

Cornucopia

News and articles for anyone interested in the horn

May 2018



Norman Schweikert

Playing Assistant First Horn

by Norman Schweikert

Many hornists feel that assistant first horn is one of the most thankless of positions, and that even when well performed, the assistant's work is hardly noticed, generating little personal satisfaction.

This position does not have to be unpleasant, and the author hopes that by offering some guidelines for the effective use of an assistant, the job can be made more appealing.

In the Chicago Symphony, the assistant:

1. Assists by: a. Playing in the loud tutti passages of strenuous compositions so that the principal horn can rest partially or completely in preparation for more delicate passages or solos. (All excerpts the assistant will play are marked by half brackets – in pencil, of course! The principal's part should be marked exactly the same so that there is no doubt where the assistant will be playing.)

b. Playing entirely or taking over long-held notes, both soft and loud.

c. Playing an occasional note or two in a solo or semi-solo passage, dove-tailing with the principal, in order to provide a short but much needed rest or a chance to secure a larger breath.

d. Helping coordinate successive open and/or stopped passages.

2. Doubles: a. In unison passages for added volume, b. the lower voice in octave passages for better balance, and c. in muted and/or stopped passages.

3. Plays other chairs in the regular horn section in an emergency or for rotation purposes.

4. Plays one of the extra parts in pieces requiring more than the usual four horns.

The assistant should always have a separate first horn part to play from (and a separate stand, of course) and should always know the count of the bars rest even when not playing for long periods of time. You should always know where you are in the music anyway because you may have to take over temporarily.

The author admits that given his preference of positions in the horn section, he would not pick that of assistant. However, the assistant position can be made pleasant and interesting, as it has been for him in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, as long as there is a good working relationship between the assistant and the rest of the section, a sensible use of the assistant, and a variety of playing situations in the section. ❖

Norman was one of the founding members of the IHS, its first secretary-treasurer, its unofficial archivist and historian, and an Honorary Member. He played in the Chicago Symphony for 28 years (4 years as assistant) and taught at Northwestern University. The complete article was a lecture at the 1974 workshop in Muncie, Indiana and appeared in the Autumn 1974 Horn Call. Norman was in Muncie this April as his son Eric gave a timpani masterclass, his first time back since 1974.

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Being Female in an Orchestra Brass Section

by Elizabeth Freimuth



With the rise of the #MeToo movement, it seems that even more people than ever are asking me the question I've heard so many times in my life: "So, what is it like to be a female brass player in an orchestra?" My usual response is to laugh and joke, "Since I have no experience being anything else, it feels pretty normal."

In no way do I mean to make light of the fact that other women have had truly different experiences than me. I owe a debt of gratitude to those women who rose to the top of the orchestral horn world at a time when they were not only minorities but also often unwelcome.

Given that I have been on both sides of the teacher/student coin, I can appreciate the uniqueness of my first conservatory horn teacher, Verne Reynolds. The heart of his orchestral career was in the 1950s-1970s – an era that rarely included women in any section of the orchestra – and yet, when teaching me, he *always* referenced my hypothetical future conductors and colleagues as "she" and "her"!

In my first two professional orchestral jobs, I was hired by female music directors and both orchestras had female concertmasters! I have had the benefit of never being "the first." In all of the orchestras in which I have been a member, either currently or previously a female had been in the horn section. I have also had my share of unfortunate experiences.

Shortly after I was awarded my current position in the Cincinnati Symphony, I read horrible comments about me on a horn page – sexist, inappropriate, and offensive, written by a man whom I have never met.

I also had the experience of a prominent conductor giving me feedback during my trial for a principal horn position. Although his feedback was entirely positive, he added, "When I look at the principal horn, I want to see and hear a very large Italian man." Really? Not a surprise that I was not offered that job.

Having a family has changed the way I do my job. I believe I am better because of it. I live every day knowing that playing my horn is by far not the most important thing I am doing. This has translated into a much more relaxed approach, further resilience, and experiencing music-making as a joy and expression of my own life.

We have come so far, and we owe it to the next generation of female brass players to assume they are tough. Teachers, hand it to them straight! Don't waste time beating around the bush; they don't need that nor do they want it. You can take my word for it! ❖

Liz is principal horn of the Cincinnati Symphony and on the faculty of the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music. She will be a featured artist at the 50th IHS International Horn Symposium in Muncie, Indiana.

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TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Jim Engele and Josh Michal
at the 2018 Horn Choir in Lexington

Esprit de Cor

Saturday, May 5, 2018, 3 p.m. Lexington MA. Free.
Works for horn choir by Wagner, Bach, Mozart, Schubert, etc.
Erik Svenson e_svenson@hotmail.com. First Parish, 9 Harrington Rd.

Stefan de Leval Jezierski (Berlin Philharmonic)

May 6, 2018, 2 p.m. in Jordan Hall, NEC, Boston
Strauss Horn Concerto No. 1 with Boston Civic Orchestra
Beethoven *Coriolan* and Strauss *Death & Transfiguration*

Jason Snider (BSO) in Mozart & Schubert

May 13, 2018, 7:30 p.m., Sanders Theater, Harvard University
Mozart K452, Schubert Octet, Boston Chamber Music Society

2018 International Horn Symposium

July 30-August 4, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana
Featured artists: Karl Pituch, Denise Tryon, Robert Danforth
Frank Lloyd, Josh Williams, Elizabeth Freimuth, Kevin Rivard
Jonathan Hammill, David Amram, Gregory Hustis
Leelanee Sterrett, Frøydis Ree Wekre, Carolyn Wahl
Concerts, master classes, competitions, mass choirs, exhibits
Host: Gene Berger, 765-285-5430 gpberger@bsu.edu
50th anniversary bash, not to be missed!
<http://ihs50.org/>



News and Events

Charles Mayhood reports that the Green Mountain Horn Club offered their Winter Concert in Burlington VT in February with Charles conducting. Founded in 1985 by Alan Parshley, the club has a current members list of over 50 players. Nine of the members performed works by Gabrieli, Douglas Hill, David Stanhope, and others. (See photo)

Paul Ingraham, who was a founding and long-time member of the New York Brass Quintet and now teaches privately and at Yale, was honored as one of the 2018 Distinguished Alumni of the Wallingford Education Foundation in April in Wallingford CT. Paul is a graduate of the Wallingford public schools. The award is for former students who have made significant contributions to family, community, state, country, and to their chosen profession.

Killian Mulrooney's mother writes: "I'd like to thank the IHS for all the information and support. When the symposium was held at the Colburn School in LA, Killian attended the entire week. It was a solidifying experience where he focused on his goals as a horn player. He is now at the Thornton School at USC majoring in horn performance."

Patrick Hill has moved to Kenosha WI to take over as the Director of Navy Band Great Lakes in North Chicago. He lives a short train ride away from work just over the state border.

Jonathan Kagan (New York City, jmkaganmd@gmail.com) asks about horn events in NYC and Westchester County.

The **Horn Choir Afternoon** in April in Lexington MA featured Joshua Michal as soloist (in *Lament* by Williams) and conductor, Jim Engele demonstrating horn maintenance, announcements of various opportunities, and lots of fun reading horn quartets with 35 players.

The **Composers Conference and Chamber Music Center**, previously at Wellesley College, will be held at Brandeis University July 29 to Aug. 12, with special study of the Strauss Suite Op. 4 August. 6-8. Wide range of chamber music coached. Horns needed. Isabelle Plaster isabelleplaster@gmail.com or J. Tong jtong@composersconference.org

A **Suzuki Method Teacher Development Course** for all brass musicians is held in Calgary, Canada, July 2-10, 2018 at Mount Royal Conservatory. Certification included. Natalie DeJong ndejong@mtroyal.ca

Eli Epstein will be leading the Horn Track of the Berklee/Boston Conservatory Summer Brass Program, June 25-29, 2018, open to high school students (age 15 and older) and college students. elipestein.com

Cynthia Brown (Brockton) has sent a contribution. Thanks!

Lost: Allison Takaacs (Bloomfield CT), Jessica Larsen (Conifer CO), Michael Borkum (Medway), Christy Niedermaier (Chittenango NY).

New members: **Steve Eddins**, Milton, student of Hazel Dean Davis; **Ann Lander**, Old Lyme CT; **Ann Babbitt**, Portland ME; **David Zoll**, Toledo, studied with Mike Hatfield, granddaughter Harper also plays horn; **Deborah Pasho**, Hartland VT, student of Ginger Culpepper after a 20-year hiatus, retired veterinarian, plays the in the Upper Valley Community Band; and from the Green Mountain Horn Club in Vermont: **Sandra Dahl**, **Cadence Fowler**, **Carole Furr**, **Mary Micklas**, **Eric Neilsen**, **Cynthia Smith**, and **Tom Whitney**. ❖



Green Mountain Horn Club (l-r): Mary Micklas, Eric Neilsen, Cynthia Smith (back), Jan Little, Carole Furr, Cadence Fowler, Tom Whitney, Sandra Dahl, Bill Harwood

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