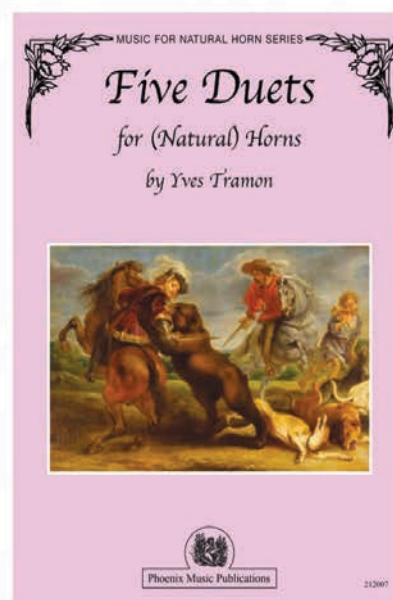
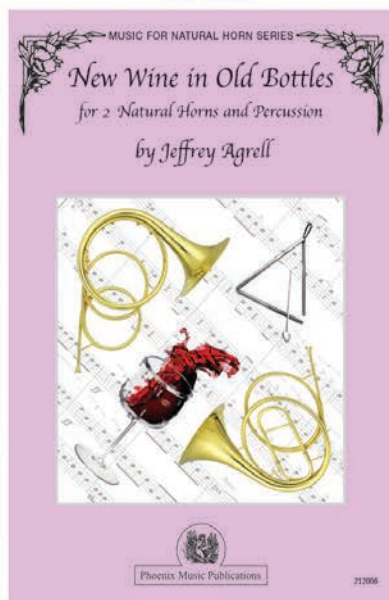
Additionally, this mute is made of durable plastic, not wood, allowing me to toss it into a suitcase or a purse without being overly concerned. It has a slightly wider flare than some other practice mutes, which might be a squeeze in some horn cases.

I would like to add that while the significant resistance of practice mutes can be a menace to the horn player who just needs to get a decent warm up in their hotel room, it can also be a useful tool in some areas. I have often benefited from small amounts of practice mute playing, particularly in the low register, where the added resistance helps with centering. For this type of work, I usually gravitate to slightly tighter mutes like the Balu Musik practice mute.

–Valerie Sly, Principal Horn,
Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Samford University

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Hanging up my Horn

By Nannette Foley

My heart is not broken. My heart is not torn.
My purpose for living was *Playing my Horn*

Now the time has come; the time is near.
It's time to face all my unnecessary fear.
I feel the fear of living without *Playing my Horn*.
I have to pursue more talents for which I was born.

Family, writing, artwork, boating, travel and more
are ghosts constantly knocking at my dusty door.
They are saying, "Let us in. We're in great need of you.
You must hear us inside and think, 'What shall I do?'"
Your days are numbered with only so many to give.
Remember life is about how you want to live."

Playing the Horn is getting harder as I age.
It's not as forgiving as it was at a younger age.
I've realized I have to practice more to sound my very
best.
I no longer want to put that work in or give a performance
any less.

So at last, it's time to sadly say goodbye to *Playing my
Horn*.
I am grateful for all I've experienced, though my heart is
forlorn.
I know it is best to end my career when I can still humbly
play.
It's time for someone younger to enjoy the glory and their
day.

Two years of Covid precipitated the end of my career and
made my decision easier to make.
Not *Playing my Horn* could probably be the most difficult
decision and my greatest heartache.

In March 2020 after a Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra
concert, I went to Savannah for a week
to visit my best friend Nan who I met at Indian Hill Sym-
phony Orchestra playing cheek to cheek.
We quickly realized all our music gigs were being can-
celed and our world was at a stand still.
We put the horns in a closet for the four months that I
stayed! That was a blessing and our will.

I began to wonder what I could do to quiet my mind with
something as engaging as the horn.
I started to paint with a creativity that always stirred
inside of me. My heart was feeling torn.
I enjoyed cooking, flower arranging, reading, writing,
walking and packing a house to move.
My friend and I were busy with a purpose in mind; to live
life to the fullest in our own groove.

Each day we planned work, relaxation and play. We would
make it a remarkable day.
We house hunted online, made many trips to Florida and

back to Savannah to weigh
where is the best place for Nan to buy?
What is the best house for her and why?
I am so grateful for that time to explore our interests. We
had so much fun being together.
What could be better during Covid than creating a new
life celebrating best friends forever?

Playing the Horn gave me a purpose, a sense of all is well
in the world and that all will be ok.
Well, during this time of Covid, we definitely were not
sure that everything was going to be ok.

Time passed and live music eventually came back.
I began *Playing my Horn* and got back on the fast track.
It was great to reunite with musician friends and to play.
It seemed so crazy driving in traffic on the busy highway.

The audiences were very happy that live performances
began.
Musicians were grateful to work together in person once
again.
I noticed a shift in my attitude about daily life around me.
Playing my Horn wasn't as important as it used to be.

For more than fifty years, the horn was an extension of me.
We were ONE facing life's challenges with heroism and
glee.
The horn is a glorious instrument which has fed my soul
completely.
The horn has meant so much more to me than making
music sweetly.

The horn has been my friend and foe, my protection and
support.
At times it's Russian roulette and if I played well, a re-
warding sport.
My horn offered me peace, serenity and sometimes a kind
of insanity.
Practice was my meditation and the horn is a huge part of
my identity.

I loved my sensuous sound with good intonation and
musical expression.
I sometimes gave myself goosebumps. It was the thrill of
my obsession.
My joy was giving to the audience, being inspired by my
peers
and inspiring talented young players I've taught over the
years.

The horn was my friend that kept me focused on my chal-
lenges, near and present to me.
I could face my fears better by *Playing my Horn*. *Playing my
Horn* was my sweet serenity!

June 1, 2023

Nannette Foley is a retired professional horn player and private teacher in Massachusetts. Nannette is currently enjoying retirement traveling, writing, reading, visiting with family and friends. She is the author of *Love, Loss and Living: A Spiritual Journey and Journal*.



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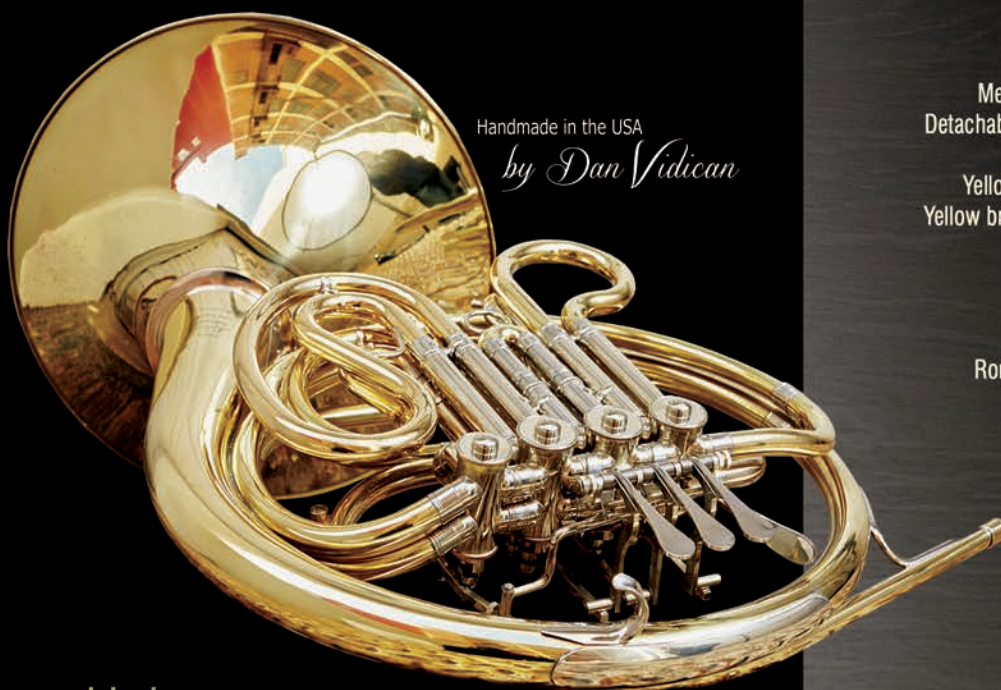
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