

Cornucopia

News and articles for anyone interested in the horn

January 2017



Lauren Becker
in Mammoth Cave

Cornucopia

is published five times a season. It is free, although contributions are welcome. To add your name to the mailing list (email or regular mail), send a contribution, or submit material, contact:

Cornucopia

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A Hornist in the American Wild

by Lauren Becker

Is any instrument better suited to play outdoors than the horn? Descended from the hunting horn, with the capacity to be at once heroic and nostalgic, raucous and pastoral, the horn is uniquely qualified. I tested my biased presupposition during the summer of 2016 by performing in spectacular outdoor venues as a member of Music in the American Wild, an ensemble that celebrated the centennial of the National Parks Service by commissioning and premiering new compositions in United States National Parks.

Music in the American Wild was the idea of flutist Emlyn Johnson. I joined her and clarinetist Ellen Breakfield-Glick, violinists Hanna Hurwitz and Jeremy Potts, violist Emily Sheil, cellist Daniel Ketter, and percussionist Colleen Bernstein on this musical adventure.

As a lover of the outdoors, I knew this would be an unforgettable experience. We performed at amazing sites – the summit of Hawksbill in Shenandoah National Park, overlooking jagged mountains in the North Cascades and rolling peaks in the Great Smoky Mountains, nestled in the Hall of Mosses in the Hoh Rainforest of Olympic National Park, to name a few.

Making time to explore each park deepened my connection with the places and shaped my interpretation of the compositions, particularly those written for specific environments. The sounds of wind and water and appear-

ances of local animals and insects made the experience all the more authentic.

I was especially fascinated by two opposite landscapes, thirty stories underground in Mammoth Cave and high above on Mount Rainier. Being immersed in noise in everyday life, I was shocked by the enveloping silence in Mammoth Cave and the different acoustics in each cavern. Some had the resonance of a cathedral; others felt like a recording studio with very little reverberation.

At Reflection Lake in Mount Rainier National Park, my sound produced a seemingly infinite echo. The excerpt from Brahms's Symphony No. 1 seemed a fitting choice to play, and I wondered if my call and echo resembled the alhorn melodies that inspired Brahms.

This tour left me musically inspired and grateful for our protected places. I feel privileged to be one of, or perhaps the only, hornist to have performed in these parks. I encourage you all to explore the wild in your parks during this centennial year and beyond – just be sure to consult your local Park Ranger prior to visiting if you would like to test the acoustics! ❖

Lauren is on the faculty of the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. She and the performers and composers with Music in the American Wild are alumni of or faculty at Eastman. See musicintheamericanwild.com

From Behind the Iron Curtain

by Cristian Codreanu



I timidly knocked on the door of the horn classroom at the Ciprian Porumbescu Music Conservatory in Bucharest, Romania: "Come in!" "Hello, Maestro... my name is Cristian and I came to..." "Please play!" "What shall I play?" "If you ask me, play the Hindemith Concerto!" "Uhh...I don't know that one." "Then play what you know." "Okay Sir, the Beethoven Sonata." "Please play it, do not tell me about it." "Yes Sir, but..." "Please use your horn, not your voice!"

That was my first encounter with Professor Paul Staicu, who became my horn teacher, mentor, conductor, and friend. As a teacher he was intelligent, passionate, professional, and demanding, but with a short fuse. As a horn student, you had better be on time, warmed-up, well prepared, and with the solo pieces memorized, or else!

Four years flew by and I had my last lesson: "Please play!" (I did, this time without commenting). Then he said, "Would you like to play principal horn in the orchestra I just created in Constanta?"

Six wonderful years followed. The new orchestra improved and began touring: Spain, Italy, France, and finally the US and Canada in 1983. Sometimes players defected. Meanwhile, the political situation in Romania worsened. More musicians defected. In 1986 I went on tour to Spain and Italy and made the decision to not return.

In 1987, Staicu's heart gave out while he was conducting a concert. Two years later, after a second heart attack, he was allowed to leave Romania. The secret police issued him a visa after six years of denial. He went to France and had heart bypass surgery. Doctors recommended that he cease playing the horn, which he did reluctantly. He went back to conducting and founded a new orchestra in Montbeliard, France.

Staicu studied the horn in Bucharest with Petre Nituлесcu and in Prague with Vladimir Kubat. He won international horn competitions, including Bucharest, Birmingham, Moscow, Geneva, and Prague. He served as a judge for competitions, including Munich, Prague Spring, Concertino of Prague, and Castello di Duino. He studied conducting with Hans Swarowsky and Sergiu Celibidache and was awarded the Karajan and Wagner Medals. He still conducts and lives in Montbeliard.

This June, Professor Staicu celebrates his 80th birthday. He deserves to be considered as one of the fathers of modern horn playing, who put Romania on the horn map. His students carry on his legacy – the legacy of a horn player from behind the Iron Curtain. ❖

Cristian Codreanu became a US citizen in 1992 and is on the faculty of Tennessee State University in Nashville. See the February 2016 Horn Call for the complete article.

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TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



2017 Northeast Horn Workshop

March 24-26, Hartt School Community Division
200 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford CT
Featured artists: BSO principal Jamie Sommerville
Bill Purvis (Yale), US Coast Guard Band horn section
Host: Barbara Hill bahill@hartford.edu 860-768-4451
hartford.edu/hcd/music/workshops-master-classes/northeast-horn-workshop.aspx

2017 International Horn Symposium

June 26-30, Natal, Brazil
Federal University of Rio Grande de Norte
Host: Radegundis Tavares Feitosa, radegundistavares@gmail.com
Artists: Abel Pereira, Adalto Soares, Frank Lloyd
Ignatio Garcia, Jeff Nelson, Kristina Mascher-Turner
Philip Doyle, Luiz Garcia, Marie-Luise Neunecker
Miklós Nagy, Nobuaki Fukukawa, Waleska Beltrami
ihs2017natal.wordpress.com



News and Events

Re: It's Not Just about Excerpts (Orchestral Music Students Today): **Bob Ashworth** (Leeds, England): "Lovely little piece from Jamie Sommerville!" ... **David Evan Thomas** (Minneapolis composer): "Excellent to get this with Mr. Sommerville's wise words." ... **Michael Thompson** (Surrey, England): "Keep up the good work with Cornucopia; I really enjoy reading it. I particularly enjoyed Jamie's article in the latest edition." ... **Greg Hustis** (Dallas): "Jamie makes an excellent point. Unfortunately, unless orchestras change the way they conduct auditions, especially preliminaries, students will not stray from the present course of being skilled 'audition monkeys.'"

Jennifer Robbins (Waltham) was Jennifer Hyde at Gordon College, has since earned an MM and graduate diploma at NEC, and is now freelancing in the Boston area.

Polly Dunn (Gwynedd PA): "I gave my horn away. At 88 my lungs are aging too fast for me to get any high notes. I am in mourning over the loss of my playing, but the frustration was becoming too much for me to continue. So please take my name off your list. Thank you for all the reading I have enjoyed."

David Amram (Beacon NY) was the focus of a concert in Philadelphia in December. His chamber music was performed by many eminent musicians, including **Howard Wall** (New York Philharmonic).

Susan LaFever (West New York NJ) will be teaching chamber music and horn in Sulzbach-Rosenberg, Bavaria, Germany in August 2017 at the InterHarmony International Music Festival.

Patrice Malatestinic (Skidmore College) will be teaching horn and coaching chamber music this July in Acqui Terme, Alessandria, Piedmont, Italy at the Interharmony International Music Festival.

Ann Ellsworth (Plattsburg NY) released her CD *Rain Coming* at a concert in December at the Provincetown Playhouse in New York City. **Lee Cyphers** and **Rachel Drehmann** were the horn players among the many musicians taking part in the festivities.

Theodore Rautenberg (Davidson NC) died in September 2015. He had worked at General Electric in Schenectady and played horn for 50 years with the Schenectady Symphony Orchestra and later as a community member in the Davidson College Orchestra.

Harold Britton (Dewitt NY), a long-time enthusiastic attendee at regional and IHS events, died October 31, 2016 at age 98. He played horn from grade school to age 92 and worked for General Electric in Schenectady and Syracuse, retiring in 1983. Memorial gifts in Harold's honor can be made to the Onondaga Civic Symphony Orchestra, PO Box 5171, Syracuse NY 13220.

Greg Hustis (Dallas), **Mary Bartholomew** (Asheville NC), and **Rick Seraphinoff & Celeste Holler** (Bloomington IN) have sent contributions. Thanks!

Lost: Linda McGuire (Tulsa), Yuko Yamamura (NY & Tokyo), Nancy Staples (Auburn University), Rebecca Klock (Golden CO).



New members: Composer **Eric Nathan**, Providence RI; and **Cristian Codreanu**, Tennessee State University. ❖

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