Cornucopia: The Book

Twenty years of articles from the Cornucopia newsletter
For anyone interested in the horn

Marilyn Bone Kloss, Editor
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The Cornucopia Newsletter

It is amazing to think that the *Cornucopia* newsletter has been published for twenty years now. It began in 1992 to keep in touch with players who had attended horn choir rehearsals and to inform them of upcoming meetings. Kathleen Principe (now Nagy) started the New England Horn Choir, hoping to build the choir into a performing group. When she was no longer able to lead the group, she asked me to continue with meetings. We did continue with occasional informal choir reading meetings, then invited Willie Ruff to come to discuss his life and his memoir, *A Call to Assembly*.

This was the beginning of a series of meetings with guests who conducted the choir and presented lectures and demonstrations. These included the Boston Opera Horn Quartet, jazz hornist Tom Varner, Kathleen Principe on meditation with the horn, a visit from former Boston Symphony member Osbourne McConathy, Jean Rife on natural horn technique, Morris Secon reminiscing, Marshall Sealy talking about jazz horn history to a public access television videographer, Danny Katzen on playing the Bach Cello Suites on horn, Dennis Leclaire conducting and coaching his horn quartet, and choir holiday performances at Quincy Market in Boston.

Robert King Music Company (before it was bought by Alphonse Leduc) sponsored brass days; for a few years a trombonist from Western Massachusetts organized an exciting New England Brass Conference; Bob Osmun sponsored events with Michael Thompson, Frank Lloyd, and the New York Philharmonic horn section at his shop in Arlington; and the Northeast Horn Workshop started in 1999 and continues today. With many horn events happening the region, our local meetings ceased.

*Cornucopia* in the meantime became the Massachusetts International Horn Society (IHS) local newsletter. Ellen Donahoe-Saltman was the IHS Massachusetts Area Representative, but she runs a music camp during the summer. When I put out the first issue of *Cornucopia* in the summer, Ellen suggested that I continue with the newsletter and take over the Area Representative position. I have continued to be the local representative ever since, and I have also served two terms on the IHS Advisory Council (1996-2002).

The *Cornucopia* name plate claims that the newsletter is a publication of the New England Horn Society – a hope that has never been fulfilled as no society has been formed. However, the motto "For anyone interested in the horn" does seem to be accurate as the number of subscribers has climbed from under 200 in 1992 to nearly 1500 in 2012. Subscribers include horn amateurs, professionals, and students, plus administrators, conductors, composers, and even trombonists, tubists, and a clarinetist. The newsletter has spread from New England to include 49 states plus DC and APOs, 8 Canadian provinces, and 28 other countries.

This book is a selection of articles, reviews, and essays from twenty years of the newsletter. Because of his early association with our meetings, Willie Ruff appears in several reviews. The people and subjects are often centered in Boston, especially the Boston Symphony, but some articles come from far-flung corners of the planet. The newsletter’s mission, in addition to providing informative articles, is to alert readers to local, regional, and international concerts, events, and workshops and to disseminate news. The mission continues and is now supplemented by a website at ma.hornsociety.org.

I hope you enjoy this eclectic collection.

Marilyn Bone Kloss
Gunther Schuller at 80
Composer, Conductor, Hornist …

Gunther Schuller started as a horn player but has't played horn since 1963 and is now better known as a composer, conductor, author, and music publisher. Yet when he got together with former BSO second horn Harry Shapiro recently, "What did he want to talk about?" asks Harry, "horn playing!"

Gunther has been in the news recently because he turned 80 on November 22, 2005 – St. Cecelia Day, the patron saint of musicians. He was feted in Boston with concerts of his compositions at NEC (where he was president from 1967 to 1977), a panel discussion on the state of contemporary composition at Harvard, an evening-long program of his jazz recordings on a Boston NPR station, and performances of his composition Spectra by the Boston Symphony.

The IHS named Gunther an Honorary Member in 2000 because of his contributions to music and especially the horn. He was principal horn of the Cincinnati Symphony at age 17 and of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra at age 19, and he performed jazz with Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, and John Lewis, later coining the term "Third Stream" to describe the union of jazz and classical music. Oxford University Press published his book Horn Technique in 1962 (later reissued).

As the IHS stated, "His compositions have covered a full range of musical genres and he has found ways to include or feature the horn in almost every one. In addition to his challenging large ensemble works, there have been numerous chamber works including horns in traditional settings (e.g., brass quintets) and innovative combinations." He features the horn in two horn concertos, a horn sonata, Perpetuum mobile for four muted horns and bassoon, Lines and Contrasts for 16 horns, and Five Pieces for Five Horns.

A review of a recording of Five Pieces for Five Horns by Barry Tuckwell and the NFB Horn Quartet in Cornucopia in June 1999 comments: "Five was published in 1952, at a time when there was little new music written for horn ensemble. It takes advantage of the new techniques that were being developed in the fifties, both compositional (serialism) and instrumental (valve tremolando, glissandos, quarter tones, and the like)."

At the 2005 Northeast Horn Workshop, Gunther participated in a panel discussion and gave a lecture on interpretation of the opening horn solo in Strauss's Till Eulenspiegel. He went into meticulous detail, backed up by references, the same sort of analysis applied to scores and recordings in his book The Compleat Conductor. Gunther believes that such analysis should inform all horn playing.

The honors showered on Gunther are too numerous to list completely but include a Pulitzer Prize, MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Grant, BMI Lifetime Achievement Award, and ten honorary degrees.

Gunther is still busy conducting and lecturing. The horn continues to be near to his heart, as shown by his compositions, his participation in horn workshops, and his delight in his IHS Honorary Membership. ❖ February 2006

An American Original, "the Renaissance man of American music" – these are just two of the most striking phrases used to try to capture the experience and spirit of hornist/composer/conductor David Amram, who played at Passim's in Cambridge in March 1996.

As a performer, David plays horn, piano, guitar, numerous flutes and whistles, percussion, and various folk instruments, in addition to conducting. He has composed orchestral and chamber works, operas, and scores for theater and film, including *Splendor in the Grass* and *The Manchurian Candidate*. His style ranges from classical through jazz and into folk and ethnic idioms, assimilating elements of each into the other. He is committed to passing the joy of music on to the younger generation, participating in many composer-in-residence programs, including one this past year in Boston that involved a whirlwind of activities at public schools, music schools, and universities. In another Boston connection, his papers are housed in the Mugar Library at Boston University.

David has been a pioneer in many areas. Starting with a classical music education – playing extra horn with the National Symphony while attending George Washington University – he soon became a pioneer in jazz horn along with Julius Watkins. He collaborated in jazz/poetry readings with Jack Kerouac in 1957. He was the first music director for Shakespeare in the Park, starting in 1956, and the first composer-in-residence with the New York Philharmonic in 1966. He has long been acknowledged as a pioneer in what is now called "world" or "multicultural" music.

It is impossible in this small space to list all the activities David participates in (leads, usually) or the honors accrued (four honorary doctorates, for example). Some of his talents will be on display at Passim's in an eclectic evening of jazz, poetry, and ethnic music. His wife, singer-songwriter Lora Lee Amram, three children (ages 16, 15, and 12), and friends will share the stage and make it a friendly family event, with all the horn players in the audience invited to participate in a grand finale, a blues in F. David says, "No prior experience required, just know the tonic, dominant, and subdominant chords!" March 1996

David is still active as musician and conductor. He is the subject of a movie called *David Amram: The First 80 Years*.

Larry Rivers, Jack Kerouac, David Amram, Allen Ginsburg, Gregory Corso
Julie Landsman
Opera, opera, opera …

There was a gasp from the committee when I, a woman, stepped from behind the screen," says Julie Landsman of her audition for principal horn at the Metropolitan Opera. "I'm absolutely convinced that if it hadn't been for the screen, I would not have won the position."

That win 16 years ago was a dream come true for Julie. She had studied with Howard T. Howard, one of the two Met principals, during high school and listened to many Met performances. She promised herself that she would become first horn at the Met. The audition came after attending Juilliard, three years as co-principal in Houston, and several years of free-lancing in New York.

"I am committed to opera," says Julie. "I love the anonymity, being part of an accompanying ensemble. It is a joy and inspiration. However, it is a high maintenance chair, and it is probably shortening my career as a player." The Met maintains two horn sections (with a shared assistant, Javier Gandara). One of the two principals must be there for every service.

"My section is usually requested for Wagner," Julie continues, "so I play many of the long, heavy operas." How does she get through such a demanding schedule? "It is my choice to use the assistant or not," she explains. "We have a good one, and I use him generously, especially in Wagner and Strauss, but usually not for lighter composers such as Rossini." Julie also depends on her second horn, Michelle Baker, who was her student in Houston. "Michelle is a perfect second horn, worth her weight in gold. She has a fat, dark sound. My sound is brighter, and Michelle's sound adds a dimension of depth to it."

Because of the heavy Met schedule, Julie plays little else. However, she is passionate about teaching. She points to Carmine Caruso, whose material she uses extensively, and James Chambers ("for style and concept of sound") in addition to Howard as inspirations for her teaching style, synthesized by her own experience.

The section at the Met is now totally different than when Julie joined it. Julie runs the horn auditions, but has only one vote along with the other horns, other brass, and the music director, James Levine. "Since the whole audition is conducted behind a screen, we have to evaluate everything by ear," Julie explains. "We are looking for something different than we would in a symphony audition – we want a player who blends, who can follow the singer and conductor, we put less emphasis on power and more on lean and flexible. Finally, we come to a sense that this person really listens. In opera playing, you are a soloist for only a few seconds. You have to sound great for those seconds, then blend into the background again."  ❖ January 2001

Julie has participated in many regional and international horn workshops, including the 2001 Northeast Horn Workshop. She retired from the Met in 2010 but still teaches at Juilliard.
Bridging Historical and Modern Horns
by Lowell Greer

Already I am looking forward to joining you in New Hampshire next March for the 2011 Northeast Horn Festival. My plan is to help bridge the gap between the historical horn and the modern horn, talk a bit, play a few notes, and pass on a few concepts.

My career has been split between symphony orchestras and Early Music groups. I have loved both, but I must regard Early Music as having captured my imagination and offered me greater opportunities as a soloist, even though I had previously been awarded the top prizes in five International Competitions for (modern valve) horn playing (Cleveland, Atlanta, Perpignan, Paris, and Vercelli). The orchestras did tend to pay a higher weekly fee, however, so I was loath to stop playing in them for years, holding posts in Detroit, Cincinnati, Mexico City, and Toledo.

My first recordings were done on valved instruments, and remain projects of which I am proud, I'm happy to say. There were two recital recordings with pianist Arvi Sinka, and Concerti by Haydn, Telemann, Cherubini, Forster, Hovanhess, and Stamitz. Some are still available, but others are out of print due to the course of CD productions, always a pity.

More often it is not one's determined plans that achieve results, but the responding to sudden opportunity provided by serendipity, and so it was for me. I had played with a Baroque orchestra in San Francisco for years, and participated in a recording of the Handel aria "Va Tacito e Nascosto" from Giulio Cesare. The producers decided during that session that they needed to add a CD of Mozart Horn Concertos to their catalogue.

I left my fingerprints all over this Mozart project in many ways; preparing the urtext we followed, constructing a replica of a Raoux Cor-Solo to use, and creating a regimen of cadenza improvisations. The results would, without question, capture the life of a horn player of a previous age. (They also provided me with the fodder for a doctoral project!)

Recordings of other Mozart, Schubert, Brahms, and Beethoven works followed, including a set of the Mozart Divertimenti for winds for Decca, played by the Amadeus Winds. All were done on eccentric historic instruments, "horns" which spoke the language without any accent, the goal of Early Music performance. I toured as soloist on several occasions, in Germany, Switzerland, Canada, and the US, always reflecting on Punto and others of his ilk, while wondering if my playing would be improved by having my own valet! November 2010

Lowell retired from professional activity to care for his companion, who died last December. He now operates a B&B, builds natural horns, teaches, and was consecrated as Bishop in the Old Catholic Orthodox Church in December of 2010, now holding the title "Bishop of the God-Saved State of Ohio."
Patty Evans
Patty from Vermont, Now Living in Winnipeg

Her email address is pattyfromvt, which is already a clue. It turns out to be a nickname for Patty Evans, currently principal horn in the Winnipeg Symphony and a featured artist at the 2006 Northeast Horn Workshop at the University of Vermont. At a music festival in Quebec some years ago, Patty kept introducing herself as "Patty from Vermont" and the sobriquet stuck. Patty loves her job in Winnipeg – the people are a second family and western Canada is a different, exciting world – although she wishes Vermont weren't so far away.

She grew up in tiny Bakersfield VT and started horn in fifth grade with her mother (both parents are music teachers), then studied with Alan Parshley, professor at the University of Vermont and host of the 2006 Northeast Horn Workshop, from sixth grade through high school. Patty credits Alan with the preparation that enabled her to be successful as a professional horn player.

Patty attended Oberlin and studied with Jamie Sommerville her second year. Things "clicked" with Jamie, so when he went on to Montreal, she followed and completed her degree at McGill University. She met her future husband, Todd Martin (also a horn player), at McGill, where she had the added benefit of being closer to Vermont.

Next came the New World Symphony in Florida for two years, which Patty describes as "an amazing educational experience, a view of the professional life but without the pressure, the same season but more instructional, with sectionals, teachers, and exposure to important musicians from all over the world."

Patty was back in Vermont in the summer of 2000 when the Winnipeg auditions were moved forward to six days before her wedding! Fortunately, she won the job and the couple moved west. Todd played second in Thunder Bay for a year and third in Winnipeg for a year, and now he freelances and teaches.

Winnipeg is "outrageously cold," says Patty, "and I thought I knew cold from Vermont." But they love the lifestyle and have been to places like Churchill (polar bears) and out on Hudson Bay. Patty also gets satisfaction from being principal in the orchestra. She's become very Canadian – she says "eh?" a lot and watches hockey.

Patty finds that people are surprised that high quality playing and a high level of education can come from a small town in a rural state, but she thinks that many people of high caliber grow up in such places. She would like to live in Vermont, but it's not possible to have her type of career there. She generally returns once a year, and she's thrilled to be returning as a featured artist at the workshop in her hometown. ❖ November 2005
Eric Ruske
A Horn Player Who Loves Music

Every note I play is a note I want to play," says Eric Ruske. "As a soloist, I have the freedom to play only what I enjoy playing."

Eric recalls his years with the Cleveland Orchestra, how so many of his colleagues had lost the joy of making music. He understands how it can happen. "Sometimes they are overqualified," he explains. "They play the same pieces over and over, and maybe not the most challenging parts. And orchestra schedules are so full, there is little time or energy left over for other activities such as teaching, chamber music, or a solo career."

Eric now spends about 150 days per year on the road, which is about right for him. He started traveling with the Empire Brass, but prefers life as a soloist. He performs with orchestras all over the world, recording with some like the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. He plays chamber music at summer festivals; the Newport festival is his favorite. "They have three to five concerts every day," he says, "so when I'm not playing, I get to hear others. And the music making there is fantastic."

Eric worries about his students. He grew up near Chicago and studied with Dale Clevenger at Northwestern University. Now he teaches at Boston University. "At the beginning of the school year, all these new horn students arrive," he says. "Why do we admit so many students when there are so few jobs? Are we misleading the students into something where there is no work?"

He answers his own question. "Even if there is no job in horn playing, they still have learned a work ethic, how to solve problems – skills to bring to any career. Music takes self-discipline. The students have to practice every day, and learn on their own between lessons. And they learn to love music, a joy they will have all their lives."

Speaking of loving music, Eric obviously does. "Music is everything that I do during the day – with the students, with my two boys – it's all one big package. People relate to music – not necessarily cerebrally, just that it speaks to the human condition. I believe that horn playing should be as emotional as possible, and at the same time as technical as possible."

In addition to teaching during the year at Boston University, Eric conducts an intense two-week horn institute at Tanglewood each summer. He gives back to the horn community, contributing to regional workshops. At the first Northeast Horn Workshop at Potsdam NY in March 1999, he played Bach and Mozart flute and violin sonatas along with more traditional horn fare. Everyone who heard his playing and comments there appreciated how much he loves all good music. ✫ September 1999
Charles Kavalovski
Retires from the Boston Symphony

Chuck Kavalovski is eager to see what the rest of his life holds. He has announced his decision to retire from the Boston Symphony at the end of the 1996-1997 season after 25 years as Principal Horn. "It was a complicated personal decision," he says. His wife, pianist Margo Garrett, is teaching at NEC this year but may go back to Minnesota next year to continue building a PhD program in collaborative piano. Chuck isn't sure yet what he will do – free lancing, solo playing, and computers are options he's considering.

Chuck says his playing is going better than ever, but he'd rather leave too early than too late, and at age 61, he's one of the oldest principal hornists in the major US orchestras. He believes in the necessity of maintaining skills, "training like a competitive athlete." It has been satisfying to have succeeded through hard work and to have seen his capabilities and musical expressiveness on the horn increase over the years. His only concession, because of arthritis in his shoulder after years of holding the horn off the leg, is a foot rest that raises his leg enough for the bell to rest on it and still project the sound.

In spite of his conspicuous success on the horn, music wasn't his first profession. He has a PhD in physics and was a tenured full professor at age 35, playing horn in community orchestras. But he wanted to see what he was capable of on horn and so took a leave of absence from teaching to take auditions. He won several principal positions; while waiting for the outcome of the BSO audition, he played a season with Denver, his first and only other professional position.

"I've been lucky to have two careers," he comments. "In this day and age, you have to specialize. I loved physics, but I also wanted to play the horn. Fortunately, I've been able to do both."

He is also lucky, he says, "to have had the best horn job in the US." The BSO has the best hall, good management/orchestra relations (no strikes), and Ozawa has been flexible with scheduling. Chuck has had a say in hiring everyone in the section, and they're great colleagues. Boston is the "easiest large city to live in", the orchestra has summers at Tanglewood, and Chuck particularly appreciates the BSO Chamber Players, a unique arrangement for the first chair players, who don't play Pops as all the other BSO musicians do. Boston also has a wonderful tradition of a public attitude that respects musicians as much as it does, for example, physicists.

In addition to his orchestral playing, Chuck has many other accomplishments to his credit, including recordings, professorships, and election to the IHS Advisory Council. Retirement from the BSO is unlikely to mean resting. We'll just have to wait and see. ❖ January 1997

After retiring from the BSO, Chuck recorded 14 CDs of Anton Reicha wind quintets with Westwood Wind Quintet until back problems forced him to retire from horn playing. He was elected an IHS Honorary Member in 2011.
Richard Mackey
Retires from the Boston Symphony

Dick Mackey retired from the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the end of the 2005 Tanglewood season after a long and distinguished career. Renowned for his virtuosity, especially in the low register, Dick had earlier been a member of the orchestras of Kansas City, San Antonio, Detroit, New Orleans, Cleveland, and the Japan Philharmonic. He was fourth horn of the BSO for 32 years, having joined the orchestra in 1973 following eight years as a freelance musician in the Los Angeles studios.

Dick was born in Philadelphia and grew up in rural Montrose PA. He played in the school band starting in fourth grade, first on trumpet, then, at the request of the band director, horn. During those years, he expanded his music education by listening to NYC radio station WQXR, famous for its classical music.

Dick earned his diploma at New England Conservatory in three years, studying with BSO principal Willem Valkenier. He also credits solfège teacher Gaston Dufresne, a BSO bassist, with rigorous musical training. Dick is still in touch with fellow students Artie Goldstein, Wayne Barrington, Dick Gerstenberger, Abby Mayer, Gail Weimer, and Ralph Pottle.

Tanglewood provided professional orchestral experience over four seasons, and Marlboro did the same for chamber music over nine summers. Dick still visits Marlboro and feels very much at home there.

The Bach Cello Suites, played in the cello range, have been a constant for Dick over the years. As he finished his studies at NEC, Valkanier arranged for him to play for Cleveland conductor George Szell. Dick played movements of the Bach. Later Szell offered him the fourth position, but the job did not materialize because the third player took the position. (Later Dick won the third audition and played in Cleveland for eight years.) When he auditioned for the BSO years later, he again played Bach and was offered the fourth position. He still loves playing the suites.

After playing principal horn in Japan for two years, Dick sailed to the US with his family. Friends in Los Angeles convinced him to free-lance there, but it was difficult to break in. A composer he had known at Tanglewood got him his first job at Disney, and then work began to pick up. The horn he plans to keep in retirement is a Schmidt he got from Vincent DeRosa when he moved to Boston.

Dick has been teaching at NEC, and will continue to teach. Among his students are Han Xiao-Ming, now playing and teaching in Saarbrücken, Germany, and Bill Caballero, principal horn in Pittsburgh.

Dick has found enjoyment and satisfaction playing in the BSO. He describes the section as "gentlemen, all fine players who get along well." He'll miss playing some works. He has projects planned already. He and his wife, Wendy, will be in Salzburg, Austria for the celebration of Mozart's 250th birthday on January 27, 2006. Dick will continue to collect Mozart artifacts – books, scores, recordings, art work, and especially first editions. He plans to read Mozart's letters again and to listen to and study the Schubert lieder. And children and grandchildren will be visiting their home near Tanglewood. September 2005
James Sommerville
Boston Symphony Principal Horn

Boston is wonderful," says Jamie Sommerville, the new principal horn of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. "My colleagues have been welcoming, and taking Mahler on tour right away was exhilarating." The BSO toured with the sixth and third Mahler symphonies in Europe in March (with Associate Principal Gus Sebring on first for the third). Boston Globe critic Richard Dyer wrote about Jamie's performance in the sixth that he "...knows how to move flexibly from the soloistic to chamber music to orchestral playing."

Jamie is a native of Toronto, where he first learned piano and recorder. When he was in junior high, the students could choose a band instrument. "I had no idea what a horn was," recalls Jamie. "I wanted a sax, but they were all taken. I thought the horn looked like an interesting machine; I didn't know what it sounded like. Obviously, it has worked out well for me."

Jamie has been principal horn with the Canadian Opera and Symphony Nova Scotia and Associate with Montreal. He has also toured Canada, Europe, and the US as soloist and recitalist. He has recorded CDs, the most recent being chamber music on Marquis Classics and the Mozart Concertos with Mario Bernardi and the CBC Vancouver. He started recording the concertos and other solo repertoire for CBC broadcast and recently realized that they had covered all the standard repertoire.

As associate principal in Montreal for eight years, Jamie did not play many of the big orchestral parts, so he is looking forward to more Mahler and other standard major works. He likes the fact that the position includes solo and chamber playing. The long audition process included these aspects. Jamie says, "Chamber music is a big part of what I want to do. The BSO Chamber Players is fantastic, and certainly unusual in a symphony orchestra." He will also be teaching at a New England Conservatory and Longy School of Music in Cambridge. May 1998

Jamie has premiered György Ligeti and Elliott Carter concertos with the Boston Symphony and has become music director of the Hamilton, Ontario Symphony since this interview.
Rachel Childers
New Boston Symphony Second Horn

Rachel Parker Childers is the first female brass player in the Boston Symphony, but she takes it in stride. "My generation is so lucky that it's really a non-issue, which is a credit to those who came before us. I'm happy to be in an orchestra like the BSO, which broke a gender barrier early on with Principal Flute Doriot Anthony Dwyer."

Rachel grew up in the suburbs of Detroit and in high school studied horn with Louis Stout, who was her greatest influence. "Mr. Stout was probably the most regimented teacher I studied with. My assignments for each lesson were a reflection of the musical proportion he believed to be important: an etude from each of five or six books, a movement of a concerto, and several excerpts. I had an enormous list of etude books and concertos to purchase before I even showed up for my first lesson. Mr. Stout played along with every note in my lessons, which helped develop my ear and my accountability!"

Rachel studied with Sören Hermannson at the University of Michigan, earning BM and MM degrees, then went to the Colburn School in Los Angeles for an Artist Diploma, studying with David Jolley (who flew out regularly from New York) and David Krehbiel (retired from the San Francisco Symphony). She freelanced in California, then last season played a one-year contract in the Colorado Symphony.

"My husband, Sam, is a bassoonist. He's planning to freelance in the area, and is looking forward to making reeds at sea level again. He has been incredibly supportive – we've moved from Michigan to California to Colorado to Massachusetts. It's hard as a freelancer to establish yourself in a new town, and he's had to do it three times now. I'm lucky to have such an understanding partner!"

"I had always hoped to play in a professional orchestra, but I realized that it would be incredibly hard to win that kind of job. I've been taking auditions for ten years, but I've done a lot of other things while pursuing that goal. I free-lanced on horn, taught elementary and secondary students for the Los Angeles Philharmonic (also was a page turner for the orchestra), and worked as an academic researcher for the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, starting in data entry. I had no idea that a musician would end up being a good statistician!"

Asked about playing second horn, she replied, "I'm excited to play second horn because I think you get a bit of everything! Lyrical duets, some fun down in the basement register, and all of those tricky second horn parts in Beethoven and Mozart that jump all over the place."

Welcome to Boston, Rachel! ❧ November 2011
David Ohanian

Happy to Be Back in Boston

David Ohanian, known to many Bostonians as a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Empire Brass before his 12-year tenure with Canadian Brass, is happy to be back in Boston, even though it was not really a planned return.

David grew up in Connecticut, near New York City, and studied with Mark Fisher of the New York Philharmonic during high school. He heard many performances then, but it was the BSO, on tour, that impressed him most. "Hearing that concert, and then listening to recordings of [then BSO principal James] Stagliano blew me away," he recalls. "I wanted to study with Stagliano, and that's why I came to the New England Conservatory."

By the time he graduated in 1967, David was playing in a brass quintet, a woodwind quintet, the opera, ballet, and Boston Philharmonic, free-lancing, and extra in the BSO. The way he became a regular BSO member is unusual. In March 1970 he won a position in Chicago, but Stagliano appealed to then BSO music director William Steinberg to say that the orchestra shouldn't lose him. On the basis of David's experience in the BSO, his win in Chicago, and the backing of the rest of the horn section, he was offered third horn, a position that he held until 1981, when the Empire Brass became full time. He joined the Canadian Brass in 1986.

When asked to compare the Empire and Canadian Brass, David sums it up as follows. "Empire Brass has always been a collection of soloists who come together to play chamber music. Their performances are magnificent and the recordings are truly dazzling, but the concept, particularly in the early days, was to be like a string quartet. That has changed over the years, so now the two groups, conceptually, are more similar."

"Canadian Brass never thought like brass players, but instead concentrated on building an audience by thinking like entertainers. The emphasis was always on the group." In the early years, Canadian Brass played hundreds of children's concerts, treating each as a workshop, analyzing how they could better connect with the audience. "They opened a new avenue for other brass groups to follow."

But because of their success, the Canadian Brass has a grueling schedule ("Be careful what you wish for," jokes David). With no time for any other musical outlet, David grew weary of life on the road and left in 1998 for a position at the University of Southern Florida in Tampa. This brought him near his daughter and his parents and enabled him to accept a wide variety of other musical outlets. Of teaching, he says, "I believe it is a performer's duty to pass along what he has learned."

David recently married bassoonist Suzanne Nelson, then of the Montreal Symphony. When Suzanne won a position with the BSO, David naturally considered moving back to Boston with her. "It was the only way I could see to live with my wife!" He has joined the faculty at Boston Conservatory, where he will be horn instructor, chamber music coach, and one of the conductors of the repertory orchestra. As a Yamaha artist, he'll continue to give master classes and judge competitions. The Transatlantic Quartet, of which he is a member, will be touring, and he will be playing in the BSO again, as a sub for Jay Wadenpfuhl, who is on sabbatical this year. "Boston has a bigger base for free-lancing than ever before," he says.

"I really never envisioned returning to Boston," concludes David, "but isn't life interesting." ❖ September 2000
Coming Home to Ithaca

by Gail Williams

Ithaca has a special place in my heart, so participating in the 2009 Northeast Horn Workshop at Ithaca College is a homecoming. John Covert, professor of horn at Ithaca College for many years, was not only my most important mentor but also the person who was responsible for my career in music. I had never had a horn lesson until my first one with Mr. Covert as a freshman music education major.

Originally, I wasn't interested in majoring in music, in spite of my family history – mother (percussion and viola, graduating in 1943) and brother (clarinet, graduating in 1969). I loved physical education and had first applied to the Physical Education Department. But Assistant Dean Walter Beeler twisted my arm at an All-Eastern Band Convention and told me I was to audition for Mr. Covert. So in my senior year of high school, I auditioned and was encouraged to attend the music school. Over the next four years, Mr. Covert not only drilled the basics, etudes, and solo repertoire into me, but he also convinced me not to leave the music department for the Physical Education School.

After graduating from Ithaca in 1973, I earned a Masters in Music at Northwestern University, always expecting to use my education degree. With some luck in auditions, I performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago for four years before winning the audition for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Being hired and shaking hands with Sir Georg Solti was one the most thrilling moments in my life. Performing the orchestral music with such great musicians has been immensely important in my musical life. To hear the best soloists in the world rehearse and perform inspired my interpretation of my own solos in all types of repertoire.

My two earlier lives have finally come together in teaching at Northwestern University. My education degree and my performing life both enhance my teaching. One of my students was Adam Unsworth, who will also be a featured artist at the workshop.

I have continued a connection to Ithaca in composer Dana Wilson. Dana has written four compositions for me, and I'll perform two of them, which I premiered in Chicago, at the workshop. Musings, an Ode to the Greek Muses, is for horn and piano, nine short movements of extraordinary contrasting music and challenges for the musicians. Dana wrote of Shallow Streams, Deep Rivers for Violin, Horn, and Piano, "Life is an accumulation of thoughts and events wherein friendships deepen and widen over time. In writing this piece, I wanted to honor our friendship in some way."

Performing these works at Ithaca is a special form of homecoming. March 2009
Stephen Stirling
Natural Horn Playing from across the Atlantic

Stephen Stirling played his first natural horn chamber recital recently, but he plans to play more. Those who missed his performances in Cambridge and Concord in October 2000 are likely to have other opportunities in the future, including at Yellow Barn in Pultney, Vermont.

Steve is part of SARASA, a group of about thirty chamber musicians who play chamber concerts on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to regular concerts, the group has an outreach mission, playing in venues such as nursing homes and teenage detention facilities. Steve's sister Jennifer plays viola in the group and lives in the Boston area, which is another reason Steve is likely to include Boston in his busy schedule.

Steve and Jennifer's father is a pianist who accompanied Ifor James and wrote for him. He encouraged his children to play music. Steve gave up on violin and piano, then agreed to try horn. No horn was available at school, so he played trumpet for a year before switching to horn. Ifor James was his main teacher through college. After college, Steve played in the Hallé Orchestra, then in the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Steve describes himself as a "London free-lancer." He is a member of the City of London Sinfonia and Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, appears occasionally as guest principal in other orchestras such as the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, London Symphony Orchestra, BBC SO, and teaches at Trinity. However, his main focus is chamber music, "a nice niche," he says. "I like being close to the audience." He's not so interested in solo horn recitals, mostly because he's not convinced that the horn and piano repertoire is interesting enough for the audience. He loves playing in orchestras. "Playing only occasionally means that it is always fresh and exciting," he says. "Many professionals become cynical, which is a disaster for the profession, but there are good conductors, real musicians, if you look for them."

"My best horn lessons came from non-horn players," he continues, citing violinist and conductor Alexander Schneider and conductor Nicholas Harnoncourt. "I see the horn as a means for musical expression rather than horn technique. And I'm a believer in 'informed' playing rather than in period instruments." He mentions that what might have been intended to be exciting, even shocking, in past centuries may be boring to modern audiences, and that we have to adapt our playing take that into account. "The emotional impact of a performance is important."

Steve has contributed two articles to The Horn magazine, the journal of the British Horn Society, and more are on the way. He explains that he wants to "provok ideas, to go beyond standard ideas into more creative thinking. These are not tried and true teaching methods." The first two articles are unique approaches to thinking about sound, toward developing affection and confidence in your sound.

"Horn playing has taken a staggering leap forward technically in the last 20 years," says Steve, "but it has not necessarily improved in musical mastery. Often refined shades are sacrificed to security. Now that players can play without making errors, it is time to take some risks, be more imaginative, make the horn an expressive instrument like the violin or cello." For Steve, the wide variety of chamber and orchestral music that he plays keeps him excited and thinking of new ways to make real music on the horn. November 2000

See classical-artists.com/stephen-stirling.
The Ifor James I Knew (1931-2004)
by Anthony G. Morris

Sadly, my good friend Ifor James passed away at his home in near Freiburg, Germany in December 2004.

I first met Ifor thirty years ago when I was a horn student in London. My fellow students and I were in awe of this man with "chops of steel" and an unattainable technique. We would follow him to concerts where he would play all four Mozart Concertos without cracking a note.

I met up with Ifor again five years ago in Germany after he had started playing horn again, intent on not giving in to his illness. We made recordings of him conducting some of his pupils, including Gregory Cass (Solo Horn, Orchestra of the Swiss Romande) and Frank Lloyd (soloist and Professor in Essen).

Ifor wanted to make a "teaching lecture on video" so that "a future generation could see how he had managed it with the last lot," so we taped six hours of basic teaching of horn technique, which will be available on a website with a request for donations to benefit his wife, Helen.

In the last weeks, even whilst undergoing treatment, Ifor was busy finishing new publications. After being in hospital, he returned home and seemed quite cheery after what he called, with customary joviality, "quite a late night out with friends down at the local restaurant." Typical Ifor, an infectiously happy chap who could entertain a full concert hall as easily as a table of guests.

Ifor started to play cornet at age four, later taking up piano and organ, becoming assistant organist at Carlisle Cathedral during his teens. At this time, he took up horn, later entering the Royal Academy as a pupil of Aubrey Brain. His first professional job was with the Hallé Orchestra, and after only two years he became, at age 22, principal horn at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.

Ifor played principal horn with all the leading orchestras in London before becoming a soloist and recording artist in great demand worldwide and for some years conductor of the Besses o’th Barn Brass Band.

Ifor had a distinguished career as a teacher, as professor at the Royal Academy, the Royal Northern College, and the Hochschule in Freiburg, Germany. He composed works for the horn and published books on playing the horn. Many composers have dedicated works to him.

More than a hundred of his pupils have become professional musicians, more than thirty principals with orchestras around the world. Nine are professors, two are principals of music colleges, and six have careers as soloists. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland and is an Honorary Member of the IHS. See ifor-james.de. ✤ April 2005

Anthony is principal of AGM Digital in Austria, an event production and recording company. See agmdigital.com for links to videos of Ifor James.
Osbourne McConathy (1908-2005)

Osbourne (Oz) McConathy, who died in December 2005, was an important figure in the Boston musical scene, playing horn in the Boston Symphony (1944-1966) and conducting Sarah Caldwell's Opera Company productions for decades. "Of all the people around me," said Caldwell, "Osbourne McConathy was the most helpful, the most knowledgeable, and also the funniest."

McConathy was born in Chelsea MA but grew up in Illinois. He had a few lessons in high school, but didn't take up the horn seriously until after he had finished college (New York University) and had a conducting fellowship at Juilliard. There he studied with Anton Horner and Josef Franzl. He played in the New Jersey, Chautauqua, National, and Rochester orchestras before being invited to the BSO.

McConathy was involved in opera early, serving as an usher for opera performances while still a teenager. He organized Gilbert and Sullivan productions while studying at Juilliard, and later conducted for the WPA.

McConathy's duties with Caldwell's opera company were comprehensive: he served as a musical and dramatic advisor, conducted several productions, and did a lot of the musicological legwork.

The opera company's former manager, James T. Morgan, said, "Ozzie was a serious student of opera, with a thorough professional knowledge of all the musical and dramatic issues, but he was also a rabid fan; he loved the singers, the ladies especially." Caldwell said, "He was very critical of everything we did because he wanted to make sure that everything was done properly. He was an excellent conductor and a very good mentor and teacher. He was so generous, affirmative, and well-versed in just about anything you could think of."

McConathy was always interested in the history of the horn and wrote "Great Horn Virtuosi of the Past" and a horn column called "Fanfare" for Symphony magazine. His article "Virtuosity" appeared in The Horn Call in November 1971 and was reprinted in August 2000.

Material in this article appeared in the October 2006 issue of The Horn Call and was taken from Richard Dyer of the Boston Globe and Norman Schweikert, IHS Honorary Member. Photo courtesy of the Boston Symphony Archives.
Abe Kniaz (1923-2007)

Abe Kniaz was highly regarded as an orchestral horn player when he left the National Symphony to teach at Indiana University in 1961. Perhaps he has not been as well known in the US as a teacher, especially after he moved to Quebec, but many students attest to his influence on their playing and also in their lives. Abe is remembered by many as a caring and kind mentor.

Abe was born in Milwaukee, grew up in Chicago, and studied at Curtis in Philadelphia and Michigan State. He played in Pittsburgh, Houston, and Columbus. When the Columbus orchestra collapsed in 1947, Abe free-lanced in New York City and then served as principal horn in the National Symphony in Washington DC from 1950 to 1961.

After such a distinguished playing career, Abe felt ready to teach. However, years later, after decades of teaching, he regretted that he had not continued to play longer. After ten years at Indiana, he moved to Canada, playing for a year in the Quebec Symphony and then teaching at Laval University from 1972 until 1994.

Willie Ruff crossed paths with Abe at critical points in his life. The first was early in 1948 when Abe was principal horn in Columbus and Willie had been learning horn on his own and playing in the band on the segregated Lockbourne AFB. Willie had joined the Army at age 14 and was still only 16 at this time. Willie studied with Abe again when Abe was in New York City and Willie was at Yale.

Willie's Mitchell/Ruff Duo performed at the 2005 Northeast Horn Workshop in Purchase NY. Abe attended the workshop, reconnecting with Willie. During the duo's concert, Willie commented, "How many 73-year-olds have their teacher in the audience?"

Regarding Abe's teaching, Bob Johnson, who played second horn to Abe in the National Symphony, says, "Abe wasn't satisfied that he had it right, that he had all the answers. In fact, I would call him the 'Great Inquirer'."

Thom Gustavson knew Abe for nearly 40 years and admired him as teacher and colleague. He recalls a joke of Abe's that Abe would probably enjoy at his own funeral. Abe said he went to the funeral of a friend, but "the only person I really wanted to see wasn't there."

Abe leaves his wife, Édith Bédard, four children, nine grandchildren, and his brother. Édith says, "Abe was a warm person, full of doubt, but who loved music and the search for perfection." Abe's gravestone will read: "The journey of the spirits and the journey of music were inseparable to him." September 2007

An extended tribute appears in the October 2007 issue of The Horn Call.
Nona Gainsforth (1950-2010)

Nona was one in a million," said Pat Hollenbeck, president of the Boston Musicians' Association. "For the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, she was not just a French horn player; she was part of the heart and soul of the ensemble for nearly three decades, a limitless source of inspiration with her courageous attitude marinated with a terrific sense of humor."

Nona grew up in the small town of Ogallala, Nebraska. Her father was the town dentist, piloted his daughter around the country in an airplane, and rode horses with her at the family ranch on the outskirts of town. Nona returned to the ranch as often as possible. She had many skills, including horseback riding, shooting, mechanics, cooking, and gardening.

Nona studied with Philip Farkas at Indiana University. She was principal horn of the State Orchestra of Mexico, Regina Saskatchewan Symphony, McGill Chamber Orchestra, CBC Orchestra, and Montreal Symphony before moving to Boston in 1981. She played the July 4th concerts on the Esplanade for 28 years and was principal horn of the Boston Classical Orchestra. She taught at McGill University, Wellesley College, and Brandeis University. Farkas asked her to be Visiting Instructor at IU when he was on sabbatical.

Nona was married twice, both marriages ending in divorce. Her son, Hartford Livingston Haffenreffer, is a student-athlete and musician. Her daughter, Anne Gainsforth Haffenreffer, has Rett syndrome, a developmental disorder that requires constant care. Nona cared for Anne until about a month before her death.

Nona was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005 and died at home in June 2010. When a friend asked how she was faring in the later stages, she replied, "Ah, chocolate and morphine, what a great combination."

Her son related what Nona said about a week before she died: "After going through this whole thing, I realize that people don't fear death; they fear having to get there." He said that she feared watching her loved ones lose hope more than she feared death itself.

"I noticed what an amazing close circle of friends she had, people who would walk a hundred miles for her," her sister-in-law, Sandra Gainsforth, said after a memorial service. "In the end, you measure people by what they leave behind, and people were changed by knowing her. She just made me a better person because she brought grace and beauty and humor into my life."

Remembrances may be sent to the International Rett Syndrome Foundation (IRSF), PO Box 706143, Cincinnati OH 45270. September 2010

Material for this article came from an obituary by Bryan Marquard in the Boston Globe.
Jay Wadenpfuhl (1950-2010)

Jay Wadenpfuhl, third horn in the Boston Symphony for nearly 30 years, was a versatile musician with interests in many genres, and beloved by those who knew him.

Jay grew up in a musical family in Kirbyville, Texas, performing with professional ensembles by age 15. He studied horn at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with John Barrows, earning bachelor and masters degrees, then completed a year toward a doctorate at North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas). He played in the US Army Band, the Florida Philharmonic, the Fort Worth Symphony, and the National Symphony before joining the BSO in 1981.

Jay and three BSO colleagues performed Schumann’s Konzertstück with the Civic Orchestra. Recordings with the NFB Horn Quartet included his compositions Tectonica and Textures and Gunther Schuller’s Five Pieces for Five Horns with Barry Tuckwell. Jay also composed popular and jazz songs and toured with the Michel LeGrand Jazz Orchestra and Chuck Mangione.

Composer William Thomas McKinley wrote his Huntington Horn Concerto for Jay, who gave its premiere is 1989 with the Boston Pops under John Williams.

Jay taught at New England Conservatory (23 years) and Boston University. One of his students at NEC was a second cousin, Lee Wadenpfuhl. Jay’s wife, Michelle Perry, is the horn player of the Empire Brass.

Frank Epstein, head of the Brass and Percussion department at NEC said, "Jay was a one-of-a-kind personality, emotionally charged yet highly committed to all things musical. His playing was elegant, stylistically fluent and secure, his tone beautifully centered at all times."

Jay was surrounded by family and friends during his last hours. BSO associate principal horn Gus Sebring was especially close to Jay, visiting often as Jay lay in the hospital for 70 days fighting Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome. "He was a brilliant horn player," said Gus. "He knew no bounds in heroic passages, while playing with exquisite beauty in the softer lyrical solos, exposing his sensitive, delicate soul."

Condolences may be sent to Michelle Perry, 26 Rockwood Terrace, Jamaica Plain MA 02130.

September 2010

Material for this article came from an obituary by Jeremy Eichler in the Boston Globe. See page 146 for a review of the NFB Quartet CD.
Jerry looked good when Marshall Sealy and I visited him in April 2007. He was stronger, his hair was growing back, and we were so happy that he was beating prostate cancer. Thus it was a shock when he died on December 26, 2007.

A native of Charleston South Carolina, Jerry began his studies in the New York City schools, including the High School of the Performing Arts, then studied at Juilliard with James Chambers. After graduating from Juilliard in 1976, he became principal horn in the UNAM Orchestra in Mexico City. There he met and married his wife, Patricia Cantu. He joined the New York Philharmonic in 1979 under Zubin Mehta. He was a faculty member of Juilliard, Manhattan, Curtis, and Aspen and an Honorary Member of the IHS.

Jerry played the fourth horn solo in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in 1989 when Leonard Bernstein conducted members of the New York and Berlin Philharmonics in a historic broadcast to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall.

I met Jerry after he had become a member of the New York Philharmonic. We talked for many hours, played together in the orchestra building, and became fast friends. I learned that I had been Jerry's idol when he was growing up. At the time, I was the only black horn player – and one of the very few blacks – in any major orchestra. Unfortunately, with Jerry's death and my retirement last January, the only black horn player that I know of in any professional orchestra is Nicole Cash in Dallas TX [associate principal in San Francisco since 2009]. And black players on any instrument are few and far between.

Jerry and I played together in the Gateway Festival at Eastman, a gathering of black musicians. One time we played the first Brandenburg, and about 16 local horn students and players came to hear us and cheered the performance. Another time we played the Beethoven Ninth Symphony, also to great acclaim.

Jerry had a difficult time believing some of the difficulties I endured when I showed up in a city like Los Angeles in 1970, as a black horn player in a major orchestra. He couldn't understand because his experience was totally different. He would not have had the same experience because he came on the scene at a much later time. I had already "broken the ice," so to speak, for black horn players in symphony orchestras. I was glad that it was different for him.

Jerry was a fantastic player, a caring teacher, and a wonderful friend. I'm devastated at his death and will miss him. March 2008

Bob retired from the Los Angeles Philharmonic after 37 years, is now writing a book, performing, and giving clinics. A tribute to Jerry appeared in the May 2008 issue of The Horn Call and a biography is on the IHS website.
Xiao-Ming Xie (1961-2006)

by Eric Ruske

On September 19, 2006, with his family at his side, Xiao-Ming Xie passed away at a hospital in Beijing after a 15-month struggle with cancer.

Xiao-Ming touched the lives of so many people in so many different walks of life that it would be impossible to fully describe his life. He was the son of a famous Chinese horn player and pedagogue, and he attended the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. While only in his late teens, he won the principal horn position in the Beijing Radio Symphony.

However, he decided that he wasn’t improving enough, and he decided to leave that job and come to the States to study. He studied in San Diego and Philadelphia before finally settling in Boston in 1992. While here he performed in the Civic Symphony, the Hingham Symphony, the Concord Orchestra, the Cape Symphony, and the Newport Chamber Music Festival.

Xiao-Ming returned to China in 2000 as the principal horn of the Shanghai Radio Broadcast Symphony (see page 51). There he performed the Chinese premieres of many works, including Eine Alpensinfonie by Richard Strauss.

While perhaps one of the greatest horn players I have ever heard, his true greatness was achieved in the way in which he lived his life. For all of those who knew him, Xiao-Ming was the personification of dedication and commitment. Never a day went by that began without practicing, and his work ethic was inspirational. He treated all people kindly and with respect, and he was always willing to be there for the many people who were lucky enough to be his friend.

As for me, I have lost my only duet partner, a second father to my sons, my teacher, and my best friend. I consider myself so lucky to have had the opportunity to spend all of the time together that we did. He changed the lives of so many people in the most rare of ways: he led by example.

Thank you, Xiao-Ming. November 2006

A memorial concert was held in November 2006 at Boston University. Eric is an international soloist and a professor at Boston University and the BU Tanglewood Institute (see page 8).
Jay Kosta wonders if there are other company bands around. He plays in the IBM Band in up-state Endicott NY. "I don't know the statistics," he writes, "but I'd guess that there are significantly more adult players involved in band than in orchestra around here." Near-by Binghamton has a professional orchestra and a community orchestra, SUNY Binghamton has a wide range of groups, and several communities in the area have bands. "It's common for players to belong to two or more groups."

The IBM Band was organized in 1915 at the request of Thomas J. Watson, Sr., founder of the International Time Recording Co, which later became IBM. Under Tracy Doolittle, the band played its first convention with fifteen musicians. A year later, the band tripled in size and, led by Roy Collar, played its first company noon-hour concerts – the first benefit for its employees.

Since then, the IBM Band has become a well-known regional attraction. The annual highlight during the late 1920s and 1930s was a trip to New York City to play at the Hundred Percent Club Sales Convention. In the 1940's, the Convention came to Endicott and the band furnished music each day. Starting in 1934, the band and the IBM Dance Orchestra alternated weekly on broadcasts from WNBF radio in Binghamton.

In the past, the band was called on for most major IBM functions, marched in local parades, and played concerts at IBM, local high schools, Veteran's Hospitals, and various parks in the area.

Continuing the custom started in 1916, the band, led by Steve Stafford, plays weekly noon-hour concerts at IBM facilities, plus two local community festival performances. In the fall, they read through new literature, and in January begin rehearsals for a Winter/Spring concert. A recent 8 a.m. performance provided amusement as the sleepy attendees were startled by a rousing march!

Repertoire includes standard marches, show tunes, Dixieland, vocal accompaniments, and an occasional solo such as a spiritual featuring their bass saxophone.

Members include active and retired IBM employees, ranging in age from 20s to 70s; two have been members for more than 50 years! The photo show the band in 1935.

Jay enjoys playing in the band with his colleagues and would like to hear if others have similar experiences. You can reach him at JKosta@blue.spectra.net. ✤ November 1999
Sudbury Valley New Horizons Music
by Diane Muffitt

Don (age 44) said, "I began sax six years ago. I want to take it to the next level playing with people." Gail said, "My wish, as a 61-year-old, is to take up playing music for the first time. I cannot read music, but my friend insists I can be taught! I would like to play the saxophone." Diane played violin through college, hasn't played in 40 years, but would love to do it again. Catie loves to play her horn, but doesn't want to play concerts. Marilyn is a pianist, but she's always wanted to play bass clarinet.

What do all these people have in common? They had a dream and now they are living that dream: making music together and loving it! In January 2008, with the help of a dedicated planning committee, I started the Sudbury Valley New Horizons Band. The band is for adults who haven't played in years (or decades) or who have never played a musical instrument ("What are those little black marks on the paper?"). We discovered people who had started learning an instrument as an adult, but never had a place to play, and also some pretty advanced musicians who wanted to play but were too busy for the demands of the standard community band or orchestra.

So, how do we meet everyone's needs? It's actually quite simple: music. Whatever we are playing, we work toward musicality. Whoops! Missed a note? Never mind the note, but get that swell and the feel of the musical phrase. Our motto is, "Your best is good enough!" Our concerts won't be note-perfect, but they will have passion and we will be having a ball making music together!

We have around eighty members, ranging in age from 30s to 80s! Rehearsals are once a week at Wayland Middle School. A member-organized jazz group meets afterwards and several small ensembles rehearse either after rehearsal or on their own. We play two "formal" concerts per year and several concerts at assisted living facilities. We have an intermediate band, a novice group, and a new string program.

SVNH has three directors: Jamie Clark, Kevin Donegan, and I are all middle school band directors. In addition, Donna Nagle, a retired music teacher, leads our string program, and Dan Foote is our percussion coordinator.

Typical member comments: "Being in the band is one of the most enjoyable things I've ever experienced... who would ever have thought, and at my age!!" "I'm having tons of fun. Now there's competition in the house over the sax that hasn't seen light in years." "I feel like a kid again!!! I am learning, stretching, and pushing myself to improve." "I'm a beginner clarinet and I LOVE it! I missed last Wednesday because of being in Paris on vacation and actually wished I was at band!" "This is the first time since my kids were born that I actually am doing something just for myself and my own enjoyment!"

We're having fun! September 2011

See svnhb.org for the SVNHM schedule, member comments, and information about the international New Horizons association.
Arcturus Chamber Festival
by Hazel Dean Davis

On December 28th, while most households were winding down after the holiday, the Darling house in Carlisle MA was bubbling with activity and anticipation. Meanwhile, across the country, young musicians were on their way to Carlisle. Slowly people began arriving and the house was overflowing with instruments, laughter, and warm-up scales. Another Arcturus Chamber Festival had begun.

Arcturus was started by violist Sarah Darling as a way to bring together the musician friends she had met at Harvard, Juilliard, and summer festivals. She seems to attract new friends like a magnet; her unfailing energy and kindness have brought her close to nearly everyone she has played with. Relying on the generosity of her family, she invited a group of friends to stay in her home for a week in the fall of 2000. They played chamber music all day, ate and slept at the Darling house, and performed concerts in Carlisle, Pepperell, and on the Harvard campus. It was a success and has since become a much-anticipated event for both musicians and audiences.

The repertoire depends on who is playing and what they want to work on. The recent concerts included the Reicha Horn Quintet, Bartok String Quartet No. 2, and Brahms Sextet. Since Arcturus includes three horn players – Andrew Karr, Kim Hammill, and me – it is not uncommon to find a horn piece on the program.

Arcturus has performed the Mozart Divertimento in D, Mozart Horn Quintet, Beethoven Sextet, and the Reicha.

This year was my second time playing with Arcturus, and was again one of the most memorable and inspiring experiences of my musical life. It is refreshing to play with musicians with such energy, intensity, and joy, and to share in their passion for chamber music. The week of preparation is all-consuming. Rehearsals for the string players often run nine hours a day and even we horn players find ourselves happily spending five hours in rehearsal, but our efforts are not boring. After all, taking a completely unknown piece and transforming it into a personal, performable masterwork – complete with E horn cross fingerings – in five days leaves no time for boredom. We spend the entire day playing or talking about the music...with, of course, tangents into the "Lord of the Rings" soundtrack, Vivaldi jokes, and stories of past Arcturus sessions.

This Arcturus festival, like the others, was a memorable week of music, laughter, delicious food, and great memories. As we grow older, it may prove harder to gather, but I have no doubt that Arcturus will continue in some form or another for years to come. It is a rare opportunity to create great music on our own terms, with people we love. And there is nothing more satisfying! ✤ February 2004

Hazel was a graduate student at Juilliard studying with Julie Landsman when she wrote this article, having completed her BA at Harvard, studying with Jamie Sommerville. Later in 2004, she joined the Virginia Symphony as second horn. See Arcturus-ensemble.org.
Sunday Evening Whispering Hill Wind Octet

One Sunday evening every month for over ten years, Victor Godin and James Whipple have joined oboe, clarinet, and bassoon players in traditional octets. Vic and Jim met at a chamber music conference at Bennington, Vermont in the summer of 1990. When they returned to Boston, they started organizing chamber music readings, first with string players but evolving in 1992 to a wind octet, the Whispering Hill Wind Ensemble.

The octet has been fortunate. Personnel has been fairly stable; the horns, one oboe, and one clarinet are founding members, and turnover in the other positions has been low. "None of us make a living from music, but none of us could live without it," says Vic. A list of dependable substitutes helps keep rehearsals on schedule.

Rehearsal space has also worked out well. Vic, Northeastern University Professor Emeritus of Business Administration (recently retired after 28 years), was able to arrange space at Northeastern's suburban Burlington campus. The land on which the campus is situated is known as Whispering Hill.

Each year since its founding, the ensemble has given one public performance, the music for the graduation exercises of the Northeastern University Paramedic Program (about 30 graduates). The venue is outdoors in July at a stately mansion in the suburbs. Once in a while other performance opportunities come along.

"We primarily play music written for traditional wind octet," says Vic, who is also the librarian. "Often there is an additional part for contrabassoon. On occasion, we play music for sextets (horns and bassoons with either oboes or clarinets) or larger wind groups (9 to 13 players). There have even been times when we permitted violins or other unusual instruments to join us. Without a doubt, our most memorable evening was when we were joined by Douglas Yeo, bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, playing a serpent." Currently the group is rehearsing with a flutist for Gounod's *Petit Symphonie*, Gouvy's *Petite Suite Gauloise*, and other works.

Jim, who retired after 29 years as a lawyer at Liberty Mutual Insurance, and Vic have played in various other groups, separately and together, but the octet, as Jim says, "has been a constant pleasure over the years."

September 2004

This article first appeared in a longer version in the May 2004 issue of *The Horn Call*. Vic died in 2006 and the octet now rehearses in Waltham.
Esprit de Cor in Thrilling Concert
by Jeanne Traphagan

Esprit de Cor played my music with such musicality, beauty of sound, and rhythmic vitality, that it was so exciting for me to be here in person!” said composer Eric Ewazen at the performance of his Grand Canyon Octet in June at the First Parish Church in Lexington, Massachusetts.

Esprit de Cor is a consortium of horn players from the Boston area and as far west as Shrewsbury, mostly amateurs who play for the love of the instrument.

The group was fortunate to have the composer at the performance. As Bob Moffet commented, "Eric Ewazen's contagious enthusiasm inspired the group and audience alike to want more. He reminded us all of why it is that we chose the horn to begin with." Eric has always loved the sound of horn choirs and he wanted to write a piece to explore the "lusty resonance and kaleidoscopic colors" in a description of the grandeur of the Grand Canyon. The octet was commissioned by Thomas Bacon's Arizona State University Horn Choir.

Eric continued, "It was also fun to reconnect with my friend from our college days at Eastman, Pam Marshall, who introduced my piece to the ensemble. It is experiences like this that make being a musician and a composer so fulfilling! My thanks to Pam, and to the Esprit de Cor, for bringing my music so expressively to life."

The concert opened with Gabrieli's Cantos II, transcribed by Verne Reynolds, then Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, arranged by James Emerson. The program also included Shenandoah, arranged by David Archibald; Abreu's Tico-Tico, arranged by Roger Harvey; and Beethoven's Egmont Overture, arranged by Alan Civil.

There were many great moments where passages were played with a lot of musicianship and emotion. Each piece had something that stood out, such as solo passages with emotional vibrato, technical passages that really worked, great low horn sounds, and top notch playing by everyone. Bob Moffett and Erik Svenson did an awesome job on the solo parts in Tico-Tico!

The performers were Shelagh Abate, Alan Brown, John Chapin, Kathryn Denney, Nan Foley, Pat Lake, Pam Marshall, Ellen Miller, Bob Moffett, Bill Muth, Jeanne Paella, Jeff Stewart, Erik Svenson, Jeanne Traphagan, Sue Lanich (percussion) and David Archibald (conductor).

Erik Svenson, who organized the concert, said, "It's great to have such an amiable and capable group. We had fun playing together. Everyone was accommodating to the rehearsal schedule and the demands of the music. Tico-Tico and Grand Canyon Octet were particularly demanding, but everyone stepped up to the challenge and played with precise rhythm and intonation and great musicality."

Bob Moffett adds, "With the intensity of everyone's daily schedules, it's rare that we get a chance to get together and perform for the sheer pleasure of it." September 2002

Esprit de Cor has continued the tradition of annual noon-time concerts at the First Parish Church. See page 30.
Our Horn Choir Conductor/Arranger

by Erik Svenson

David Archibald is the conductor of Esprit de Cor, an amateur horn ensemble based in the Boston area, but he is also a skilled and creative arranger of many works that Esprit has performed over the last ten plus years.

David began conducting us in 2000. At that time, the ensemble of sixteen horns had no idea that David's skills as a conductor would translate to arranging. David introduced us to *Reverie* for five horns, a delightful piece based on the works of Debussy, in 2004.

Since then, his pieces have grown in imagination and scale, each year adding more parts to his works: *Shenandoah* for six horns, Chester Variations, Noturno from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Der Freischütz* for eight, and lately the Firebird Suite, Mahler's First Symphony (1st movement), and *Star Wars* for twelve horns.

He is quick to say that his works are arrangements, not original compositions, but they are much more than straightforward transcriptions. He frequently modulates tempos and keys in sections of a piece to create something very fresh.

When asked what inspires him to arrange a piece, he says that he tends to pick pieces that have well-known horn components in the original work. He started off listening to the character of the ensemble, impressed by the quality and range of the players. Later, when he started composing for eight, he was freed up to create more complex works by distributing the tougher parts to different players rather than having the first few chairs carry all the load.

His facility with composing for a horn ensemble comes from his experience with his son, who was a talented horn player. David became familiar with the repertoire as well as the abilities, challenges, and range of the instrument.

Through his history with the instrument, his background as a wind player, and his training as an orchestral conductor, his understanding of the importance of breathing comes forth in both his conducting and his arrangements. His phrasing of his own works and the other works Esprit performs show his understanding and empathy for the instrument and the performers.

We’re very lucky to have David as our conductor and one of our composers (others are fellow Esprit members Pamela Marshall and Marilyn Bone Kloss). We hope the next ten years will give him and us many more opportunities to play his works.

Next for David and Esprit de Cor: *Carmina Burana* ♦ May 2011

*Erik is the founder and director of Esprit de Cor. His day job is with Microsoft.*
Why Have a Conference for Women Brass Players?

Cynthia Brown went to St. Louis in May 1993 to find out. She attended the International Women's Brass Conference in her role as representative of Robert King Music Sales, so much of her time was spent in the exhibit area. Even so, she came away with great enthusiasm for the experience.

With over ninety percent of both participants and clinicians women, their interests, goals, and ideas were paramount. They had a chance to express themselves, and they did so from the heart, in a way they certainly would not have in a male-dominated environment. Performances covered a wide spectrum of styles (jazz, classical, contemporary) and group combinations. Comments from listeners included, "I didn't know women were so talented," and "I'm astounded to see how much these women are involved in music."

The conference allowed women to choose the materials and to emphasize what women do in brass playing. In addition to sessions on performance, breathing, orthodontics, etc. there was a discussion on pregnancy led by women who had gone through it while pursuing their playing careers.

The recounting of history – through formal tributes to "Pioneers" at a banquet and through informal discussions – was inspirational and eye-opening to the younger women and affirming to the pioneers. Most pioneers were so focused on the music that they hadn't gotten involved in politics. They loved what they were doing, but were usually in the background, not getting much recognition, as the establishment was run by men. Talking about their experiences made their eyes light up.

Cynthia has her own story to tell about playing in the Boston Women's Symphony in 1964. The musicians were all women, union members, conducted by Reuben Gregorian from the Boston Conservatory. Mostly they were promised pay but didn't receive it, and one concert at Symphony Hall was held up because many of the musicians refused to go on until they were paid something. The manager was eventually black-balled from the union.

Cynthia's observation from attending many horn workshops is that there is greater parity for women horn players than for the other brass. She imagines that the IWBC must have had a greater impact on those other brass players, but even for herself, she was "glad it happened; it was good on all levels." ❖ March 1994

Cynthia studied with Paul Keaney and Willem Valkenier at NEC and did graduate study at Peabody while working on repairs at Lawson Horns. She taught brass in the Westwood Public Schools and played in the Cape Cod and Plymouth Symphonies. She is now retired. See myiwbc.org.
Changing Times
by Karl Pituch

When I was growing up, things were different. A couple of times a year, I would drive 50 miles to a record store and buy the latest LP of Baumann, Civil, or Tuckwell. Now you can download horn music in a matter of seconds with an almost unlimited repertoire.

Also back then, you could travel to the one and only horn workshop of the year and hear great artists in person. I was fortunate to hear recitals by Baumann, Civil, Clevenger, Wekre, Kavalovski, and Barboteu during the course of a week. Now we have regional workshops, horn camps, horn seminars, brass institutes, and master classes where the participants can hear great players, get individual instruction, and play in ensembles. In the early days, we were content with playing Fripperies late at night.

And speaking of Fripperies, that was a major portion of the horn quartet repertoire. Nowadays, with virtuoso groups like the American Horn Quartet, the chance to hear an amazing horn ensemble concert is very good. Horn ensembles are being formed in great numbers and composers are writing good music for all brass.

Only a handful of standard horn concertos were available when I was growing up. Now composers are also recognizing the horn as a solo instrument and the variety of horn concertos is astounding. For a while, I was trying to buy any new CD that included a horn concerto. Unfortunately I have had to abandon that quest.

In college, my friends and I traveled to hear The Rite of Spring by the Cleveland Orchestra in Cleveland, and then heard it with the Chicago Symphony in Chicago. Now you can hear the Berlin Philharmonic on your computer, or see the Metropolitan Opera at a theater nearby. These are some of the new learning opportunities available to anyone choosing to improve horn playing and musicianship. I have also taken the opportunity to search out and study with great horn players and teachers: Frøydis Ree Wekre, Dale Clevenger, and Phil Myers.

I've had the luxury of playing with a number of great orchestras and playing alongside great colleagues. I am continually honing my music-making skills with these inspiring musicians. This summer I will again be on the faculty of the Interlochen Academy and Audition Mode, a horn audition seminar at Temple University in Philadelphia. Also, a download of the John Williams Horn Concerto of me in the first digital download of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra is being released soon. ❖ March 2010

*Karl is principal horn with the Detroit Symphony and was a featured artist at the 2010 Northeast Horn Workshop*
On the Road Again, with Tommy

Thinking back over her fourteen months traveling with the show *Tommy*, Laurance Mahady allowed that she would be willing to go out with another show "if the music were interesting and the venue someplace new." She said that going on the road is "serious experience."

Laurance is from Lake Charles, Louisiana. Her father, a professor of percussion, influenced her by example to practice hard and play all types of music. She studied during high school with former Boston Symphony Orchestra hornist Ralph Pottle, who encouraged her to attend NEC, which she did, studying with Jon Menkis. Since graduating, she's been free-lancing, giving private lessons, and, for hobbies, learning medieval recorder music and painting in watercolors and acrylics.

Laurance won the job by audition, which is unusual for shows. She met a trombonist; learning that he played mostly on the road, she expressed interest and he gave her a number to call. The music director faxed three excerpts and Laurance sightread two more for the director and some administrators. A few days later, she got the call that she had been accepted. They were putting the show together at this time.

After two rehearsals in New York City and two more before the first show, they went on a "bus-and-truck tour," traveling on Mondays, staying in motels, and playing eight shows a week. There were about fifty people, eight of them musicians. They got on well and Laurance made some good friends.

*Tommy* is a rock-and-roll show in the format of a musical. Everything the horn plays is like a solo. It was "challenging", but Laurance became comfortable with it and soon changed a few things, such as putting passages up an octave, to make it more challenging!

The most exciting part of the tour was Brazil. There Laurance was struck by the poverty, but she also found that "live music is a part of an everyday person's life." The show played in Rio de Janeiro (touristy, beautiful, very Latin), Sao Paulo (large, cosmopolitan, vibrant), and Curitiba (sophisticated, European, colonial). Laurance took a hike in a temperate rain forest with lush jungle flowers, and swam at the base of a waterfall.

On the practical side of touring, the pay is "not terrific, but not bad." Laurance feels lucky to live in a house with good roommates that she didn't have to give up while on tour. She loves Boston and was happy to get home.

Her advice to anyone going on tour – "Don't take anything you can't carry yourself!" November 1996

Laurance now plays and teaches in Germany.
Playing in Philadelphia
by Jennifer Montone

The 2010 Northeast Horn Workshop is coming soon. The Philadelphia Orchestra horn section is taking part in the workshop, and I'm writing this article for *Cornucopia* in anticipation.

I have been reading *Cornucopia* since I was in high school in Northern Virginia and my sister was working as a college student at Osmun Music! I have always felt that the northeast has such a nice "horn family," and that these workshops and publications are good ways to stay connected, and to learn from our teachers and colleagues.

Here is a brief synopsis of my professional life so far: after four years at Juilliard as a student of Julie Landsman, and nine years playing in the wonderful orchestras of New Jersey, Dallas, and St. Louis, I feel incredibly grateful to be living my wildest dream, playing with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

I am currently in my fourth season as the principal horn with Philadelphia, and I feel incredibly grateful to be living my wildest dream, playing with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

I am currently in my fourth season as the principal horn with Philadelphia, and I am loving every minute of it! The repertoire we perform is great fun, and we get to travel and record. But definitely the best part of it is the daily inspiration and collaboration. I think every professional feels blessed to be able to listen to their colleagues perform night after night, and I have always felt that this is one of the loveliest ways to further my hopefully lifelong learning and growing.

As a student, I was taught to find great recordings, and to imitate them: the more inspiration the better, and the more varied the styles, the more varied your own color palate will be. I have been like a kid in a candy shop here in Philadelphia! Everywhere I listen, there is someone doing something amazing – whether it is the string sound and blend, or my wind and brass colleagues’ creativity, I just sit there in awe.

I am fortunate to have a wonderful section, both musically and personally, in Jeffrey Lang, Shelley Showers, Daniel Williams, Jeffry Kirschen, and Denise Tryon. We are excited about playing at the upcoming workshop, and I think part of the fun will be the chance to just get together and play outside the orchestra. The six of us gather often after concerts for evenings of good cheer, and I also consider them daily friends whom I spend a heck of a lot of time with, but there is a unique enjoyment to playing chamber music with people that you love playing orchestra repertoire with. These opportunities give us the chance to experience that, and we were putting together an exciting program.

It should be a great workshop, and we look forward to seeing you there! ☼ January 2010

Jennifer is also on the faculties of the Curtis and Juilliard music schools.
A Hornist's L.A. Story
by Daniel Katzen

Playing in a major US orchestra has some benefits in addition to the obvious making of music on a consistently high level. One is the opportunity to take a sabbatical after serving ten years. My seventeenth year as second horn in the Boston Symphony Orchestra was spent with my family in Pasadena CA, outside of Los Angeles. While there, I experienced some aspects of a freelancer's life.

My former connections with three of the busiest LA horn players led to my breaking into the circle of working musicians more easily than if I had moved there cold; my being a member of the BSO, surprisingly, didn’t carry as much weight. When I first arrived, I called my colleagues, who in turn told contractors I was in town and to use me when a need arose. I would get called to replace a player on one or two of the five days needed to record a film score, for instance. I also got hired to fill in with some of the local orchestras when a member was absent, or for an expanded section.

The other horn players on the various jobs treated me as a new person with a story, more than as a member of a major orchestra horn section. Consequently, when the section filled up, I sat wherever there was an open seat. There was no preferential treatment. Film studio seating is done democratically; after the first few chairs are filled by the busier players, the rest of the section is "first come-first served." Symphony seating is, on the other hand, predetermined. When the contractor calls, you are hired for a particular part. This was, to me, a preferred method, since you knew your chair wouldn’t be in dispute.

Most of the musicians in the LA freelance world work very hard, if they are working at all. Ten to fifteen services a week is not an uncommon workload. Often they will record film music for six or seven hours, then rush off to teach or rehearse with "their" orchestra. Each person has a unique schedule with jobs put together by means of their years on the circuit. Typically, their time is 75% film work, 25% symphonic, teaching, solos, etc.

I was well treated in general. It was a curious mix of interest in life in a Big Five orchestra along with acknowledgment that I was a newcomer, in town only temporarily. I consider it a valuable insight into another part of our music profession. ❣ January 1997

Danny is now a professor at the University of Arizona in Tucson.
Genghis Barbie
A Different Take on the Horn Quartet
by Alana Vegter

Genghis Barbie is the world's one and only all-female pop horn quartet of close friends Alana Vegter, Danielle Kuhlmann, Jacquelyn Adams, and Rachel Drehmann.

The first question is (inevitably) where the moniker "Genghis Barbie" came from. It was suggested by Danielle's father. "The young daughter of a friend played with Barbies and created a comic strip called Genghis Barbie. My dad always thought that would be a cool band name, so we stole it!" The Barbies feel that the name reflects the "warrior woman" attitude of the ensemble. They also dress the part by wearing glamorous costumes.

All of Genghis Barbie members are active free-lancers, but each has her own personality. The women perform with the stage names of Freedom, Velvet, Jungle, and Attila the Horn. "Using stage names allows us to escape a more traditional performance practice," remarks Jacquelyn. "It's great to have a place to create our brass alter-egos."

The members have studied with Jon Boen, Julie Landsman, Jerome Ashby, Bill VerMeulen, Bill Scharnberg, Myron Bloom, Bill Purvis, Wayne Lu, and Charles Kavalovski at DePaul, Juilliard, Rice, North Texas, Curtis, Yale, Minnesota, and Manhattan.

In addition to orchestra and chamber music gigs, various members are involved in contemporary ensembles, rock bands, pop groups, shows, teaching, and other activities such as making jewelry and violin bow making.

While some might classify Genghis Barbie as a crossover classical group, the group does not limit itself to one genre. The group's appeal is universal, performing music from many decades and musical styles. The aim is to treat concertgoers to a unique musical environment.

Brass quintets have become popular with a wide audience, and horn quartets are gaining similar momentum, but it is still challenging for them to cross into the mainstream. Genghis Barbie feels that it is important to perform at a high level, and it uses its energy and enthusiasm to appeal to a more diverse audience. To expand their fan base, they rely on social media. "We operate mainly through Facebook and YouTube. It's an easy way to be instantly accessible," says Jacquelyn.

Genghis Barbie has a rigorous rehearsal schedule. "We have to take our music seriously," states Rachel. The group's first release was Seal's Kiss from a Rose. "People expect a parody because were playing popular music. But when they hear us, they realize that the music can be transformed in so many ways," says Danielle. The arrangements are always carefully considered and demonstrate great musical technique. Genghis Barbie also performs original works composed for the group.

As self-described "post post-feminist feminists," Genghis Barbie recognizes its role as an all-female ensemble. "As we all know, the brass section can be a man's world. We receive many messages from young girls telling us how inspired they are to see youthful female faces playing at the professional level, seeing someone to whom they can relate," says Danielle.

Genghis Barbie hopes to empower more young women to realize their dreams and explore their passions in music and beyond. January 2011

Genghis Barbie performed at the IHS Symposium in San Francisco in June 2011. See the February 2011 issue of The Horn Call for the complete article. Jacqueline Adams left the group later in 2011; her place was taken by Kelly Cilham Misko, aka Electric Barbie.
New Hampshire Festival Musicians Fight to Survive

by Nina Allen Miller

Nestled between the Lakes Region and the White Mountains, Plymouth is a bucolic college town, home to Plymouth State University, the long-time host of the New Hampshire Music Festival (NHMF).

Following the first NHMF rehearsal of the 2009 season, the festival administration delivered shocking news: musicians wishing to return for the 2010 season would have to undergo a rigorous reapplication process. Veteran performers were being asked to submit an audition portfolio of a CD with solo performances of music from three periods of music history plus optional jazz, improvisation, or alternative styles, and three essays on music-making and mentoring. The rationale was to assure that musicians would be competent to assume duties related to a "new orchestra model."

Orchestra solidarity was paramount at this critical juncture. At an orchestra meeting, it was decided that musicians would wear purple ribbons during rehearsals and concerts to express their solidarity against management’s actions. Little did they know that the audience, outraged at the prospect of losing their musicians, would also choose to wear purple ribbons!

Concerned citizens gathered to establish a group, SOON (Save Our Orchestra Now), whose goal is to save the NHMF and its musicians. With over 300 members, SOON continues to support the musicians and their return for future summer seasons.

The battle to save the festival continued throughout the off-season, and after countless hours of discussion with the Orchestra Committee and executives of SOON, the Board of Trustees voted to abandon the "new model." Also the President, Festival and Artistic Directors, and several board members resigned.

NHMF musicians, ecstatic with the news that they would return in 2010, were then disheartened to learn that the board would not recognize the orchestra as a collective bargaining unit. Most musicians have opted to return, but at this time many questions remain unanswered.

The Orchestra Committee continues to work to restore peace and harmony. The goal for musicians is to provide world-class performances of classical orchestra and chamber music and to achieve recognition so that they are never again put in such a precarious position. May 2010

Nina is in the NHMF horn section and on the Orchestra Committee and is also a member of the Portland (ME) Symphony Orchestra. See NHMFmusicians.org. The festival continues in 2012 with the original musicians.
There Is Life after Music School

What do a flute manufacturer, a hardware engineer, and a software technical writer have in common? Since they are mentioned in this periodical, you can assume that they are all horn players. But they also all earned degrees in music and later turned to engineering for earning their livings in the real world.

Jim Phelan, Bob Moffett, and Marilyn Kloss all attended music schools intending to become professional horn players. But in the reality of the working world, they turned to technical skills for their professions, while still retaining their love of music and horn playing.

"I started at Boston Conservatory and finished at NEC," recalls Jim. "Later I studied math and physics at night at Northeastern. Finally I sold my interest in a flute-making company and studied full-time to finish a degree in mechanical engineering." Jim and his wife, Lillian Burkart, own Burkart Flutes and Piccolos.

Marilyn earned BME and MM degrees at Indiana University. "Years later, I earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at Northeastern while working at Raytheon Company." She has since worked for two software companies and earned a graduate certificate in technical writing.

Bob maintained a dual education from the beginning. He earned a BM in horn and a BS in electrical engineering from Wichita State. "I later attended NEC for two years, then studied privately with Charles Kavalovsky." He works on hardware at Sun Microsystems [now owned by Oracle].

Naturally, for people working a day job, finding time to practice can be a struggle.

"I'm lucky that my neighbors are tolerant," says Marilyn. "But I'm careful never to practice early or late. I'm also lucky that I work close to home. I walk to work and home for lunch. Warming up before lunch helps with practicing or rehearsing in the evening."

Bob's problem, with work, orchestra, and family life, is finding enough time in the day. "It's simple – I give up sleep. I practice after the kids are in bed. I'm up at 5:20 to beat rush hour traffic. My family has learned to sleep through most everything."

Jim also works his practice time in around family life. "Like Bob, I find time at the beginning and end of the day. I take my horn on business trips and always make time to practice in the hotel room or in a hall."

All three play in community orchestras and love the wide range of repertoire performed. Music is still central to their lives, and they all appreciate having studied music in college and played professionally, however briefly. ❖ March 2001

The complete article appears in the May 2001 issue of The Horn Call.
To Transpose or Not to Transpose
by Ellen Michaud Martins and John C. Boden

Transposing is here to stay

Pragmatically, philosophically, and pedagogically, I believe in reading orchestral parts as originally written. Pragmatically, established orchestras on all levels have complete libraries with horn parts in the original keys. Until these libraries are completely revamped, horn players will have to be proficient in transposition; and since Richard Strauss was writing for horn transpositions as late as 1945, orchestral literature will require transposing for years to come.

Philosophically, the ideal would be for us all to experience works in their original keys on natural horns so that we would know the "sound" of each crook and emulate it on our modern horn. Playing from the original means a cleaner page to read and puts us closer to knowing the composer's intentions. Just as some teachers endorse memorization, I believe that the cognitive aspect of transposition helps make us better musicians.

Pedagogically, I strongly believe in teaching transposition to students of all ages. For young players, it introduces them to the concept of the staff as a form of symbol-reading system. College students need to be prepared for professional life; in addition, transposition aids us all in skills such as score reading and conducting.

From the perspective of 20+ years of orchestral playing, it's difficult to hear the parts any other way. March 1998

Ellen Michaud Martins, University of Massachusetts Lowell. Ellen is a Boston-based performer on modern horns, a Schmidt or Yamaha double or Engelbert Schmid triple.

Enough is enough

Could we please put the technique of transposition in its proper place for the 21st century? Transposition is a technique for study and understanding the history of the horn, but it need not be part of performance practice for modern hornists. With today's computers, is there any reason why a player has to sit in front of an audience and look at one note and play another? I have a C horn by pressing valves 1 and 3, but does anyone play symphonies in that manner? No; we pretend to play C horn while actually using any number of valve combinations.

College students will be better served if they spend their practice time learning the techniques that will be needed by all horn players of future generations such as improvisation, big band, and extended techniques. Orchestral demands are evolving all the time. The brass quintet repertoire is full of extended techniques and improvisation, yet these techniques are seldom practiced.

Original parts should find a place for study and for performance on original instruments; a hornist with a modern double or triple horn should play F horn parts. Should someone planning to audition know what partial they're playing, what part of the chord they're sounding, how it sounded in the period? Of course. Should they sit in front of an audience and fake playing another horn? Of course not.

Let's enter the 21st century honestly. March 1998

John C. Boden, University of Southern Maine. John is a professional player of both the modern horn and the baroque and classical historical instruments.
Glorious Antiphonal Polyphony in Venice

by Br. Nathanael Reese and Sr. Victoria McNeil

How fortunate we are to have performed in the magnificent Cathedral of St. Mark's in Venice in April! At the inaugural concert for the 900th anniversary of the reconsecration of the Cathedral (on completion of renovations in 1094), Glorae Dei Brass and Glorae Dei Cantores of the Community of Jesus in Orleans MA performed in the Venetian tradition, adding instrumental voicing to the choir and at times independent antiphonal choirs. The highlight for the brass was Gabrielli's *Canzone Duodecimi Toni* in ten parts.

As has often been noted, some of the biggest blessings come out of the greatest labors – in this case, rehearsal difficulties. Emotions are often fragile on tour, so it was a challenge when our rehearsal time was cut by an hour! The choir needed most of the available time, which gave us about five harried minutes on the *Canzone*. While we knew the piece, having played it on tour in America, we had hoped to try antiphonal possibilities from the various galleries in St. Mark's. But this was not to be, and our vocal coach/acoustical analyst Craig Timberlake assured us that performing en masse up front would work fine – the domes would take care of the rest. And so they did!

We had rehearsed against the din of hundreds (no exaggeration) of milling, conversing tourists, so we had no idea how the building would respond for the concert. Now, as we filed in, we had an audience, an invitation-only crowd that filled the sanctuary, and we were beyond nerves, just wanting to be done! But we were thrilled for the next four minutes, realizing what a master Giovanni Gabrielli was in crafting this music from his *Sacrae Symphony* to fit the Byzantine basilica. The building and domes took the sound, mixing and amplifying it in a way that enhanced and made sense of the piece – harmonies and crescendos that we'd never heard before, phrases so effortless to play and shape. The whole concert was like that; the timelessness of the polyphony enabled us to reach back and touch the time from which it came as well as experience its validity for today and the future.

We had "returned home" with this worshipful music; we will always remember our time there and be grateful for the privilege. ☼ January 1995

Brother Nathanael Reese and Sister Victoria McNeil play horn in the brass ensemble and band and sing in the choir of the Community of Jesus in Orleans (Cape Cod), Massachusetts.
South African Horn Society Outreach Initiatives  

by Sean and Pamela Kierman

The South African Horn Society (SAHS) invites you to support its player development projects. Projects in the Cape Town area aim at generating young horn players and broadening the base of horn playing in South Africa. The horn is expensive to purchase in South Africa, and it is the limiting factor for the programs. Any donations of horns – or, in fact, other instruments, or funds – would be appreciated.

Professional orchestras in Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban established in the colonial British tradition at the beginning of the 20th century were originally staffed by overseas players. At the end of the 1970s, South Africa had five full-time and two part-time symphonies and supported active free-lancing and amateur ensembles.

The only training for instrumentalist were private lessons until the 1960s, with the introduction of instruction into schools. This was the climax of apartheid, so it was extended almost exclusively to the white population.

The first institutionalized teaching of horn was in the Free State in 1970, and by 1974 the orchestra could field a creditable horn section. By the end of the 1980s, 60 to 80 well-trained hornists played nationwide, but these were elite youth aimed toward other professions. Doubts that the New South Africa would retain even the few professional hornists working at that time were justified: only two full-time symphonies remain in South Africa after the end of apartheid.

The demography of hornists in South Africa in 2006 is impossible to know. We estimate about 300 for the country. One of the long-term benefits of the IHS Symposium will be to extend horn playing to all communities. Development projects are ongoing in all the major provinces; here we highlight projects in the Cape Town area.

The Cape Philharmonic Development Project is underwritten by the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra. Students receive tuition, and ensembles rehearse every Saturday. Another University project takes music into communities.

The Redefine Investment Trust Music Project in Kuils River also provides weekly tuition and ensemble instruction. The University of Stellenbosch has programs for community interaction and a BM degree.

Three regional music centres operate within the metropole to serve the broader community. Each of these has a complement of school horn players.

Several people and organizations, including Chris Leuba and Kurt Vallenga, donated instruments at the symposium. You can still send instruments to: SAHS, 8 Ravensworth Road, Claremont, Cape Town 7700, SA. See sahornsoc.com. ❖ April 2006

Sean was Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town (now retired) and Pamela is Lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch. Both are involved in research and outreach programs, continuing into retirement. The South African Horn Society, with Sean as president, has organized national symposiums since the 2006 IHS symposium. The student is Andre Valentine.
The Horn in Iceland
by Joseph Ognibene

Iceland's history of settlement began before 1000 AD, but instrumental music not until the 20th century. Now the Iceland Symphony Orchestra (ISO) and other ensembles are thriving, and the Icelandic Horn Club (HornIs) is hosting the Nordic Horn Seminar in June 2008.

In the beginning of the 1900s, Iceland was one of Europe's poorest countries. As elsewhere in Europe, romantic national awakening was reflected in the arts. Music-making was limited to vocal tradition since the purchase of musical instruments was a luxury not many could afford.

Any serious musician would naturally have to make his career elsewhere, and so Jon Leifs, composer and conductor, settled in Germany. It was through his initiative that Otto Böttcher was sent to Iceland to teach horn.

Böttcher stayed for two years, leaving behind disciples Óskar Jónsson and Eggert Jóhannesson, the first Icelandic horn players. They were also influenced by a visit in 1926 by the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jon Leifs, the first time a symphony orchestra had been heard in Iceland. Their principal horn, Albert Döschler, was soloist. With the advent of World War II, musical development was once again a struggle.

In 1945, the Lanzky-Otto family moved to Iceland from Denmark. Wilhelm Lanzky-Otto's students included Jon Sigurðsson, who became the first professional Icelandic horn player. Wilhelm's time in Iceland is remembered for solo recitals, live recordings, and as the first principal horn of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Wilhelm's son Ib, also a horn player, grew up in Iceland and, although having lived in Sweden for many years, still has a command of the Icelandic language.

The founding of the ISO in 1950 was a catalyst for professional horn playing in the country. With only two local horn players available, players were imported from abroad: Alois Spach, Jörgen Jensen, Wolfgang Münchs, Friedrich Gabler, Virgente Zarzo, Rolf Bengtson, Herbert Hrieberscheck Ágústsson from Austria, and others.

Viðar Alfreðsson and Stefán Stephensen were the first Icelanders to join the ISO horn section; both trained in the UK. The next generation includes Thorkell Jóelsson, Lilja Valdimarsdóttir, and me (Joseph Ognibene).

I am originally from California, came to help on a tour, and ended up staying as principal (since 1981). I teach at the Reykjavik College of Music, where I have taught the most recent recruits to the ISO: Emil Friðfinnsson, Stefán Jón Bernharðsson, Anna Sigurbjörnsdóttir, Sturlaugur Björnsson, and Ella Vala Ármannsdóttir.

The focus of horn activity in Iceland is the Icelandic Horn Club, founded in 1995. Its core is the horn section of the ISO, but its members include all professional, amateur, and student horn players in Iceland. This broad inclusiveness has lead to an impressively consistent membership. May 2008

The Harpa Music Hall in Rekjavik, the new home of the ISO, opened in 2011.
Music in the Faroe Islands
by Páll Sólstein

Where are the Faroe Islands? You might ask. They are in the North Atlantic, between Scotland, Iceland, and Norway, an autonomous province of Denmark since 1948. With a population of about 48,000 scattered across many small islands, you might wonder what kind of musical life is possible.

The answer is that in the last twenty years or so, instrumental music has flourished. The inhabited islands are connected by tunnels through mountains and under water, bridges, and causeways, so getting around is relatively easy. Professionals like me converge on the islands five or six times a year for chamber music and orchestra concerts. The orchestra, established in the early 20th century, comprises local students and teachers augmented by visiting professionals and conservatory students.

I grew up in the Faroe Islands. My first musical experience was playing alto horn (tenor horn in Britain) in a brass band. Brass bands have been active for a long time and involve learning as well as performing. My father gave me a real horn when I was 14. We had no horn teacher, so I studied with a viola player until I attended the Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen. Now the islands have specialized teachers for all the instruments.

After playing with the Jerusalem Symphony and a Danish orchestra, I have been second horn in the Royal Danish Opera Orchestra in Copenhagen for ten years. However, I plan to return to the islands to play and teach when the opportunity arises.

I am a member of a professional chamber music ensemble Aldubaren (meaning "waves," both ocean waves and waves of music) that works with Faroese composers. We have released a CD and produced an opera by Sunleif Rasmussen based on a story by Faroese writer William Heinesen. I have also composed music to Faroese lyrics and arranged music for folk singer Hanus Johansen.

The first inhabitants of the Faroe Islands were Irish monks, followed by Vikings from Norway. Christianity was introduced in the 11th century. Norway and Denmark shared control from 1380 until 1814, when Denmark took sole control. The language is Old Norse (with a few Irish words), mostly unchanged for centuries, but now with new terms for modern life. The economy was originally agriculture, then principally fishing, and is now diversifying into oil and information technology.

The islands are small and rocky, with weather that is cool and windy. The people are friendly, cultural life is vibrant, and it is a good place to live. I hope you will come visit our summer music festival, Summartónar.

September 2008
Music in Australia

Australia has professional and amateur ensembles, youth orchestras and conservatories, and musicians both home- and foreign-trained. The professional orchestras were instituted mostly through the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), which was formed in 1932 with a charter to establish broadcast orchestras in each state.

The Melbourne Symphony, the oldest professional orchestra in Australia, celebrated its centenary in 2007. The Sydney Symphony was established in 1932, the year the Sydney Harbor Bridge was opened and ABC formed; the Sydney Opera House is now the orchestra's home. The Adelaide Symphony began as a radio ensemble in 1936. The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1948 in a partnership between the state government, city councils, and ABC; it aims to be the Australian repertoire orchestra with an emphasis on new music. The Western Australia Symphony started in 1928 as the Perth Symphony by silent movie musicians who were suddenly without work. In 1932 ABC formed a studio orchestra, which eventually became the West Australian Symphony. The Queensland Orchestra, based in Brisbane, was created in 2001 by the merger of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and the Queensland Philharmonic (a chamber orchestra).

Community orchestras, concert bands, and brass bands are active in many communities throughout Australia. Woollahra Philharmonic Orchestra, in Sydney's eastern suburbs, was founded by hornist and conductor Mathias Rogala-Koczorowski, who has studied at the Sydney Conservatorium, the ABC National Training Orchestra, and the Musikhochschule Rheinland in Cologne, Germany. His varied music education is typical, although some horn players in Australia are from other countries; for example, Lee Bracegirdle in the Sydney Symphony is from Philadelphia.

Australia's first music degree was awarded in 1879 by the University of Melbourne. The Sydney Conservatorium of Music opened in 1916 and is now part of the University of Sydney. Queensland Conservatorium at Griffith University in Brisbane and horn professor Peter Luff are hosts for the IHS symposium in 2010. In addition to numerous conservatories, most states support youth ensembles, leading to the ABC National Training Orchestra for young professionals.

Two prominent hornists from the early 20th century are Alan Mann and Alexander Grieve. Alan Mann played in the Sydney Symphony and taught at the Sydney Conservatorium. Barry Tuckwell moved to Sydney at age 16 to study with Alan and be his assistant in the orchestra. Alex Grieve was a member of the Melbourne Symphony for thirty years, founded the Melbourne Horn Club, and was a teacher and a supporter of community music. He was an IHS Advisory Council member and was given the IHS Punto award. Barry Tuckwell (an IHS Honorary Member) is back in Australia after a career in orchestras in Britain, a solo career with many recordings, and now as a conductor. He is a Principal Fellow at the University of Melbourne.

With such a vibrant music scene in Australia, the symposium in Brisbane in July 2010 is sure to be well worth the trip down under. ♦ November 2009
Sydney Symphony Orchestra Horns

by Lee Bracegirdle

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra has had a number of prominent figures as members of its horn section over the years, including instrument designer Richard Merewether, soloist and conductor Barry Tuckwell, and soloist, professor, and composer Kazimierz Machala.

The SSO was formed in 1932, the same year as the Australian Broadcasting Commission, to which the orchestra belonged, wholly or in part, until 2007. Guido Gervasoni and Harold Wolf were associated with the formative years of the orchestra.

Gervasoni arrived in Australia in 1900 with an Italian opera company. He settled in Sydney and taught many horn players during the first half of the 20th century. He played a single F Cazzani, manufactured in Milan.

Wolf played on a King double horn that had a piston thumb valve. His mouthpiece was of the "old-school" Viennese style with a deep, straight-funnel cup, whose rim was made from an old shilling coin that had the middle of it drilled out. Wolf taught many players who became professionals. In 1938 the SSO's horn section was Wolf, Gervasoni, Alan Mann, and Phillip Lego.

Wolf retired in the early 1940s and was replaced by Alan Mann, a student of Gervasoni. Mann was a radiographer in the Australian army during World War II. During this time Richard Merewether joined; in 1950 he moved to England, becoming designer of Paxman horns.

Mann taught many horn players. At one time the SSO section was Mann and a collection of his students, all playing Cazzani double horns: Clarence Mellor, Barry Tuckwell, Claude Katz, and Doug Hanscombe. I met Mann in the 1980s, after he retired. I once asked him if he still owned his horn. His reply was, "I tied it to a flat-iron and threw it off the Sidney Harbour Bridge."

Two others studied with James Chambers. Kazimierz Machala, a Polish-American joined in 1979, and Lee Bracegirdle, a Philadelphian, joined in 1980. During the 1980s the section was Machala, Bracegirdle, Hillman, Trengove, Harrison, and Mellor. Machala left in 1987 and was replaced by Robert Johnson.

The current section is Robert Johnson (who studied with Mann), Ben Jacks (from Perth, studied with Dale Clevenger in Chicago), Lee Bracegirdle, Marnie Sebire (from Canberra), Geoff O’Reilly (Mann's last student), and Euan Harvey (from New Zealand, studied with Erik Ralske in New York). ❖ March 2010

Lee is from Philadelphia and has been a member of the SSO since 1980. Ben Jacks and Rob Johnson were featured artists at the 2010 symposium in Brisbane.
Xiao-Ming Xie Returns to China

Xiao-Ming Xie – Xie Xiao-Ming in Chinese – is returning to China in March to be principal horn in the Shanghai Broadcasting Symphony. "This is the first new orchestra in China since 1949," says Xiao-Ming. "It pays well, in dollars, and most members are foreigners. Concerts will be broadcast nationally, and the first concert includes Strauss's Alpine Symphony."

Xiao-Ming explains that good conservatories are in the major cities in China – Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou (near Hong Kong). Each city has one conservatory of traditional Chinese music and one for Western music. Xiao-Ming attended the Central Conservatory in Beijing, which teaches Western music, from middle school through college, then came to Boston for graduate study at Boston University with Eric Ruske. "I still had a lot to learn when I came here," he says.

Xiao-Ming points out that there are many fine Chinese musicians in orchestras around the world (especially string players, pianists, and vocalists). "The musicians stay away from China because of the money," he says. "Musicians are paid very little in China, with little opportunity. With better pay, I think some will now go back."

Paul Meng, host of the IHS Symposium in Beijing in 2000, has written about the early orchestras and the first horn players and teachers in China in the November 1999 issue of The Horn Call.

Western music has been known and played in China for about a hundred years. First it was Europeans who played in orchestras in Shanghai, Ha'erbin (north), and Beijing for other Europeans. Gradually, Chinese took over the orchestras and established conservatories.

The Boxer Rebellion, the Japanese invasion, the world war, the Cultural Revolution, and other political upheavals affected the course of music in China. It was often difficult to obtain music, instruments, and other necessities of musical performance and education.

Other aspects of Chinese music have been in the news recently. A 9000-year-old seven-holed flute, the oldest playable musical instrument ever discovered, was found at a Neolithic archeological site. The flute is made from the wing bones of a red-crowned crane, and it has a small extra hole, presumably a correction for intonation.

A concert in Boston in September 1999 honored the Tcherepnin family. Russian pianist and composer Alexander Tcherepnin arrived in Shanghai in 1934. He discovered traditional Chinese instruments but was concerned that Chinese composers ignored their traditions to imitate European composers. Tcherepnin encouraged Chinese national music and championed it around the world. His own music shows the influence of Chinese music.

Xiao-Ming has been freelancing in Boston since his graduation. He looks forward to returning to China, but Eric Ruske plans to bring him back for the Boston University Tanglewood Institute each year. Xiao-Ming will be in Beijing this July to welcome us to the IHS Symposium. ✦ January 2000
Early History of the International Horn Society

The International Horn Society has, over the past forty years, brought together the best horn players and educators in the world and opened doors and opportunities for many attendees.

The first International Horn Workshop was held in 1969 at Florida State University in Tallahassee, hosted by William Robinson. The artists were:

John Barrows          Philip Farkas          Wendell Hoss
Arthur Berv            Carl Geyer            Max Pottag
James Chambers         Anton Horner          Barry Tuckwell
Arthur Berv            Carl Geyer            Max Pottag
James Chambers         Anton Horner          Barry Tuckwell

At the second workshop in 1970 (also in Tallahassee), the idea of establishing a society was broached. The organizing committee included:

John Barrows          Philip Farkas          William Robinson          Lowell Shaw
David Berry           Wendell Hoss           Norman Schweikert         Barry Tuckwell

The first officers of the IHS were:

President             Barry Tuckwell
Vice President        David Berry
Secretary/Treasurer    Norman Schweikert
Editor of The Horn Call Harold Meek

The third workshop was also held in Tallahassee, but since 1971 the venues have been in different locations each year, including Los Angeles, Athens GA, and non-US venues such as Munich, Beijing, and Cape Town. The 25th anniversary workshop was again in Tallahassee. For more on the IHS and symposiums, see hornsociety.org.

If international symposiums are out of reach, try regional or local workshops. Attendees from secondary students through professionals find them inspiring.  November 2008

First International Workshop (1969)

Second International Workshop (1970)
Have you ever wondered what horn you would play if you were hired by George Friederic Handel or Hector Berlioz, or if you studied with Louis-François Dauprat, Joseph Meifred, G. Kopprasch, Antonio Tosoroni, Josef Schantl, François Brémond, or Aubrey Brain? I’ve always been interested in horn history, and was curious what it would be like to play these and other horns from past generations.

It all started about forty years ago when I came across the remains of an odd looking Italian horn with its valves mounted on the right-hand side next to the bell. After puzzling over it for several decades, I finally learned that horns of this type were commonly used in Italian bands for at least a half century. Next, in a flea market, I came across an Alexander single with clockwork valve springs, and for the next twenty years the collection numbered only these two.

Then came the Internet and eBay. As a result, the collection now comprises over seventy instruments representing horn history from the eighteenth century to the present. It includes hunting horns, natural horns, and valved horns from nine countries, plus mouthpieces, photos, method books, and other hornabilia.

Of special interest to New England hornists are two examples from the Boston Musical Instrument Manufactory, representing the four options they offered: brass, nickel-silver, left-and right-handed. They appear to be the same model as used by New York Philharmonic virtuoso Henry Schmitz, who gave the US premiers of Weber’s Concertino and Schumann’s Konzertstück.

In France, natural horns were preferred long after valves had been adopted everywhere else. Dukas wrote Villanelle for the final examination at the Paris Conservatory in 1906, requiring proficiency on both natural and valved horn. François Brémond was the horn professor at the time, and he preferred his students to play right-handed. The horn he advocated is right-handed and has removable valves (or sauterelle), so it is perfect for Villanelle. The collection contains one of these and several other examples of right-handed horns from all periods.

Another unusual horn is probably the only surviving example of the omnitonic horn designed by Gautrot in 1847, in the midst of musical and political turmoil in France, which found its way to Mexico. (Omnitonic horns are natural horns with a built-in method of changing the key without physically interchanging crooks. This one has three manual "taps" that are rotary valves without springs or levers, and hence not instantaneous.)

The complete collection was displayed at the 2011 Northeast Horn Festival.

Dick is a horn player, collector, researcher, and teacher living on eastern Pennsylvania. To view the collection online, see rjmartz.com/horns/. The collection comprises more than 80 horns as of January 2012, including a single F horn by August Bopp of Munich (#085) donated by your editor.
Courtois: The Horn in the Trunk
by James Berriman

I spent a weekend in Maine in 2004. The weather was foul, so I went antiquing. In a dark shop, I walked past a steamer trunk with the lid open. I was startled to see something that looked remarkably like a natural horn.

At first I thought it must be an ornament, like a Christmas decoration. But it looked beautifully made. The proportions were right. I picked it up and was surprised at its lightness. It had a deep patina. There were no crooks, only the body.

It was not perfect. In the left hand position was some flattening and a tear. But the main loop and tuning slide were intact and the bell was nearly perfect. It was in great condition considering that it was naked in the wild.

Inside the bell I saw traces of ruby-red lacquer with a gold lyre pattern. By this time my heart was beating fast. It was obviously real and very old. How did it end up here? The shopkeeper said she had picked it up in England while acquiring stock for the shop. She snatched it from my hands and waved it around, telling me it would make a great wallhanger, finally perching it on the edge of the counter on its bell.

My heart almost stopped, thinking how tragic it would be for something so fragile to survive so long only to be wrecked at the moment of rescue. I gently took it back and asked how much. She said $185, which was not a junk price. I asked if she had found any other parts. She had not. I didn't bargain. Back at the hotel, I could finally examine the horn in the light. I found a maker's mark stamped in small letters on the bell garland: COURTOIS FRERE RUE DU CAIRE A PARIS.

I did some research. The singular "Frere" and the street address suggest that the horn was built by Antoine Courtois the elder in his original shop, which existed from the end of the 18th century to about 1844. I found photographs of other Antoine Courtois horns. The shape of the braces and the lacquer pattern are similar to examples built between 1810 and 1815.

Back in Boston, I sent photos to Richard Seraphinoff at Indiana University (who makes a Courtois copy), Jean Rife, Lowell Greer, and Bob Sheldon at the Smithsonian to get their reactions and learn more about the horn.

The horn remains unrestored. I like the feel of musical history when I hold it. It makes me wonder who played it and what music came from the bell. I do not expect ever to find anything so wonderful in an antique store again. ♧ March 2011

Jim is a former horn student who is now a lawyer in Boston.
Story of a Five-Valve Horn

by Mark J. Anderson

Five valves! When I saw this horn in a store window in 1985, the five valves, as well as the decorative engraving on the bell, intrigued me. After a little bargaining, I paid $400 for it. The slides and valves were frozen; $300 more got the horn lacquered and in playing condition.

Ed Kruspe built the horn in Erfurt, Germany in the early part of the century. It is serial number 10, a single B-flat horn pitched in "high" tuning (about 460 Hz). The five valves are string-operated rotary valves. The first is used primarily as a stopping valve, but may also be used to play horn in A. The middle three are the conventional valves. The fifth adds somewhat more than the combination of the first and third valves; it has a small inner slide that can also be used for tuning.

The tuning slide had to be pulled too close to the end of the sleeves to be played at A440, so I had an alternate crook fabricated for normal use, but I’ve saved the old slide for use with other period instruments in that high tuning. We have an 1885 Hook and Hastings tracker organ in the Lutheran Church here. It was built for the Baptist Church in Hopkinton, New Hampshire and relocated to Woodstock, New York in 1971. When playing trumpet parts there, I use a Pepper cornet in high tuning made in the 1880s.

The five-valve design originated with Lorenzo Sansone (1881-1975) in the hope that it, rather than the double horn, would become the standard. My Kruspe-Sansone has the advantage of light weight (less than four pounds!) but isn’t limited in the lower register like a normal B-flat horn as it can be played chromatically all the way down to the F pedal. The fifth valve solves many intonation problems, but it means learning almost an entire new set of fingerings. A water key before the main tuning slide really works.

All in all, this is a very satisfactory as well as interesting horn. September 1993

Mark Anderson is a retired teacher and writer and lives in Rifton, New York. He plays horn and trumpet.
How to Create Your Own Fingering Chart

You need only three pieces of information to create a fingering chart, including all alternate fingerings. Actually, once you understand the information, you won’t need a fingering chart at all; you will be able to construct the fingerings in your head any time you need them.

Brass instruments have a fundamental note on which the harmonic series is built. For a standard double horn, the fundamental for the F side is the C (written) below the bass clef, (sounding a fifth lower); for the B-flat side, it is the F (concert B-flat) just below the bass clef. A deskant (high F) horn has a fundamental an octave above the standard F horn. The fundamental of a natural horn depends on the key of the crook being used.

The harmonic series starts on the fundamental pitch, then goes up in the pattern shown. These are the notes played on the open horn and on natural horns. The pitches above the fundamental are called overtones or partials. As you can see, the number of overtones doubles every octave as you go up. The octaves are always multiples of two (1, 2, 8, 16). The pitches with odd (especially prime) numbers (7, 11, 13, for example) are the most out of tune and are to be avoided in most situations.

The natural overtone series does not agree exactly with equal temperament, which is one of the reasons we have to adjust both within the instrument and with other instruments to be "in tune."

The fingering pattern can be started on any open tone. You can already see an alternate fingering – G is an open note (i.e., an overtone), and can also be played 1-3. You also see an indication of why notes above the treble clef are so difficult – all those fingerings from the upper partials give the notes many alternate fingerings, so the embouchure has to be perfect to produce the right note.

Now you understand the principles behind horn fingerings, so you don’t have to consult fingering charts any more. ✷ September 1998
How to Practice: A Panel Discussion

The Amateur Session at the symposium in Cape Town was a panel discussion with Jeffrey Agrell (Iowa, US), Erik Albertyn (Port Elizabeth, South Africa), Peter Hoefs (Tübingen, Germany), Shirley Hopkins-Civil (Kent, England), Joseph Ognibene (Iceland), and Jonathan Stoneman (Devon, England). "Practice smarter" and "keep the embouchure in shape" seemed to be the lessons to take from the panel discussion on how to practice in limited time.

Everyone, in fact, not just amateurs, needs more practice time, whether because of "day jobs," professional playing, teaching, administrative duties, or a combination of obligations. The panelists, between them, faced all these situations.

In addition to breathing and athletic conditioning as good preparation, the panelists agreed that every horn player must spend at least 30 minutes a day, every day, with the horn. "Too many days away from the horn cannot be recovered and can lead to a crisis of confidence," said Joe. "You cannot depend on ensemble playing, because it does not cover the basics."

An audience member mentioned wind bands, which usually involve lots of playing, and said that they can usually hit the first note "right-on" without any warm-up. The panelists, however, strongly recommended warming up. "You will play better," said Jonathan. "And your embouchure will feel better the next day," added Joe.

Several panelists recommended focusing on the low register during daily practice. Many players find that if their low register is working well, the high notes take care of themselves.

Erik mentioned the feeling of isolation when practicing on your own. Jonathan recommended lessons as inspiration. Jeff suggested getting organized, knowing what you want to practice. Shirley mentioned spending some time improving weaknesses, but also playing studies that give you confidence. Joe suggested finding other people to play with, maybe the section in your ensemble. Jeff added that a playing partner could be other than a horn player. You can work on difficult scales together.

Joe recommended knowing your scales well, "which makes transposition easier," and Jeff followed up with several suggestions, some of which appear in his column on technical tips in The Horn Call, for practicing scales or bits of etudes or solos. Shirley added that you can improve technique by practicing fingerings without the horn.

As the participants left to attend a master class, they all agreed that it had been a worthwhile discussion.

September 2006
Playing or Using an Assistant First Horn

by Robert Dickow

Playing assistant principal horn is not an easy job, as I can attest from experience. Mainly your job is to serve as the "right hand man" (left hand?) for the first chair player, playing primarily in non-prominent passages while the section leader takes a momentary rest.

You often have to sit out for many measures, then enter on some touchy high note. Chances are this will be required of you just when your horn and your chops have become cold.

You may need to cultivate special skills, such as matching the tone quality and playing style of your section leader in order to make a seamless line when taking over the part. You will need to learn to feather an entrance with a breath attack, such as when picking up the tail end of that long tone between phrases in the Firebird so the solo player can catch a much-needed breath.

Assistant horn players need to be accurate players as well as musical ones. Some principals may ask you to keep track of measures rest, to turn pages, or perform other tasks. I have at times had to cover spots in parts other than the first horn part.

Another important but seldom-mentioned skill is knowing how to play the politics of this sometimes lonely position. You need to know how to be a supportive player emotionally as well as musically. Never be competitive and never complain. You need to stay alert and prepared even when it seems that you have little to play for extended periods. Moments of glory are rare for an assistant.

An assistant player should normally not double the first chair player unless clearly directed to do so. Only occasionally should you play along with the principal, and that would most likely be reserved for really powerful passages in which the entire section is playing a unison line. Doubling can produce balance problems in the section and create the "chorus effect" – a subtle difference in sound that is probably not what the composer intended.

Principal players also have responsibilities if they are to use an assistant to the best advantage. First, use the resources of the assistant. Ask your assistant to play as much as is practical given the part at hand. Don't try to be an Arnold Schwarzenegger of the horn when you can relax a bit by delegating some notes to your assistant. Some first horns give minor solos or more exposed passages to the assistant.

Another important issue concerns the marking of the part. Send the parts in advance of the first rehearsal, clearly marked to indicate those passages the assistant is to play. Your assistant will be grateful.

May 2000

Bob is on the faculty of the Hampton School of Music at the University of Idaho and principal horn of the Idaho/Washington Symphony. This article is extracted from the March 2000 issue of Northwest Horn News, of which Bob was editor.
How Low Is Low?

by Simon de Souza

How low should you be able to play? Even if one is exclusively a soloist, a look at the standard solo repertoire shows such works as Adagio and Allegro, Morceau de Concert, Glazunov's Reverie – all have at least a pedal B-flat and many of them an A, A-flat, or even G. Most of the principal chamber works have pretty unavoidable pedals. And then there is the orchestral repertoire. A first horn who cannot play the opening phrase to Ein Heldenleben is not going far, while as third horn in Till Eulenspiegel you can scarcely ask conductors if they mind doing without the pedal A when you play the theme for horn in D.

But how low is necessary? I would suggest that an ability to play a controlled, quiet, sustained note down to at least a pedal G, and preferably an F, is something aspiring players should seek to have in their armoury. Lower than F, instances in the repertoire become rare. However, the most obvious example is probably Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, where all four horns are required to play pedal E's. Realistically, what I suggest is to aim for a good solid pedal F, one which you can both produce and hold, cleanly and reliably at any dynamic and also (and this is critical) that you can slur down to and up from.

So how, assuming that you find playing low very difficult, can you improve matters? When working on players' low registers, I try to stick to a few fundamentals. The first of these is that of keeping the head up and not letting it drop as one descends. I encourage students to keep their heads up at all times, to consider the embouchure for the low register to be an extension of their normal middle register setup, to think of opening the aperture in the embouchure by lowering the jaw and to pay particular attention to the position of the tongue, preventing it emerging between the teeth where it blocks everything up and upsets the carefully arranged embouchure.

To help achieve this, I recommend the following exercise. Play in half notes, starting on the open B-flat horn, on written F in the first space, slur down to C, then F, then rearticulate the F. Repeat on the 2nd valve, then the 1st, descending through the B-flat combinations, continuing through the F horn combinations to the pedal F#. Resist any temptation to drop your head. As you descend, gently lower your jaw and slide down, letting the note blend until it eventually clicks onto the lower harmonic. It is better not to get the note than to "cheat"!

Keep your chin flat and firm and the corners of your embouchure braced. If you loosen the embouchure, control of the notes will be greatly diminished. The repeated low note should be tongued with the tip of the tongue still in contact with the lower edge of the upper teeth so that the tongue does not come through.

Finally, keep the air flow solid and constant. Part of the idea of the "slide" is that the sound and hence the air column should be absolutely constant. March 2000

This article is extracted from the December 1999 issue of The Horn Magazine, a publication of the British Horn Society. Simon teaches at Birmingham Conservatoire, the Junior Department of the Royal Academy of Music, and Wells Cathedral School.
View of the Low Register from New York

The low register is important to any good horn player. Erik Ralske and Howard Wall, third and fourth horns of the New York Philharmonic, agree with Simon de Souza [see page 64] on this point. They take it further: "Nowadays, everyone is expected to have good control over four octaves," they state.

Erik studied with Ranier DeIntinis, who started on fourth in the Philharmonic, then moved to second, then third, and so covered the entire range. DeIntinis advocated dropping the jaw in the low range, and Erik, who teaches many students and thinks about the technique, agrees. "Say 'whoa!',' explains Erik, "so the jaw goes not only down, but also slightly forward. If it just drops, the embouchure pulls away from the mouthpiece. The point of contact of mouthpiece against lip has to be constant, and the fundamental structure of the embouchure has to be constant."

Erik also agrees with Simon that the shift should be fluid, smooth, and gradual. "Don't do anything unnatural," he cautions, "and, as Simon says, blend the low register into the middle and high." He points to the Strauss excerpts as requiring fast register changes. "The third solo in Till Eulenspiegel is harder than the first," Erik states, "and you have to work to make the last note as strong as the previous two."

Howard did not start out intending to be a low horn player. It just happened that way. Now his low register is secure, and he makes an effort to balance his practice with high register playing. Howard recently played Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which he says is an ordeal, but one he would not miss for the world. "In preparing for the Ninth, I focus more on the higher parts," he says, "because I'm not used to playing up there by myself."

Perhaps no one sets out to be a fourth horn player, but Erik appreciates the value of a good one like Howard. "The fourth is the foundation of the quartet, the center of both pitch and sound. A strong, rich sound is essential in the low register, where the air is slower moving than in the high register, but in greater quantity."

Erik and Howard played at the 2000 Northeast Horn Workshop along with the rest of the section (Phil Myers, Al Spanjer, and Jerry Ashby) and guest Paul Ingraham from Yale University. ♦ March 2000

Erik is now a principal horn in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Photo (l-r) front row: Erik Ralske, Al Spanjer, Phil Myers; back row: Howard Wall, Paul Ingraham, Jerry Ashby.
On Not Warming Up

by Lydia Busler-Blais

Why do we warm up? When I warm up, I want it to be meaningful and efficient. After all, why waste time? A warm-up should target the part of the anatomy that needs warming – perhaps embouchure flexibility, contact and articulation, or free airflow. Whatever is needed, I avoid warming up the stuff that's already working well because the warm-up must not wear me out before I perform.

A warm-up should be specifically effective, thoughtful (not mindless!), and feel gradually warming. And if something is in need of warming up, it might not sound great – don't worry! The point is to sound good at your gig. Speaking of the gig, when you're there, neither settle on the safety of what sounds good in front of others nor rely on too vigorous a routine. Remember, the point is to sound good in rehearsal or concert – that's all that matters, and it won't happen with a blown-out lip.

And sometimes, when you're practicing, just play without warming up! Start right out playing delicately, loudly, high or low. The reason: certainly we do not always have time to warm up. We may get caught in traffic or even get called for a gig at the very last minute. That has happened to me plenty of times.

Let me describe a scene. I had been in New York City barely two weeks. My husband went off to teach cello and I settled into my pajamas and started to work at my computer for the evening. I had my feet up, a bowl of popcorn next to me, and at 7:55 p.m. the phone rang. It was the orchestra manager from the NYC Ballet. He said that I had been recommended by the principal cellist and asked if I was available to play right at that very moment. I said that I was. When asked where I lived and I told him Washington Heights (way uptown), he sounded a bit disappointed but asked me to get there as quickly as I could. Dropping a black outfit over my head, I called a cab, which got me to Lincoln Center quickly. I was hastened to the orchestra pit at 8:10 where the orchestra was already playing. The hornist next to me pointed and I started to play Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty*.

I played what I saw, including a single but rather loud eighth-note that rang out as a prominent solo. Everyone snickered, but another hornist leaned over and said, "Forgot to tell you about that – mistake in the part." Very embarrassing! But you know what? The hornists took an instant liking to me because that note proved that I wasn't afraid to play out. Plus I got there fast, and played with no warm-up.

After that I was offered many gigs and was on call lists for major groups. All because I got myself there and didn't worry that I wasn't warmed up. ❖ March 2008

Lydia is a teacher, performer, and composer in Montpelier VT. She participates regularly in the Northeast Horn Workshop as artist, clinician, and organizer, especially of the exhibits.
What Comes after the Warm-up?

by Jonathan Stoneman

Reading Lydia Butler-Blais’s thoughts on not warming up (page 66), I was reminded of a lecture given last year by British pro Bob Ashworth on practicing. His big question was "What do you do after you warm up?" (assuming you’re at home rather than in a concert hall or rehearsal room). Nobody came up with lasting or memorable answers at that lecture, and I’ve been thinking about it since. A lot of warm-up routines are around, many of them excellent, and most of us have some kind of routine. But if we’re not practicing for a concert, or preparing a piece for a lesson, what should we do after we warm up?

In The Art of French Horn Playing, Philip Farkas suggests a tick list of skills to work on. As a student, it's obvious what you need to do. You have to learn "stuff" between lessons: legato, staccato, expression, range, transposition, etc. Later in life I suppose it's a matter of discipline making those pianissimi as quiet as quiet can be, those crescendi amazingly controlled, and the fortissimi as loud as loud can be. But if you just have to play "OK" in whatever outlets for playing you have, it's hard to be that disciplined.

I had a thought today as I was walking the dog. Max, a sheepdog, has become very adept at grabbing his rubber ball out of the air, picking out the flight and predicting the bounce like a pro ball player. That's what he does every day. I don't know what else he could do, because he never tries anything else. For all I know, his lip trills could be better than mine, but he never practices those and we'll never know.

So, what is the answer? It depends what you want to do with your playing. I am probably typical of thousands of people who don't make their whole living from the horn, but want to play it to a high standard. Over the years, I have worked at lots of things, but mostly practiced what I needed to practice; if something's coming up, I make sure I can play it. Lip trills have to wait, accuracy and long notes cannot. When practicing, I pick etudes or pieces that I can almost play, and work only on the measures I can't play. And I’ve always kept certain pieces as "progress markers" – Strauss 2, Dukas Villanelle, Schumann Adagio & Allegro – which I'll never perform, but which tell me whether practice is paying off. *September 2008*

Jonathan plays in a community orchestra in Devon UK and works at the BBC. At the time of the article, he was also a member of the IHS Advisory Council and its treasurer.
The Eliminator
by Thomas Bacon

Horn players can be eliminated from orchestra auditions, wind ensembles, quintets, opera orchestras, etc. if they cannot transpose or read bass clef. Good sound, rhythm, technique, range, and musical phrasing are not always enough. Sight reading, playing from hymnals, fourth horn parts in all sorts of ensembles – someone else will win the gig if you do not have these skills.

When we talk about horn technique, often the first thing that comes to mind is playing lots of fast notes. The fact is, though, we practice many different techniques, even from the beginning stages of learning how to play – tone production, range, and dynamics, for example.

The better we become, the more techniques we must master: articulations of all types, wider range and more dynamics, stopped horn, lip trills, and more. As abilities improve, the difficulty levels of the music we play and the expectations of our teachers and colleagues also escalate. With high school students, and more urgently with college students, the need to address new techniques becomes ever more acute with each tryout, audition, concert, or contest.

In young players’ attempts to play louder, faster, and higher than anyone else, less obvious techniques, like transposition and reading bass clef, are often overlooked or avoided. Granted, very young players seldom need to read bass clef or horn in any key other than F. But soon it does become an issue: when they want to play in an orchestra, when they get that church gig and the choir director passes out the hymnal and says “play along,” when they decide to go to an ensemble competition as a horn quartet and the fourth part is mostly in bass clef.

Be assured, if players want to keep getting better on the horn, transposition and bass clef are skills they must have, and sooner is better than later. You should practice these skills every day until you achieve proficiency. The great thing is that you can combine them with other things in your practice routine. For example, if you are practicing articulations in an etude, transpose the etude so you are working on articulations and transposition at the same time!

Tom has been principal horn with numerous orchestras and on the faculties of several universities, and is a world-renowned soloist, a founding member of Summit Brass, an active clinician, and featured artist at international symposiums. He was the featured artist at the 2007 Northeast Horn Workshop, where his clinic was "Practice Smarter Not Harder." See hornplanet.com/hornpage/museum/articles/Wind_Tips_Bacon.pdf for the complete article.
Having Fun with Free Improv

by Pamela J. Marshall

Do you noodle around while you're warming up? Do you experiment with "alternative" sounds on your horn? If so, maybe you'd like to try free improv. This isn't the more structured improvising of jazz or Baroque figuration. The guidelines for a free improv session can be anything you want.

Quite a community of people are doing free improv (see twistedvillage.com). At an NEC workshop hosted by Jean Rife, the Reveille Trio – trombonists Abbie Conant, Julie Josephson, and Sarah Kline – demonstrated their approach, which involved a lot of listening to each other and subtle interactions. Berklee professor and trombonist Tom Plsek is a renowned improviser who gets all kinds of novel sounds out of his trombone. The trombone is particularly conducive to "alternative" sounds, and glissandos are a natural, but horn players can make interesting sounds too. We have stopped and muted sounds, bending tones with the hand or lip, and flutter tonguing. We can play with a slide removed, turn the mouthpiece around to make a wind sound, and toot on a mouthpiece in a slide.

However, funny noises are just one resource of the free improviser. The music you make depends on how you and your partners listen to each other. Three or four players is a good number because you can develop a variety of textures and still hear what everyone is doing. I think it's easier to play with other wind players, because you can react more directly to what you hear; but if a keyboard player wants to play, don't turn him/her away!

It's helpful to start with a very general plan. For example, choose a mood, situation, or image to depict; choose a tonal center; restrict the pitches each player uses; specify a musical quality like fast, sustained, high, low. Your plan might include sections with different textures, with a signal or time limit for the next section.

Remember to listen and leave space. To paraphrase suggestions from Abbie Conant and the Trio: as you play, become aware of the room, your fellows, and the audience; the point is not to show your skills, but to find a shared musical intention. I relish the freedom to play what comes to mind, rather than being restricted to written music.

Above all, listen... and have fun! ❖ April 2003

Pam is a composer, horn player, improviser, and recording engineer in Lexington, Massachusetts. Spindrift Music Company (spindrift.com) publishes her work.
Horn Playing and the Inevitable Aging
by Frøydis Ree Wekre

I have to admit it – as I get older I am always looking more eagerly for the new voodooos of horn playing, stuff that will make my performance better, my tone more centered, stable, and brilliant, my low range more rich sounding, my high range easier, my staccato more effortless, my intonation impeccable, and my rhythm completely perfect.

What else – oh yes, a lightweight horn that is easy to hold, with some extra weight on the valves and mouthpiece to avoid cracking up in fortissimo, the new stick arrangement to hold the horn up while playing, frequent visits to the health club to strengthen my arms, a little practice device that encourages less pressure on the upper lip, another one which gives me the Super Power Embouchure, and plenty of stuff for enhancing my breathing capacity and air speed and thus projection.

It is not uncommon to discuss the differences between the lives of brass players and string players. I think it could be compared with buying a house – or renting one – for the rest of your life. When you buy a house (or decide to become a string player) you have to invest a lot in the beginning. Lots of money (hours and hours of practice) for the interest and the principal of the loans. As time goes by, the monthly costs of living in this house (playing this string instrument) normally decrease. Maybe you even get to the point where you are close to debt-free (you can go away for a week or two without your instrument and still be okay on it when you come back...).

When you decide to become a brass player (or rent a place to live) the initial investment is not as large as that of the string players (or the house buyers). If you practice more than four hours a day, you might just get bruised and destroyed instead of becoming a better player. However – warning – the rent always goes up with time! Try going away without your instrument for a couple of weeks and come back – and not just your self-confidence might be at risk, but your job as well.

Back to the voodooos of horn playing – the best one is probably to get smarter at practicing, and, I am sorry to report, do more of it – rather than less – as the years go by. That is, according to my experience, if you really want to stay in your best playing shape! ❖ May 2008

Frøydis is an internationally renowned soloist and was professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music. She was elected an IHS Honorary Member in 1994 and retired in 2011. The complete article appears in the May 2008 issue of The Horn Call.
Fun & Easy Teaching and Learning

Fun and easy" – if those two elements are missing from horn playing, teaching, and learning, something is wrong. I wouldn't be playing horn if it were as difficult as people think it is.

A help for beginning students is starting on a single B-flat horn, which has advantages over the single F horn: (1) smaller, lighter, easier to hold, carry, and blow; (2) easier to play high (harmonics further apart, more understandable fingerings); (3) faster progress and confidence; and (4) easier switch to double horn.

The first priority with beginning students is getting a great sound. Everything else comes after that. Buzzing should be relaxed, with a healthy, resonant vibration. Young children do this, and also breathe properly, naturally. Vibration of the air should happen as a result of the air going past the lips, not from a focus on "buzzing."

Students become familiar with notes on the horn by playing long tones; however, rather than single notes, I have students play a phrase – two quarter notes and a half note, for example. As they advance, the phrases become more complex and interesting. In these exercises, students focus on consistently knowing the amount of air needed to play a specific note. Even if they can't hear a note, they can feel it.

I recommend interval studies, following Chris Leuba's advice: "All you need to know to play the horn are how to start the first note, and how to move to the next note." Start with an interval of a second, going down from the tonic and back, and then up from the tonic and back. Continue with thirds, etc. Play the interval study in a different key each day, for beginners perhaps going only as far as fifths.

I believe in learning technique through music. My favorite beginning books are the Clevenger Method, which introduce range in the best way possible, keep music-making as the focus of playing, and include duets.

Ideal hornists seem to be students who love accomplishment and challenge and have patience to learn, but also have a child-like approach to just "making a joyful noise." I still love every minute and am swept away by the organ-like grandeur of multiple horns. Once students are hooked on the horn, they will be part of a community of like-minded musicians everywhere. ❖ January 2009

Joan is principal horn of the Canadian Opera Company, a member of True North Brass, and has two new CDs. The full article appears in the Fall 2008 issue of Canadian Winds. See joanwatson.com.
Help for School Music Programs

by Br. Nathanael Reese

Many school systems have watered down music programs, or cut them altogether. The Spirit of America Band from the Community of Jesus in Orleans MA saw the results of these cuts when we worked with and performed for middle and high school bands on an eight-day New England tour in August 1995.

During the day, we gave workshops on playing the instruments – technique and musicianship – and on marching. Evenings featured brass and wind quintets and a high-energy field show – we wanted the kids to experience how exciting a good performance can be.

We watched a change come over the kids as they worked. They usually started off worried about being "cool," but as they got good results, they became excited and took pride in what they were doing. They discovered that the discipline needed to be good isn't bad! We were thrilled at the improvements.

The horn section was particularly charged up for this teaching effort after attending the Kendall Betts Horn Camp, where we got rejuvenated and redirected. The camp was a wonderful, intense experience, with all kinds of help from Ken, Abby Mayer, and David Ohanian, and an opportunity to perform with other horn players of all levels. We can't say enough good things about it.

We regret to report that there was only one horn student per school, and some were recent switchovers from other instruments. Most had no teacher or instruction in horn basics. With our new knowledge from the horn camp, we were able to help them, and they got excited about playing the horn. Maybe by next year they will have won some more converts!

Music teaches discipline, social skills, pride, teamwork, and cultural heritage, and it can be an alternative to harmful pastimes. We hope that we have been a positive force in this direction and are planning another tour in 1996.

We welcome inquiries and can be reached at Spirit of America, PO Box 2831, Orleans MA 02653. 

December 1995

Brother Nate and his colleagues sing in the choir as well as play in the band and chamber ensembles.
Let the Horn Be Heard!
by Dolores Beck

What kind of educator excludes a student from the school jazz band because he is playing "the wrong instrument"? That instrument is the horn, and for those of us in the horn world who have heard the many fabulous jazz horn players out there, this exclusion is incomprehensible.

I have been a private horn teacher for 53 years, and some of my students have gone on to become professional horn players. I have exposed my students to all kinds of music. For jazz, I include Ellington, Parker, Jobim, etc. My students enjoy the change of style, but put most of their study into the classical repertoire.

Then about five years ago, a special student came into my horn studio. Tim Gallagher is one of the most dedicated students I have ever known. He loves his horn and music like life itself. I believe that he only sets his horn down to eat and sleep. The special thing about Tim is that as a tenth-grader now, he is already a jazz horn player. This is what he chooses to play, and this is what he excels in. Tim is intent on spending his musical life playing jazz.

In addition to learning the fundamentals of the instrument, Tim has worked with Alex Brofsky and John Clark and attended John's jazz horn camp. He has been the only horn player for two years at the SUNY Purchase jazz festival for high school students. He has studied with Vincent Chancey and recently performed with David Amram and his band. Tim also has been accepted into the pre-college jazz program for high school students at the Manhattan School of Music.

Everything should be wonderful for Tim, and it is, except for one very disturbing thing. The jazz band director at his high school, Byram Hills in Armonk, New York, will not allow Tim to play in her jazz band. She has told Tim that he is playing "the wrong instrument." Tim's parents have gone to the school, the principal, and the music district supervisor, and the band director still says no.

Some school jazz band directors write out parts so hornists (and other non-traditional instruments) can play in the band. But that is not necessary for Tim: he can transpose, play all clefs, and will play anywhere in the band, but the answer is still a big no. An educator owes it to her students to support their dreams and encourage them to be the best that they can through practice and commitment. This has not happened for Tim.

To this I say: Let the horn be heard!

David Amram says it best when he states: "There is no such thing as a jazz instrument, but all instruments can be used to play jazz. Julius Watkins, John Grass, Junior Collins, and I were already improvisers on the horn in the late 40s, and Willie Ruff by the mid 50s had his own duo. Now an army of hornists can play jazz: John Clark, Vincent Chancey, Alex Brofsky, Tom Varner, Bobbie Rouch, Rick Todd, Adam Unsworth, and many others who are fantastic." All these artists would be surprised to learn that they are playing "the wrong instrument."

I am curious if others have experienced this kind of discrimination against the horn. I will be organizing a jazz horn festival in 2010 for my horn choir of students and will invite all the jazz horn players who are available to play with and for us. ✡ September 2009

Dolores graduated from the Manhattan School of Music and studied in Warsaw, Poland, Music Academy of the West, and Tanglewood. Her teachers include Gunther Schuller, Edwin Golnik, Wendell Hess, and James Stagliano. As of 2012, her horn choir, Top Brass, is going strong and has received local publicity. Tim is studying at the Manhattan School of Music, and the same high school teacher refuses to allow horn players in her jazz band.

Right: Tim Gallagher with David Amram
Power Practicing
by Eli Epstein

When we practice, we are our own teachers. We need to become the kind of teacher we would most like to have: positive, helpful, challenging but gentle (not overly critical, dull, or repetitive). Most of us have been practicing the horn from an early age but have never really considered the issue of work habits and attitudes. Yet our work habits are what shape us as musicians.

When we practice, we’re developing muscular memory. Our minds constantly need new angles to stay interested and attentive. The traditional idea of practice is to repeat and repeat until you get it right, and the mind rebels, but when we find new angles, the mind pays close attention. Some techniques to achieve high quality work are:

- Unwind before practicing.
- Play passages in slow motion the first time through.
- Sing passages with vowels and expression first.
- Focus on where your tongue is striking.
- Analyze what happened.
- Learn from your mistakes.
- Use a metronome (and really pay attention to it!).
- Change the rhythm.
- Stop on notes that feel unsure.
- Play loud passages quietly until they are secure.
- Practice with eyes open, then eyes closed.
- Work sdrawkcab.
- Use a tuner regularly.
- Record thyself.
- Practice opposites; for example, when playing high all the time in performance, balance it with low horn practice, and vice versa.
- Exercise! Being physically fit and toned in the abdominal area makes breath support more natural.
- Always warm up and cool down.
- Seek out a room that is comfortable to play in.
- Practice regularly.
- Practice when you are physically and mentally rested.
- Stop practicing before your face gets overtired.
- Involve the artist side of your brain.
- Emulate great singers and string players.
- Be encouraging and positive.
- Build the foundation brick by brick. ✝ November 2007

This article is an excerpt from a chapter in Eli’s forthcoming book. See eliepstein.com for the full chapter. Eli gave a talk at the 2008 Northeast Horn Workshop. Formerly a member of the Cleveland Orchestra, Eli is now on the faculty of the Boston Conservatory, New England Conservatory, and Aspen Festival and is an active chamber musician.
Kevin Bacon, Herb Tarle, and Transfers

by W. Peter Kurau

It may come as a surprise to learn that one of the initial requests to new horn students at Eastman is for them to transfer! No, not in the academic sense; rather, consider this definition from the American Heritage Medical Dictionary: "transfer: a condition in which learning in one situation influences learning in another situation."

In the trivia game "Six Stages of Kevin Bacon," participants attempted to link any event back to the actor in six or fewer steps. Thus, an event, person, or location that may seem remote or entirely unrelated to the actor could, in labyrinthine ways, ultimately be traced back to him.

Consider the following examples. I think you'll agree that their message is relevant not only to the original source, but, indeed, could be "transferred" to the world of horn playing, teaching, and learning.

Example 1. A quotation from Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Chris Simms: "There's no other way to learn other than by playing. There's just something about throwing an interception in practice compared to throwing an interception in front of 70,000 people that just makes it stick in your head that much more."

This advice is easy to transfer directly to horn. While all of us have spent countless hours in solitary practice, our learning can be consummated only by demonstrating these skills in public, via a concert, recital, or audition. While a "clam" in a private practice session resembles an immature cockle, in a public concert, it is cited in the Mitchell Report as "Bivalve Growth Hormone."

Example 2. A quotation from the late correspondent Ed Bradley: "My formula for success has three elements: the talent you've been given, the hard work you do to get better at whatever it is that you do, and a certain amount of luck. And I always found that the harder I worked, the better my luck was. I will not go into a story unprepared."

Bradley's formula for success is the formula for success in any field, including music. His mantra that he will not go into a story unprepared transfers in "hornspeak" to "I will not go into a performance unprepared."

Example 3. The character Herb Tarle in "WKRP in Cincinnati" would observe discussions with feigned interest, only to then blurt, "How does this affect me?" Too bad he had not developed the ability to "transfer"!

At Eastman, a new "transfer" example is posted every week outside the horn studio. The examples provide stimulus for creative thinking. But further, such "transfer" examples are prevalent and abundant, and thus provide a virtually limitless opportunity for learning.

Happy "transferring," and best wishes for limitless learning! ❖ January 2008

Peter is professor of horn at Eastman School of Music, principal horn in the Rochester Philharmonic, host of the 1997 International Symposium, and a featured artist at the 2008 Northeast Horn Workshop and many other symposiums.
IVASI: Orchestra Repertoire via Interactive Video

by Brian T. Kilp

The program starts with Strauss's Don Juan. The lights dim, the audience hushes in anticipation, the video projects the image of the conductor as he gives the downbeat, the players respond by.... Wait a minute! Video? Is this a nightmare coming to pass? Or is it the high-tech concert of the future? Actually, it is neither, although it is certainly "high-tech." It is the brainchild of legendary West Coast hornist James Decker called International Video Audition Service Inc. (IVASI).

IVASI was developed at the University of Southern California and was originally intended to make the first rounds of orchestral auditions fairer and more affordable. Players were to make a tape in a local television studio and send it rather than travel to an audition site. The real value of the project soon became apparent – it is the ultimate orchestral repertoire education tool.

Here's how IVASI works: A conductor is videotaped conducting to a CD. The video is replayed on a large television facing musicians who watch a score and the screen, listen through speakers and sound monitors, and play along. If they are in tune and rhythmically accurate, they won't hear their voices on the recording, as their own playing covers it. They hear the missing instruments, all those no one in the room is playing. One player or any number of players can take part in a session.

This system allows players to focus on any aspect of the excerpts, in context, with opportunity for learning together as a section, and matching intonation with the video. More repertoire can be covered than with most school orchestras, and in a more controlled environment.

I experienced IVASI at the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival in Maine in the summer of 1994, where Decker had us work with a live conductor, then darken the room, turn on the video and our stand lights, and off we went – Mahler, Strauss, Brahms, Stravinsky – sometimes several pieces in a sitting. Over 50 titles are now available.

All the students at Bowdoin agreed that their experience with IVASI was a most valuable and rewarding one, and wished that all their schools had the system. It's now being used at six universities, and a recent demo at the University of Arizona has led to discussion of possible equipment purchases – the faculty as well as students are enthusiastic, and we've got our fingers crossed! December 1994

Brian was a doctoral student with Keith Johnson at the University of Arizona at Tucson. He also studied with David Jolley and Mike Hatfield. He is now teaching in Terra Haute, Indiana. Jim Decker is a studio and concert performer and professor at USC and California State Long Beach. IVASI is now [2012] available on DVD with expanded repertoire.
A Lesson on Schumann's Konzertstück

by Peter W. Iltis

Chuck Kavalovsky gave four amateurs an unforgettable lesson on the Schumann Konzertstück last spring. Bob Moffett, Drew Halberstadt, Chad Musser, and I were to play with the Lexington (Massachusetts) Band soon after Chuck, Danny Katzen, Jay Wadenpfuhl, and Dick Mackey (the Boston Symphony horn section) played the same work with the BSO. Bob, a former student of Chuck’s at New England Conservatory, arranged the lesson.

We met Chuck at the stage door of Symphony Hall and followed him down into the basement. Four chairs and stands were already set up, and Chuck noted that the BSO section had just finished practicing the Schumann – the chairs might still be warm!

We didn’t play perfectly, but the lesson was a joy. With energy, enthusiasm, and concern for detail, Chuck gave us two hours of concentrated, inspiring coaching. The time flew by as we became absorbed in the work.

Chuck didn’t seem particularly impressed with the technical flourishes that occasionally came off, but rather concentrated on musical expression. What impressed me most was his interest in capturing the composer’s intent in all passages, from the most dazzling to the simplest. Indeed, we paid more attention to long flowing phrases than to the bravura runs. We worked on tempo, ensemble, phrasing, and musical style.

I was struck with the way Chuck, with all the enthusiasm of one leading the piece for the first time, would say, ”I’ve got an idea! Let’s try...” whatever. We would try it, and he’d say, ”Yeah, I think I’ll try that with our group.” He seemed to enjoy the chance to analyze as a listener rather than a performer, and eager to find ways to make his own interpretation more effective.

Artists like Chuck possess a passion for their art, discipline in their own study, and willingness to share their knowledge. Bob, Chad, Drew, and I were inspired by our brief encounter with this passion. Years from now, when we reflect back on our Schumann experience, it won’t be the concert in Lexington but the lesson with Chuck that we’ll remember.

Chuck, thanks for sharing your gift with us and for enriching our lives as you did! ❖ December 1994

Peter teaches exercise physiology and horn at Gordon College in Wenham MA. Bob, Drew, and Chad are engineers.
Prepare Like an Athlete

by Annie Bosler

On game day, a typical professional athlete wakes up from a good night's sleep to eat a hearty breakfast followed by a hot shower. Next he warms up and stretches before meeting with the trainer to get taped up and massaged. The coach gives an opponent run-down and pep talk. The athlete's cross training has consisted of weights, plyometrics, yoga, wind sprints, and distance running. At the end of the day, the athlete warms down, stretches, receives a massage and a hearty meal, and returns home for a good night's sleep.

A typical horn player, however, wakes up on concert day from an OK night's sleep to eat whatever is in the fridge. He probably hasn't had a massage in a year, if ever, and the conductor has not given a pep talk or a composer run-down. The musician's cross training regimen ... well, enough said there.

Although musicians are athletes, they do not always properly care for their bodies in the same way athletes do. Here are three items horn players can learn from athletes.

**Stretching.** One of the things runners do several times a day is stretch. Ironically, most horn players do not spend any time doing this with their lips. Try these three:

1. Massage the inside of the mouth with the tongue (30 seconds).
2. Open the mouth as wide as possible, trying to reach the bottom of the chin with your tongue (15 seconds).
3. In the shower, allow warm water to massage your lips (1 minute).

**Efficient Practice!** Because musicians use smaller muscle groups than athletes, musicians should divide their practice time into smaller segments. If your goal is to practice three hours a day, try to play two 45-minute sessions in the morning with a 15 minute break, and the same in the evening. Muscles need time to rebuild and rest when use is repetitive; therefore, the downtime in between practice sessions is vital to your chop health.

**Visualization.** One of the greatest tools that musicians can take from athletes is visualization practice. Athletes are known for visualizing an entire game from start to finish in their head. Every thought must be positive and successful. A musician can practice in this same manner without ever touching an instrument.

These and other tips from athletes' methods can help horn players maintain their bodies better and longer. ❖ January 2010

Annie earned a DMA from USC. She spoke at the 2010 Southwest Horn Convention and the 2010 IHS Symposium and presented a film about the Los Angeles studio horn players at the 2011 IHS Symposium.
Protect Your Hearing!

by Priscilla Douglas

I'm an audiologist, someone who specializes in hearing and hearing loss, and an amateur horn player. I'd like to urge you to educate yourself about preserving your hearing while playing music.

It is possible, and likely, to damage your hearing by long-term exposure to damaging levels of sound such as other musicians (e.g., trumpets and percussion) as well as your own practicing. The damage always begins in the high frequencies of 2000, 3000, 4000, or 6000 Hz, and gradually worsens until it begins to affect the frequencies of speech, at which time people begin to complain of not understanding soft speech or difficulty in the presence of background noise. This type of damage is often accompanied by tinnitus, or ringing in the ears. It is almost always permanent and non-reversible.

There are many strategies you can use to minimize your risk. First, make sure when you practice that your bell is pointing at something soft, to help absorb the sound. As you know, hard materials are reflective and bounce the sound back toward you.

Next, consider wearing hearing protection, especially for loud practice sessions and rehearsals. Headphones or earmuffs are easy to put on and take off; I had some luck with noise-cancelling ones. There are also custom made (and cheaper, non-custom) musicians' earplugs, which still allow you to hear fairly well but damp damaging levels. The custom earplugs go deep into the ear canal to minimize the annoying "occlusion effect", when your own voice or instrument sound is amplified in the ear canal.

Peoples' susceptibility to noise damage varies, so what may harm one person might not affect another as much. A colleague in a wind ensemble suffered damage in one ear due to being close to the trumpets. He is significantly affected by tinnitus, which is driving him crazy, and he is worried about his hearing.

Consider having a hearing test for a baseline and to detect any possible early damage. This should be done by a certified audiologist, who can also counsel you regarding hearing protection and can make musician's earplugs.

I also recommend a book called Musicians and the Prevention of Hearing Loss by Marshall Chasin, an audiologist affiliated with The Centre for Human Performance and Health Promotion in Hamilton, Canada.

January 2001

Priscilla (MS, CCC-A) is affiliated with Fletcher Allen Health Care and University of Vermont. You can contact her at pxdougla@gmail.com.
Alexander Technique and the Horn
by Allen Spanjer

I have been using the Alexander Technique since I was a student at Juilliard. Several aspects of playing become much easier with the Technique: breathing, posture, and focus. The Technique makes certain unconscious actions and reactions more conscious and therefore more controllable.

Why is breathing so difficult to understand or control? Because it is an unconscious physical activity that we wish to use consciously. Why is it so difficult to find a comfortable and efficient position while playing the horn? Because it is not a natural position. Alexander Technique helps you focus because when you become more aware of the interconnectedness of mind and body, you can use them to affect each other. For example, with the Technique we can learn to be physically more relaxed and less tense while playing, which results in the mind being more relaxed, which in turn results in an increased ability to focus and pay attention.

How is this accomplished? Most of what we do is habit: physical, mental, and emotional patterns. Since these patterns are how we define ourselves, they are difficult to change. Alexander saw that if you try to change a physical habit with the body, you are still going to be working within the old habit. This discovery that he could free himself from habitual physical patterns by using thought is the basis for the Technique. The result is a more natural flow of energy in the body, which allows us to use our bodies with more ease and control.

In a lesson, a teacher guides you through simple movements like sitting, standing, and walking. The teacher observes how you use your body, suggests thoughts for you to use to talk to your body, observes how you use these thoughts, and gives your body the experience of how it can work differently with their attention. This attention is their energy flow describing directly to your body with their hands how your body can work.

After a series of lessons, the connection between your thought and your body becomes stronger, so a teacher is no longer needed. It is a technique that, once learned, is yours to use always, not only for playing the horn, but in many other aspects of your life.

There are books and web sites about the technique. An organization of teachers called AmSAT has a list of certified teachers at alexandertech.com.

If this sounds interesting to you, find a teacher and try a lesson. Alexander Technique has helped me and my students so much with horn playing that there is a very good chance that you will also find some value in it. March 2001

Allen is second horn of the New York Philharmonic. He led a workshop on Alexander Technique at the 2001 Northeast Horn Workshop, where he helped Dan Grabois.
Alexander Technique and the Horn
by Kay S. Hooper

Look at your Northeast Horn Workshop schedule and be surprised! You have the opportunity to learn something about horn playing from a pianist.

After ten years of suffering from tendonitis linked to piano playing, I thought my piano playing days were over. Then I had the good fortune to study Alexander Technique (AT), a hundred-year-old process for changing movement and habits in activity.

Performers around the world find this subtle but powerful work to be the technique supporting all other techniques. By learning how the mind/body integrates for free and easy movement, I was able to free myself from pain, improve my technique, and eventually become a certified Alexander Technique Teacher.

When F.M. Alexander’s acting career was threatened by hoarseness, he had fears similar to mine. He found no help through traditional approaches. But he studied himself and learned that his own habits of poor balance and co-ordination were causing his problem.

Alexander came up with these basic principles:

- The head leads and the body follows.
- The whole body responds dynamically to any decision to move.
- Balanced effort is a combination of support and movement resulting in an appropriate amount of effort for a task.
- Changing habits requires conscious, active choice.
- Learning to sense in activity enhances performance.

AT is taught through gentle hands-on contact by trained teachers. This guidance presents students with movement and balance choices that may not be part of their habitual patterns. Alexander lessons usually include useful information on how the body works. By studying models, palpating structures, and experimenting with movement options, students learn to separate confusing images about movement from the truth of the body. Having an accurate body map decreases the chances of being injured or limited in practice and performance.

Some of the benefits of AT to musicians are:

- Improved respiration
- Increased facility, stamina, and poise
- Injury avoidance and recovery
- Reduced performance anxiety
- Increased inclusive awareness
- Improved use of all the senses
- Increased clarity of intention in performance

Because of the universal benefits of AT, even a pianist can help a horn player. This conference includes a group presentation and time for individual sessions. ❖ January 2007
Focal Task-specific Dystonia (FTSD)

by Peter W. Iltis

Have you ever felt as though you were losing your embouchure? In January of 2001, I began to notice a loss of embouchure control in the middle range of the horn. The problem progressed over several months, until I finally sought advice from a performing arts neurologist. The diagnosis was clear and pretty grim. I had focal task-specific dystonia, and my horn playing days were over.

The term dystonia refers to a variety of uncontrollable muscular contractions. Focal dystonia is limited to a body part such as an eyelid, the jaw, or hand. If the focal dystonia occurs only in response to a specific movement, it is focal task-specific dystonia (FTSD). For a horn player, it's usually the embouchure. An estimated 5% to 10% of musicians seeking medical attention are diagnosed with FTSD.

Unfortunately, there is no commonly accepted remedy when the embouchure is involved. Injections of botulinum toxin into the affected facial muscles, treatment with various oral medications, meditation, and retraining the embouchure to operate with a new "set" have all been tried with very limited success.

Nobody knows how FTSD develops, though research is underway. Factors may include a slight prevalence in males, a perfectionist mentality, performance anxiety, being in the fourth decade of life, and excessive, focused practice. However, it must be stressed that these are only hypotheses at this point, and there is no agreement as to the precise mechanisms of the disorder.

I have published a review on excessive practice as a possible factor in the September 2003 issue of The Instrumentalist. Briefly, it is possible that the part of the nervous system that provides and interprets sensory information becomes "wired" incorrectly. This may cause inappropriate output of the nervous system to the embouchure, leading to tremor and spasm.

I teach horn at Gordon College, but I am principally a professor of movement science. The intersection of my two interests gives me the opportunity to study FTSD. At the 2003 IHS symposium at Indiana University, I used electromyography to measure the electrical activity of embouchure muscles in both normal players and those with suspected problems, examining the wave forms generated during playing to find distinguishing markers for FTSD.

I am also investigating the use of altered mouthpiece rims that may have the effect of "tricking" the nervous system's sensory capabilities in such a way as to inhibit the debilitating spasms and tremors associated with dystonia. Such "tricking" is a well-documented treatment for other forms of dystonia. November 2003

For further information or to volunteer as a subject for our research, email me at Peter.Iltis@gordon.edu. For articles, see the journals Medical Problems of Performing Artists, and Movement Disorders. For web sites, see dystonia-foundation.org and (for musicians) dystonia-support.org/IA-FocalDystoniaInMusicians.htm.
Overcoming Performance Injuries

Janine Gaboury gave the impression of having it all together. She could play anything, and she could play all day. I heard her play in a tribute to her teacher, Verne Reynolds, at the 1997 IHS workshop in Kansas City and was impressed with her confident performance of technically demanding repertoire.

I heard Janine play a new work at the 2001 symposium in Kalamazoo and was again impressed with her solid playing, so it was a surprise to learn what had happened in the meantime. Janine had temporarily lost her ability to play the horn in what was believed to be focal dystonia and had to start over, rebuilding an embouchure after many months off the horn.

Fortunately, Janine stopped playing before she had done irreparable harm, partly because of the example of a trombonist colleague, Curtis Olson, who, experiencing similar symptoms, increased his practicing in an attempt to "play through" the difficulties and ended up losing his ability to play entirely. Janine would like to bring attention to the dangers of serious injury so that players will not ignore symptoms and will get help.

Focal dystonia is something of a mystery. It is difficult to diagnose, partly because there is no pain and nothing to show up on any test. Its symptoms are similar to writer's cramp; in fact, writer's cramp can be a form of dystonia. It is task-specific, meaning that you can do other things with the same muscles, but lose the ability to perform the one specific repetitive activity. There is a loss of endurance, which affects lip seal, for example. There is a rapid loss of facility, and it is suspected that the brain's motor program goes away. It happens more to men than to women, and more to people in mid-career than to the young.

No cure for focal dystonia has been found. No one is even sure exactly what occurs. Nerves may have been damaged. Sometimes drugs used to treat Parkinson's are effective. In the case of brass playing, it is very difficult to isolate which muscles are causing the problems. Therefore using injections of botulin toxins is not an option for treatment. It would be too easy to treat the wrong muscles, and to cause other damage. As with many other disorders, the earlier it is caught, the more options are available to treat it.

Many performance injuries can be overcome. It is important to pay attention to your body and not to ignore pain. Remember that what we do is a highly taxing athletic activity; taking proper care of oneself physically may be the most important preventative step that one can take over the course of a long career of playing. Janine suspects that many young players push themselves hard while neglecting their physical maintenance, and that the results don't show up until they are older.

Dr. Richard Lederman at the Cleveland Clinic has helped many musicians with these difficulties and has published an article on embouchure problems in Medical Problems of Performing Artists, Volume 16 No. 2.

Janine is talking about her experience because she feels that performance injury generally – not just dystonia – ought to be discussed more frequently and openly within our community. If the presentation on performance injury she conducted at the Kalamazoo symposium demonstrated anything, it was that hornists are widely interested and concerned with the subject, and that our meetings should deal with it more than they have in the past.  November 2001

Janine gave a presentation and performed at the 2002 Northeast Horn Workshop.
Thoughts on Testing a Horn

by Leo Sacchi

aced with a horn, or several horns, to evaluate, what tests will most quickly reveal important playing characteristics? Books and articles contain suggestions, most of which are valid. Here are tests not found elsewhere. They can be performed in any order. Every note in one’s playing range should be tested, but it is often not necessary to go so far since deficiencies soon become apparent.

1. Bend each note to see how far it goes before jumping to the next. The extent to which this can be done depends largely on the range, but the greater the amount of bend, the more space (band width) there is per note and the better the slurs. There is also a direct relationship between the band width and resistance. While I prefer an easier-slurring, freer-blowing horn, others may prefer one in which the notes lock in more, have more resistance, and, paradoxically, may be more energy-efficient. A compromise would likely be the best choice for most players.

2. Test the horn’s pitch stability by playing long tones with crescendo and diminuendo. Avoid making any adjustments to control the pitch as the dynamic changes, observing instead how much it might otherwise wander. Notes within and above the staff in particular should require little or no adjustment.

3. Play \textit{sfz} attacks, repeating each note several times. Response should be immediate, without hesitation or differing pitches. This test reveals bad notes and the horn’s potential for clean staccato. Also check if notes respond softly and immediately at the slightest puff of air or require a hammer-blow from the tongue to start.

If deficiencies are found from these tests but the horn seems to have potential, experimentation with different lead pipes might be a worthwhile investment.

The horn’s harmonic series must of course be well in tune, but only the octaves can be checked against a piano or tuner as the harmonics do not follow tempered tuning. The easiest interval to hear is the “true” fifth (4th to 6th harmonic, 6th to 9th, and 8th to 12th) by slowly playing the lower then the upper note. The slightest deviation of the upper note is noticeable. No slide should have to be pulled far to tune the horn.

Finally, while tone is usually a major factor in choosing a horn, what is apparent at first becomes less so in time as the player's normal tone creeps back in. Some horns change tone color more readily than others with slight changes in hand position. This characteristic could be a valuable asset and something to consider in testing. September 1997

Leo was a student of Philip Farkas, played first horn in the Chicago Civic Orchestra, then in Denver, first in North Carolina and Florida, and eighteen years as third in Houston. Since leaving the orchestra in 1982, he has continued in Houston with free lancing, teaching, chamber music, and research on historical music.
Choosing a Horn

"One man's trash is another man's treasure" sums up my conclusions on horn selection. We have all tried an instrument highly praised by another only to discover it not to our liking. One horn can not possibly work for everyone since each person's physical make-up is different.

About the only quality one could call objective in an instrument is how well it is made, but the craftsmanship doesn't always determine how well a horn will play for you. I recommend judging an instrument on comfortability, sound quality, and craftsmanship – in that order.

You may think that sound quality should be first in the list, but I believe that it is more important that the instrument play easily for you. A listener is more likely to notice bad intonation and missed notes than slight nuances of sound, and if the horn is close to your target sound, with practice you will attain the sound you want. However, if the sound is radically different from your ideal, this will not be the right horn for you.

Sometimes a conductor demands everyone in a section play on similar models. I do not belong to that school that believes certain models or makes to be the only choice. When everything is balanced, the performer is free to pursue the true goal of making music. 

Oil Your Valves!

One time I was invited to participate in a brass repair seminar. When it was my turn to speak, I walked out, said, "Oil your valves!" and left. Though the enthusiastic response was probably due more to the brevity of the speech than its content, the message was clear. As frequent oil changes are essential to long car engine life, so also frequent oiling of horn valves results in fewer chemical cleanings and valve rebuildings.

Oil, besides providing the necessary lubrication for the bearing surfaces, leaves a thin, corrosion-resistant coating on the interior of the tubing. Moisture, a mixture of water, saliva, and various acids, and other foreign matter, (pizza, Twinkies, ...) that causes the dreaded dezincification, or red rot.

A suggested oiling regime is:

1) Every other day put a few drops of valve oil into each slide, insert the slides (being careful to keep the oil from dripping out) and rotate the horn to wash the valves in oil; also blow a few drops through the lead pipe.

2) Weekly, put sewing machine or spindle bearing oil under the valve cap and rotor stop arm (the part to which the valve string is attached).

I have seen many horn twenty-five years and older in amazing shape due primarily to diligent oiling. Consider it an investment since your horn will keep or increase its value – an oiling a day keeps the repairperson away! 

Ken is proprietor of Pope Instrument Repair in Jamaica Plain. He attended Oberlin college and is active as a free-lance hornist in addition to having studied instrument repair.
Clean Your Brass Instrument!

Brass instruments can cause lung disease; spit can linger in instruments plumbing, causing mold and bacteria. So states an article by Susan Donaldson James on the ABC News website.

Brass musicians may unknowingly inhale mold and bacteria from their instruments, which may lead to the development of hypersensitivity pneumonitis (HP), according to a study published in Chest magazine. The allergic lung condition, which can develop into a more dangerous fibrosis, is characterized by shortness of breath and coughing.

Researchers identified cases of HP in a patient who played trombone. The patient had no other medical or environmental exposures that seemingly could have led to the condition.

Scientists at the University of Connecticut and University of Texas documented the case of the 35-year-old with "trombone player's lung." He had a nonproductive cough for 15 years with no other medical explanation. When he stopped playing for two weeks, the symptoms lifted. Later, his instrument was found to be contaminated.

"This isn't shocking, nor do I think it's very common," said Dr. Martin Blaser, a specialist in infectious diseases at New York University. "My guess is these are isolated events and somebody got unlucky. But maybe some instruments are brewing something and perhaps it's a harbinger of a bigger problem."

Hypersensitivity pneumonitis is a general term that refers to inflammation of lung tissue, according to the Mayo Clinic. Factors that can cause HP include exposure to airborne particles in the workplace, some drugs, radiation therapy, exposure to birds, and mold.

Symptoms include difficulty breathing, often with a cough, and sometimes fever, but specialized tests are necessary to make a diagnosis. "HP is just what it sounds like," said Blaser. "It's a hypersensitivity or allergic phenomenon that causes an inflammation of the lungs and has been described for a long time with many different causes." These allergies can be dangerous and progressive, causing fibrosis of the lung, but usually it's only an acute disease, according to Blaser.

Doctors have long known about hypersensitivities to the brass dust in metal factories, he said. "People always thought it was the metal itself, but maybe it's the mold."

When researchers examined the study subject's trombone, they found microbacteria. After immersing his instrument in 91% isopropyl alcohol, the subject's cough disappeared and he has been symptom-free since.

Educators advise students to rinse their mouths or brush their teeth before playing and to clean their mouthpieces and instruments frequently. Now comes another bit of advice.

"This is a rare problem if a problem at all," said Dr. Myron Cohen of the University of North Carolina. "Just clean the instruments." November 2010
Scrubbing Bubbles Clean Horns with Sound

by Kenneth Pope

Every now and then someone comes up with an idea that is so "perfect" that I'm overjoyed to see the person become fabulously rich.

A few years ago I read an article by an electrical technician who was disturbed by his industry's use of trichlorethylene and other ozone-eating compounds as the cleaner of circuit boards. According to the article, he sat at home at his kitchen table with a beer and a few dirty circuit boards trying to come up with a cleaner that was environmentally friendly and efficient. The first thing he thought of (perhaps while opening the fridge for a second beer) was lemon juice, and it worked! (And now we see citrus-based products in most of our cleaning solvents!)

What does this have to do with ultrasonic cleaning of instruments? Well, nothing, but it highlights the idea of rethinking an accepted process, challenging it, and coming up with an answer that is "perfect."

The musical repair industry has for decades used such chemicals as silver cyanide, chromic acid, muriatic acid, degreasers, and a myriad of other fluids to clean your horns, and these chemicals have worked well. However, in a nation that has become more environmentally aware, they have become the target of the EPA, and customers have helped to lead the charge by asking for something less hazardous to do the job.

Ultrasonic cleaners have been around for decades – jewelers clean jewelry in them, and now dentists use them because ultrasonic cleaners can get the dirt out of every nook and cranny, safely. This sonic tug-of-war is so powerful that in the 1960s the space industry used them to clean satellite parts and found that they could be made powerful enough to tear apart metals! In commercial applications, however, the power stays at a safe level.

Ultrasonics use soundwaves in water to create waves of compression and expansion. These cycles create microscopic bubbles that exist for a fraction of a second. During that brief moment, a partial vacuum is created, the pressure around the bubble rises (increasing the temperature to as high as 5000°C – the temperature on the surface of the sun!), the bubble pops, and a jet of liquid rushes in at a fast rate that dissipates the heat and cleans the surface.

In essence these truly are 'scrubbing bubbles,' and I love the idea of a musical instrument being cleaned by sound waves! ✨ September 2003

In addition to building and repairing brass instruments, Ken is a free-lancer whose gigs have included everything from popular artists to tours with the BSO and Pittsburg. He exhibits at horn workshops and has served on the IHS Advisory Council. See poperepair.com.

In addition to building and repairing brass instruments, Ken is a free-lancer whose gigs have included everything from popular artists to tours with the BSO and Pittsburg. He exhibits at horn workshops and has served on the IHS Advisory Council. See poperepair.com.
Why Do My Valves Click?

by Robert Osmun

We've all heard it – the annoying clatter of noisy valves. The sound can range from merely annoying to downright disastrous.

Possible sources for the noise are loose stop plate or stop arm retaining screws, misaligned valves that allow the stop arm to hit the stop plate, bent linkages that hit the stop arm, worn mechanical linkages, or unsoldered indexing pins. The most common source is end play.

End play is excess clearance in a valve assembly that allows the rotor to move vertically in its casing. When you press a valve lever, it puts pressure on the rotor shaft, which turns. When it has turned as far as it can, it still responds to the pressure, so it moves up in the casing. When the rotor moves upward as far as it can, it smacks into the thrust bearing on the bearing plate, producing a click.

At one time, especially in the US, makers were casual about end play. Many horns arrived with significant vertical movement in the valves, and no one thought much about it. As better-made European instruments became more widely available, people realized that noisy valves were not something they had to put up with, and American makers responded with much better-fitting valves.

Another source of end play is wear. Especially when valves are not properly cared for, mechanical wear can cause significant vertical play in only a few years. The longer this goes uncorrected, the more the problem is exacerbated. One or two thousandths of an inch can cause problems; older instruments with ten or twelve thousandths are not uncommon.

End play is adjusted by hand in the assembly process, an adjustment that requires skill. Some manufacturers build instruments with too little end play. The bearing plate, if seated all the way down into the casing, causes the valve to bind. The assembler puts the valves together and taps the end of the rotor shaft to push the bearing plate out enough so the valve turns. With skill, the valves remain tight, but in the wrong hands, the result can be a disaster.

The purpose of the top cap is to hold the bearing plate down. If the threads are too long, the cap rests on the outside of the casing rather than the plate. This creates a gap that allows the bearing plate to move up when the rotor reaches the end of its rotation and pushes up against the bearing plate.

To solve end play, first try oil. Use a bearing oil specifically made for musical instruments. If oiling doesn't help, stronger measures are required. End play is corrected by machining off the underside of the bearing plate where it sits on the casing. This moves the thrust bearing lower in the casing and takes up the excess play. If the cap doesn't hold down the plate, the threads are shortened until the cap sits on the bearing plate instead of the outside of the casing.

Once properly adjusted, valves that are well maintained should retain their adjustment for years. So, if your valves have any problems, get them fixed and then keep them oiled. November 2009

Bob is proprietor of Osmun Music (osmun.com). He apprenticed with Bill Tottle while still a student at NEC and worked under Jerry Lehninik at Schilke in Chicago. He has served on the IHS Advisory Council.
How Horn Bells Are Cut

by John Q. Ericson

This is very much in the "don't try this at home" category, but as my students often ask how bells are cut, I know there is interest in how this is done.

My doctoral program at Indiana University required that I have two minor fields, and I was lucky enough to be able to design a special minor in Brass Instrument Design and Construction to fulfill part of this requirement, working closely with the well-known natural horn maker and player Richard Seraphinoff. Besides making a natural horn with his help that really turned out quite well (thank you, Rick!) and also making several lead pipes (one I made is actually mounted on the horn in the photo) I also was able, with Rick in the shop to double check my work, cut the bell on my Yamaha 667.

The short version of the process is this. You unsolder the braces and joint between the bell tail and the first branch to separate the bell from rest of the horn. The next step is the most critical: solder the male ring on, absolutely perfectly lined up. I used Alexander rings. After the ring is solidly soldered on, use a razor saw (next to the lead pipe in the photo) and carefully cut the bell. If you are at all squeamish, you won't want to see the cut in progress. The photo was taken just after cutting the bell.

Next, solder the female ring on the bell tail and reassemble the horn. The process is in a sense quite straightforward repair work, but much care must be exercised, and it does take at least a day of solid work in a well-equipped shop to accomplish.

I later cut the bells on two other horns I owned, but I have now officially retired from cutting bells! This really is a job for a pro. I have immense respect for craftsmen who make horns. It is truly an art.

In terms of playing qualities, I have found that either the horn felt essentially the same or perhaps better after cutting the bell. I have not personally noted any negative results in the playing qualities of cut bell instruments.

If you are considering having your bell cut, it could be a great investment. It certainly makes travel easier. But don't cut that bell yourself! ✡ November 2002

John has earned degrees from Emporia State, Eastman, and Indiana University. He is professor of horn at Arizona State University and a winner of the IHS 2000 Harold Meek Memorial Award. See public.asu.edu/~jqeric.
Piccolo Horn or Corno da Caccia?

Should it be called "piccolo horn" or "corno da caccia"? Doug Myers and Greg Whitaker use both terms. In Europe, corno da caccia is the term used, and many leading trumpet players have one. It is a high B-flat instrument, the same length as a standard trumpet. IHS members Doug and Greg started their careers as trumpet players, but are playing horn more as time goes on. Piccolo horn, a term suggested by natural horn pioneer Lowell Greer, describes it best, according to Doug.

However, you can't call it a "natural horn" because the modern version has valves. It comes from a tradition earlier than the hand horn and is used for Baroque and pre-Classical composers such as Bach, Handel, Telemann, and Leopold Mozart. It is played without the hand in the bell, which results in a distinctive sound, quite different from either the natural or modern horn. Doug and Greg's instruments are made by Thein in Bremen, Germany.

The tessitura of these horns is quite high, which allows tackling the high Baroque parts. Bells of different sizes favor different ranges – smaller bells for primo (higher) parts and larger bells for secondo (lower) parts.

The mouthpieces are horn mouthpieces. Doug plays a Bach 10 and Greg a Schmidt from Klingental in the former East Germany. A narrow bore helps get the high notes (up to D concert above the staff!!), and a bigger backbore helps keep the sound like a horn.

Doug and Greg are old friends, having played together at Emmanuel Music (a cantata and concert series at Emmanuel Church in Boston) from its early days. Music Director Craig Smith had them play both trumpet and horn parts. In October 2005, they played with the Boston Classical Orchestra. The Handel concerto is particularly interesting, according to Doug. Handel wrote two horn concertos; this one is known as the "Water Music Concerto," and the second movement was found in the Yale Library, separate from the other movements.

The duo are the only piccolo horn players in the US as far as they know, and they play concerts in diverse venues, enabling audiences to hear this new instrument and music not heard before. They perform 20 to 30 concerts a year, and growing, and having lots of fun doing it.  

September 2005
To Triple Horn or Not
by Philip Myers and Frøydis Ree Wekre

Pro

I started playing my Engelbert Schmidt triple horn almost by accident. I tried the horn at IHS workshops, borrowed one to perform a concerto, then ordered one as a descant. But when I took it to the job, the reaction I got from the orchestra was overwhelmingly positive, and the more I played it, the more I liked it.

After eight years using the triple full-time with the orchestra, I notice more (1) security in the high range, (2) clarity in technical passages, and (3) power and flexibility in middle and low registers.

Horn players deal with age-related changes, but some changes are required no matter what age when changing from full-time double horn to triple because the triple requires less (1) air, (2) tongue, and (3) embouchure.

Back in the 1960s, the sound and intonation of the high F side was not particularly pleasant. But we are in a new era now where horn makers have gotten the intonation much better and the sound quite even. On a day-to-day basis, I play everything above written second line G on the high F horn. ❖ November 2005

Philip Myers, solo horn of the New York Philharmonic, from The Horn Player, April 2004.

Con

The high F horn was introduced in the 1960s. At first it was welcomed by many players as the solution to all their problems. Eventually players realized that they could miss notes on the high horn as well, those clams being far less discreet than those on longer horns; also, the sound was often thinner and less rich in overtones.

I understand the excitement of getting more fingering options and another string on the otherwise two-stringed double horn. I also see the need for these instruments for the specialists of today, the ones who have conquered the full range to the fifth above c””. However, I do not believe that the rest of us will be taking to the triple – and the triple only – because it supposedly can cover everything.

The double horn is already an acoustical compromise, and the triple much more so. Players with three horns at hand tend to choose the shortest option more and more often, even if the sound is not always the most suitable for the music in question. The quick fix is all too tempting. The players will try to ignore possible sound discrepancies, but the audiences may notice. ❖ November 2005

Frøydis Ree Wekre, professor, Norwegian Academy of Music (now retired), from a letter in The Horn Call, May 2005.
Finke: Fifty Years of Making Brass Instruments

Fifty years ago, Johannes Finke's father turned from playing trumpet in a chamber orchestra to manufacturing historical brass instruments such as natural trumpets, clarino trumpets, and sackbuts. Johannes now carries on the family business with his father, Helmut, still making historical instruments but specializing in custom horns since the 70's. Johannes visited Osmun Music in October 2000 to display his instruments and talk with customers.

Johannes is an amateur horn player, but his work schedule, with long days and much traveling, leaves little time for practicing. Johannes trained seriously for horn making, serving an apprenticeship with his father, studying materials science and manufacturing processes at a technical school, attending a brass instrument course in Mittenwald, Germany, and passing the guild's master's exam.

"My father was the first brass instrument maker to combine acoustical research with the traditional style and tone of the horn," explains Johannes. "He contacted the technical institute at Brunswick in the early 60s to find out how to improve intonation and response to meet the demands of players. Other makers laughed at my father then, but now they are all using the technology, too." Finke Horns focuses on the first twelve harmonics of the horn, striving to produce even intonation and to make playing easy over the whole range of the instrument.

"We aim for our instruments to have a soft, dark sound," Johannes continues. Finke ships three different leadpipes with each instrument, but although the different tapers produce different playing qualities, the result is still round and dark. "Other innovations are plastic/carbon valves for lighter, faster valve action. This type of material is used in aircraft industries and is very strong. We use only mechanical linkages and a shorter stroke to give a more direct feeling in the valves." They also consider ergonomical factors, making sure that the horn is light, well balanced, and feels good in the hands.

Johannes seems proudest of the fact that each horn is not only handmade, but also custom made. "Every aspect of the horn is tailored to the particular customer," he says, "and our prices are very competitive with other handmade horns." The workshop has five employees.

Johannes took some horns to the 2000 IHS workshop in China to display. Unexpectedly, every one was sold. He enjoyed visiting China and cruising in the Three Gorges. He sees a good market ahead in China. He also likes Boston and plans to return soon. November 2000

Learn more about Finke Horns at finkehorns.de.
Lawson Horns Moves North

People hear that Walter Lawson is retiring and they wonder, "Is Lawson Horns going out of business?" Kendall Betts is able to answer with a resounding "No" because he has bought the business and is moving it to northern New Hampshire to carry on.

For those who don't know Lawson Brass Instruments, the shop is located in Boonsboro MD and is renowned for its high quality horns and perhaps even more for its research into the acoustics of horns. Walter Lawson and his sons have published articles for the Acoustic Society of America and The Horn Call. The results have been applied to designing their mouthpieces, leadpipes, first branches, bell tapers, alloys, and annealing. Their instruments are played by numerous professionals and amateurs.

Kendall has played Lawson horns since the beginning. "They helped me play my best," he says, "helped me make a living playing for 40 years." He has known Walter since 1965 and "worked with them through the whole process." Kendall studied at Interlochen and Curtis and was principal horn in the Minnesota Orchestra for 25 years, retiring in 2004. He had spent summers in northern New Hampshire since the 1970s, performing regularly with the North Country Chamber Players, and always planned to move there when he retired.

"I need something to do in retirement," says Kendall. "I teach part-time at the University of New Hampshire, which I enjoy, but I wouldn't want to teach full-time." At first, Kendall and the Lawsons thought about starting a satellite operation, but then the Lawsons decided to sell. Kendall, through contacts, found a bank to work with him and the Lawsons for a smooth transition.

"Walter is retiring, although he'll still make mouthpieces. None of his sons wanted to take over," says Kendall. He has already hired several new employees and is looking for a few more. Bruce and his brother Paul are helping with the transition and training Kendall and his employees.

Kendall assures everyone that he will maintain the Lawson tradition of acoustical innovation, quality design and manufacture, and friendly customer service, including repair and customization. He points out that the new shop will be right off I-93 in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, three hours from Boston. Technicians looking for employment are encouraged to contact Kendall. ❖ May 2007

See lawsonhorns.com. Walter Lawson died in 2007; his biography on the IHS website under Honorary Members.
Wagner Tuba

As a horn player, you have undoubtedly heard of the Wagner tuba. But how much do you know about it, and have you actually played one?

First, is it really a tuba? No, it's a horn. Although it is upright like a tuba and about the size of a euphonium, it is pitched in F or B-flat or both, uses a horn mouthpiece, the valves are operated with the left hand, and horn players double on them. They are usually used in pairs or as a quartet, with B-flat parts high (tenor) and F parts low (bass). Often four horn players (five through eight in a symphony section) alternate between the horn and the Wagner tuba. The sound of the instrument is similar to that of the horn, but mellow, and is noted for its nobility and dignity.

Issues with Wagner tubas include notation, intonation, and availability of instruments. Parts are often notated oddly (tenor tuba parts in B-flat with unusual key signatures, for example), although most publications now are in standard F horn. Wagner used three different systems, and later composers used all those systems. Most players have no instruction on the instrument and have to work out the considerable intonation problems for themselves. The instruments are expensive, not uniformly of high quality, and not readily available for the occasional player.

The history of the Wagner tuba is not long. Wagner was writing Das Rheingold in 1853 and wanted an instrument that would bridge the gap in tone between trombones and horns. It is not clear what instruments were used in the early performances of the Ring; the premiere of Das Rheingold in 1869 likely used military instruments. The first quartet of Wagner tubas, it is generally agreed, was manufactured by C.W. Moritz of Berlin for Bayreuth in 1877.

Bruckner used quartets of Wagner tubas in his later symphonies. Stravinsky called for a pair in Rite of Spring. Richard Strauss, Arnold Schoenberg, and Béla Bartók also wrote for the instrument. A few more recent composers have called for it, sometimes in non-traditional combinations or as a solo instrument.

William Melton, a member of the Sinfonie Orchester Aachen (Germany) since 1982, wrote a series of articles called "Greetings from Heaven or Demonic Noise?" for The Horn Call starting in 2001. The articles are now a book, The Wagner Tuba: A History, from edition ebenos.


Laurel Ohlson, a member of the National Symphony horn section and a Wagner tuba specialist, was at the 2012 Northeast Horn Workshop to instruct and answer questions in a "Wagner Tuba Room" where attendees could try out a full complement of Fs and B-flats. These Wagner tubas belong to Arizona State University.
It was about six years ago, as I recall. I was sitting in my wind quintet in the great hall of an elegant old castle performing for a small and intimate audience of chamber music lovers. I can't remember the piece, but I do remember having just finished an exposed muted passage after which the mute had to be quickly removed to play unmuted in a transparent pp section. I had carefully and silently placed my metallic mute on its side on the stone floor and begun playing when, to my horror, I noticed a metallic rolling sound. Yes, on the uneven stone floor, the mute rolled until it was beyond my reach. I was helpless to stop it, and the snickers of the audience almost got to the whole quintet. We survived, but that was the last straw for me – I had to find a solution!

I began to give the situation serious consideration and realized that other aspects of mute use also present problems. I remembered kicking my mute over, and worse still, kicking over a colleague's mute. I had witnessed similar mute fiascoes at major symphony orchestras. Once I watched from behind an orchestra as the second horn held the principal's mute a couple of inches from his bell hand; at the right moment, the principal reached swiftly to the right, grabbed the mute without looking and plunged it into the bell without missing a note. With that image in mind, the seed of a solution began to grow.

What I needed was a mute-holding holster of some kind to attach to my chair. It needed to hold both mutes securely and allow me to remove and insert the mutes without having to move much or look at them. I'd like to have oil and tools handy during rehearsals and concerts. And if my device could allow for easy storage and transport, why not include that in the design as well?

Finally, what about a name for the device? After considering several unsatisfactory possibilities, it came to me – since we are often directed to use mutes by the command mit dämpfer, why not just flip the words around? It is a mute mitt, so call it a Dämpfer Mitt.

Now, five years later [1996], through the help of many product development people and a fair dose of perseverance, the Mitt actually exists. I have to say that the project has been extremely satisfying to work on. What started out as a personal playing problem has led to a solution that not only solves my own troubles, but just may serve the community of horn players on a much broader scale. ♦ November 1996

Peter teaches exercise physiology at Gordon College. Contact him at Peter.Iltis@gordon.edu.
Keeping the Horn from Sliding off Your Knee

by Philip Myers

For several years now I have been using a sheet of rubber on my leg to keep the horn from sliding around. I had tried using a chamois and a wash cloth, but while I found both effective in cleaning the horn, neither kept my horn from sliding off my knee.

This became a problem in 1982 when two things happened: (1) I gained weight, which moved the horn farther out on my leg, and therefore (2) I had to close my hand in the bell more than I wanted to just to keep the horn on my leg. This accidental closing of the hand seemed to have a bad effect on my attacks and sound. It took me a while to realize my right hand was the culprit, but then I knew I had to find something that would hold the horn by itself without me having to use my right hand to do it.

What I found was the kind of rubber that is used on a ping pong paddle. It is purposely made real grippy and the horn just won’t slide around on it. I could put my right hand on top of my head now and the horn wouldn’t slide.

There are several kinds of ping pong rubber; what I use is; pips out, 1.5 mm, black, usually Chinese.

Pips out means that the pimples are facing out. Pips in means the pimples are facing in and the rubber is smooth and flat, but for me that type deteriorates.

The foam comes in several thicknesses: none, 1 mm, 1.5 mm, 2 mm, sometime more. I’ve have tried them all and I now usually get the 1.5 mm because it conforms to the shape of the leg well but also is substantial enough to hold up. I put the rubber in the bell of the horn when I put it in the case with the pips side out to help the rubber get used to wrapping in that direction so it fits the leg.

I usually get the black color because I think that maybe that in an orchestra full of tuxes or tails, red or blue might look a little crazy. I buy the Chinese brands because they seem to hold up better than the Japanese brands. I get about nine months out of a sheet of rubber, if I don’t lose it (a regular problem for me).

All of this can be seen and purchased at your local sporting goods store or at paddlepalace.com. You want only the rubber sheet, not the paddle.

On the website, click store, 1) rubber sheets, 2) Pips Out Rubber Sheets, 3) Double Happiness Pips Out Rubber, PF4 651 - attack pips, then black, 1.5 and place the order for a cost of $20 a piece. No, I don’t know the owner; you are donating nothing to Phil Myers, I promise.

Better get two; once you get used to how secure this makes the horn feel on your leg, you’ll be hooked. I keep extras at work, extras at home, and take extras on tour.

I hope someone finds this helpful. I’ve often wondered if it would also help young players for whom the horn still feels quite large. ❖ December 1998

Phil Myers is Principal horn of the New York Philharmonic and has appeared at many horn workshops.
On or Off the Leg?

by Howard Hilliard

The choice between playing the horn with the bell on or off the leg is a topic that gives rise to strong opinions. Is one way better than the other?

Prior to the development of the double horn, it was unusual to play the single horn on the leg. Anton Horner began playing a Kruspe double horn in 1900 and soon had the Horner Model Kruspe built to his specifications. He imported and sold this model until World War II. The design was copied by several other makers, most notably for the Conn 8D. Horner was a leading horn player in Philadelphia and a teacher who advocated playing the large double horn on the leg; his influence as a teacher was amplified through his association with Curtis Institute.

It may seem strange for us to read in The Art of French Horn Playing by Phillip Farkas about "a new method of holding the horn while sitting, with the bottom edge of the bell resting on the outside of the thigh." Farkas refers specifically to the heavier repertoire for horn that brought on the adoption of the double horn. "Today it is very fatiguing, if not impossible, for the average player to hold the horn 'free' for a long day's work. The conception of horn tone has also changed over the years. Holding the horn 'free' produced a bright, clear tone. Now the accepted horn tone has a more dark, covered quality."

A generation or two ago, world-class teachers most likely spent the majority of their lives performing in orchestras. Their status was derived from the fact that they prepared students to play in a symphonic, operatic, Broadway, or studio orchestra. It was acceptable for a professional soloist to play sitting down in the US. Now we have reverted to the previous practice of expecting horn soloists to play standing up.

Playing off the leg can have liberating effects. The height of the chair does not dictate the posture. The transition to playing standing up is virtually seamless and you don't need a chair of any kind to practice. Another benefit is the ability to pivot the mouthpiece.

More and more horn players play both on and off the leg, depending on the circumstances, giving a surprising number of reasons for playing on the knee. Some find it easier to play low notes on the leg or feel the sound is more appropriate for low notes. On the lowest notes of the horn, the hand is not needed in the bell for intonation. A favorite trick of low horn players to get some extra sound in loud tutti passages is taking the hand out of the bell altogether, which is difficult when holding the bell off the leg.

Those who prefer the sound with the hand on the bottom of the bell have no choice but to play on the leg. Some players put the bell on the leg only for long concerts or operas. Many play on the leg or use support devices to practice longer. Some might play a triple horn (but not their double) on the leg. Others play on the leg to produce a feeling of total playing security but only when they have a challenging passage or piece. Sometimes the motive is to match the section leader. Still others are always in a state of flux and experimentation and use variation as an impetus to improvement.

Differences in bell position produce differences in sound. For most horn players, the sound tends to be clearer and brighter and have more presence off the leg. What is your preference? May 2011

Howard Hilliard earned a DMA at the University of North Texas. He freelances and teaches in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. See the complete article in the May 2011 issue of The Horn Call.