



VOL 19 #3 - AUTUMN 2022 - THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FROM THE BRITISH HORN SOCIETY

THE HORN PLAYER



Featuring

**Tom Fisher's F single for
Carsten Williams**

Bob Ashworth retires

Letty Stott on *Northman*

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Dear members,

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *The Horn Player* magazine.

It was great to see so many of you in Birmingham at the first in-person festival for three years. What a great event it was! For those who couldn't make it, there will be a feature in the next magazine and on the website.

There are lots of great articles and interviews for you to catch up on in this edition, including an interview with Bob Ashworth on his retirement from Opera North after 44 years, and a review of the IHS festival. Although national and international celebrations of the horn are great occasions, we also need to focus on more local events. The BHS was pleased to support the Bromley Horn Day in September which was attended by over 50 horn players. If you would like us to support your horn event, then please let us know.

We also hope to see many of you at our online workshops which will continue next year.

Enjoy reading!

Best wishes,

Lindsey Stoker
Chair, British Horn Society

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Regulars

- 6 News
- 22 Experts on Excerpts
- 28 Community Focus
- 32 Ask Heidi
- 34 Teaching Notes
- 36 Horn Health Matters
- 38 CD Reviews
- 39 Comment
- 40 Obituaries
- 43 Crossword by "Tacet"

Features

- 7 Bob Ashworth
- 10 The Singularity
- 13 "Corno not Corona continued..."
- 14 Felix Klieser
- 16 *The Northman*
- 18 IHS54
- 20 William Lightman
- 24 From the Archives
- 26 Eddie Chapman (part 3)
- 30 NYO 1948
- 33 GALSI

Dear reader,

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 issue of *The Horn Player*.

In our last edition we featured the new Woodhead & Woodhead double horn, and we continue our focus on British horn makers with Tom Fisher, a name that is familiar to many of you as a horn repairer. The story of how a single F horn came to be used in a world-class British orchestra is as interesting as it is surprising (it is 2022 after all, not 1922!). I hope that after reading the article, many of you will be “horn-spotting” next time you watch the Philharmonia.

It is my sincere hope that reading this magazine inspires you to go and listen to the wonderful horn players that this country has produced. There are fabulous recordings available, but nothing beats the live experience. I think most of us would agree that this country is not currently the envy of the world for many reasons, but we do still have some of the finest musicians on the planet. Please support them where you can!

Keep safe and happy reading,

Best wishes,

Richard Steggall (Editor and publisher)

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Dear fellow horn enthusiasts,

I hope this issue finds you well and enjoying your playing and listening.

I took great pleasure in putting my articles together for this magazine. Watching Felix Klier's masterclass was fascinating; it's always fun to see what another horn player picks up on. He clearly has a very creative mind and I loved the way he looked for musical solutions to the problems that the horn loves to throw our way.

I was also really delighted to be able to feature my old horn teacher, Bob Ashworth, following his recent retirement from Opera North. He taught me at music college and has always been wonderfully supportive and someone to “geek out” with about playing and equipment.

Speaking of geeking out, I do hope lots of you managed to make it to Birmingham for our annual festival and are now buoyed with enthusiasm and inspiration after some wonderful playing from Premsyl and Elspeth!

Best wishes,

Ed Lockwood (Co-editor)

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A huge thank you to this issue's contributors:

**Bob Ashworth
Sue Baxendale
Tony Catterick
Tom Fisher
Kelly Haines
John Humphries
Nivanthi Karunaratne
Chris Leyland “Tacet”
Robert Parker
Anneke Scott
Simon de Souza
Letty Stott
Carsten Williams
Heidi Woodhead**

And particular thanks to our **Sub-editor Paul Cott**. “One of the most pedantic horn players of his generation”.



News

Wells Cathedral School Horn Day

On Sunday 9th October, 36 enthusiastic young horn players descended on the beautiful city of Wells for a fun day of horn-playing activities. In the shadow of the historic cathedral, they were tutored by long-time Wells specialist horn teacher Simon de Souza and two of his former Wells students, Ed Griffiths, co-principal horn at Welsh National Opera and Dave Oxley, a principal West End player. The repertoire covered in various graded groups ranged from *Horn Quartz* by Richard Bissill, through Johann Strauss's *Radetzky March* to Ted Chance's exhilarating *fanfare.cor*.

The attendees ranged from one who had only been playing for four months to conservatoire audition candidates, and activities included performance clinics, maintenance classes, warm-ups and masterclasses. The tutors performed three of Anton Reicha's charming trios, and Dave

amazed everyone with *Okukoowoola Kw'Ekkondeere* by Justinian Tamusuza. This called for quarter tones, playing with slides removed, multiphonics and playing a rhythmic accompaniment on an egg shaker! Meanwhile Ed gave beautiful renditions of Glazunov's *Réverie* and Abbott's *Alla Caccia*, repertoire that some of the students had played, so they could feel very connected to his performance. In the finale of the day all present took on Richard Bissill's *Titanic Fantasy* where Dave demonstrated his prowess with the

conductor's baton, Simon underpinned all with his fundamental Ds and Ed again shone with his glorious top Ds! It would be fair to say the thoroughly partisan audience loved it. Steve Flower of Paxmans brought instruments for the participants to try, and an array of other accessories.

It was a delight to be back in person after missing two years, and we're looking forward to the next event next year!

Simon de Souza



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- The Michael Jackson Scheme holds a number of fine quality horns which the BHS will loan to you for a maximum of two academic years

What you need to know.

- Applications are accepted from 1st January to 1st May each year. Your application must be with the Grants and Donations Officer by 1st May at the latest, and any applications outside of these dates will be held over to the next year.
- BHS Trustees consider applications at the following June/July meeting and awards are made at that point.

Full information will be available on the BHS website from 1st January 2023

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Bob Ashworth



After over 40 years as principal horn, **Bob Ashworth** has just retired from Opera North. **Ed Lockwood** met up with his former teacher to find out more about his illustrious career.

I have known Bob for something in the region of 35 years now. His influence over me began slightly earlier though, because he also taught my first teacher, Nic Firth. We first met at a Summer School in Harrogate where he coached the horns and gave me a lesson or two. The most notable event on that occasion was him trying my horn (an ancient Lidl double) and realising that my terrible sound may not have been entirely my fault. He produced a pull-through from his case and removed the largest piece of sludge I have ever seen from a horn. It had always been somebody's first double and I suspect that it had probably never been cleaned! Every time I do it now, I am always a little bit disappointed.

A few years later, he taught me at the Royal Northern College of Music. I had four very enjoyable years where he helped shape my ideas on playing. I went to the Northern with rather a young man's view on the horn's role, and we didn't always agree stylistically, but looking back, I can now see that he played the long game and gently shepherded me towards a more rounded perspective. To this day, I find myself using his words in my own teaching, and I suspect that there may also be traces of Sydney Coulston in there too (see later). Since that time, he has always been on the end of the phone to answer questions if needed, and it was lovely to sit next to him again recently during a COVID-doomed performance of Richard Strauss's opera, *Elektra*.

Bob has just retired from Opera North where he was Principal Horn for over 40 years. It gives me tremendous pleasure to be able to feature him in this magazine and I hope you enjoy learning a little more about him. I know we all wish him well as a community, but he is at pains to point out that he has only retired from Opera North!

It must feel very odd leaving a job after 40-plus years. Was it a big wrench, or did it feel like the right time?

I've been thinking about it for several years on and off. Obviously no-one wants to stay on forever, and I had been telling myself that, having done it for so long, I didn't think it would be an issue. When I looked at the schedule for the coming season, the only piece I'd not done before was Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* and, initially, I thought I would like to play that and also do Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* one last time. But the more I thought about it, I realised that there was no point in putting it off any longer. Time for other things while I still have some energy. So yes, it was a big decision but hasn't felt like a wrench and it did feel as if it was the right time. I didn't want to make any fuss about it so managed a relatively quiet exit and am not regretting it in the slightest.

Tell us a little about your early life before college and Opera North.

Well, I started playing the horn aged 11 and played in my local (Salford) youth orchestra and, before very long, in the Salford Symphony Orchestra. The then Principal Horn, Godfrey Stafford (who played in the Manchester Police Band), was very helpful to me when I was thrown in at the deep end with transposition! I was initially taught by the local peripatetic teacher Bill Spry (I still have the Bach 7 mouthpiece he gave me) but soon had lessons in school from John Butterworth (briefly) and then Ken Monks (then 2nd horn in the BBC Philharmonic). Sometimes I had a lesson with Ken at Chetham's, or at the Northern School of Music which is where I first met Xenophon Kelsey and Peter Davies. As a schoolboy I was in awe of these players. One of the extras who played with the Salford Symphony Orchestra was a pupil of Syd Coulston's, Andy Jones, who amazed me with his consistent nailing of the 3rd horn part in Dvořák 9. Anyway, I seemed to progress quite quickly and was playing in quite a lot of the amateur operatic scene in Manchester, with my father ferrying me around. So I had played Figaro, Così, Aida, Merry Widow, etc., before even going to college. I was such a horn geek (still am!), avidly collecting LPs and music and hand-writing out the horn parts to the Mozart concertos, Brahms trio, Beethoven's symphonies, Strauss's tone poems, and Mahler's *Fifth Symphony* – I still have the books. After a couple of years in the National Youth Orchestra (despite detached retinas along the way), I was all set to go to the Guildhall School of Music to study with Tony Halstead when Ken Monks asked me one day why I hadn't applied to the Royal Manchester College of Music (soon to be the Royal Northern College). He arranged for a late audition with Syd Coulston, for whom I played only a few bars of Mozart's *Concerto No. 2* before he stopped me and said yes, I could have a place on the new RNCM course starting in September 1973.

Everyone who was taught by Syd speaks about him with tremendous warmth. Can you talk about his influence on you as a player and teacher?

Syd was a legend. A strong character, always with a twinkle in his eye. At this stage I wasn't at all aware of his stature as a player or teacher or of his background story. A rear-gunner in Lancaster bombers in the war; surviving a serious car crash leaving him with only one lung; deep friendship with Dennis Brain; taught by Franz Paersch; passion for golf, etc.: none of this I knew. And I never heard him play live – as a schoolboy I didn't really go to concerts – the mid-day ones given by the BBC Northern Orchestra or the evening ones by the Halle orchestra – stupid, looking back now; most of the listening I'd done was on Radio 3 or on LPs. At the time that I was a student with Syd, he was just about at the end of his playing career and he rarely played in lessons. Once, I remember him taking me through a tricky bit of *Till Eulenspiegel*. He just picked up the horn (having not played at all), played along flawlessly with great panache, and put the horn down again, leaving me quite stunned.

His method was quite simple: working through Kopprasch and Maxime-Alphonse studies and exercises from the Otto Langey *Tutor*, firstly setting a different study each week, along with a piece of solo repertoire, with the second lesson of the week always featuring orchestral excerpts from his famous hand-written black folder (now sadly lost) and some sight-reading. He was very keen on sight-reading with transposition – something

that stuck with me. I know that his method didn't work for everyone, and I realise now that there were limitations to his approach, but he certainly did produce some notable players, and encouraged people to teach themselves. I wish now that I'd asked him far more questions about his life and career. I hope that in my own teaching I've managed to keep some of Syd's spirit and ethos alive.

You were a founder member of Opera North: that must have been a very exciting time. What was your first patch as a company, and who was in the original section?

Whilst at college I'd been lucky enough to pick up lots of freelance work (in Manchester, Birmingham, Belfast and Newcastle), but when this new opportunity arose to form a brand-new company, I thought I'd better have a shot at it. I did two auditions: the first at the RNCM (for the founding conductor David Lloyd-Jones and the orchestral manager Ian Killik) and the second in the bar at Sadler's Wells (or was it the Leeds Grand?) for Alan Civil. I was told that mine was the second appointment to the orchestra after that of the leader David Greed. It was a very exciting time, and the orchestra was very young, learning day-by-day. The original section was me, Mark Brook, Stuart Bower and Paul Kampen. The first orchestral rehearsal was in the dubious surroundings of the City Varieties Theatre, and we played the overture to *Die Meistersinger*. The first opera that was performed by the company in Leeds Grand Theatre was *Samson and Delilah* by Saint-Saëns. There was no band room in those days, and the space behind the stage was very basic, filthy and down-right dangerous, although thankfully no one ever did fall into the massive void underneath the stage!

You did a huge number of big operas without a bumper. Any advice on playing 1st horn on your own?

Until we started doing operas in concert format, the only opera for which I really had a bumper was Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*, but we did use six horns for *Die Meistersinger*, sharing out the parts a bit. I remember having contact with Ian Harper, who was then at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, to ask for advice on playing *Die Meistersinger*, and was told that they had an entirely new horn section for Act 3! I had a bumper when we did *Tristan* in concert, and for the *Ring* I had a bumper for *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* (but not for *Das Rheingold* or *Die Walküre*!). As a 1st horn in the pit, most operas have only one or two places where it gets demanding in terms of stamina. Dynamics are not usually as loud as some symphonic writing, and I suppose I just enjoyed the challenge – so satisfying. It's akin to the athletic training and competitions I used to do as a teenager – lots of sprinting and weight training. I much prefer to be concentrating on doing it myself, focusing and pacing myself when necessary. I suppose I developed a very strong embouchure in my student days as I used to practise for hours and play lots of duets with Mark Brook. So, yes, put in the ground work while you can and while you have the time. It's not so easy later on when other commitments crowd in. Stay focused.

Can you single out any particular highlights within the company and away from it? And is there anything that you would have loved to play but missed out on?

The *Ring* cycle has to go down as the highlight but there are many other operas too that I've loved playing: all the Mozarts, *Fidelio*, *Hansel and Gretel*, all the Puccinis, Janáček's *Káťa Kabanová*, Britten's *Billy Budd* and *Peter Grimes*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *Tannhäuser*, *Flying Dutchman*, *Boris Godunov*, Prokofiev's *Love for Three Oranges*, Handel's *Julius Caesar*, Weber's *Der Freischütz* – the list goes on and on! I would have loved another go at Strauss's *Daphne*, *Arabella*, *Der Rosenkavalier* or *Salome* – one of my favourite operas. I remember as a college student being inspired by the Vienna Phil's recording with Solti (and Birgit Nilsson), and always assumed it was the incomparable Roland Berger on 1st horn – that last high-C entry! Roland Berger's "Siegfried's Horn Call" from the Solti *Ring* cycle is still unsurpassed in my opinion. I wish I'd had the courage to play it on the F side! Marching across the back of the stage playing Wagner tuba in Benedict Mason's *Playing Away* in Munich was an unforgettable and hilarious moment! There are still plenty of operas that I've not come across and of course, despite the orchestra's other role giving symphony concerts, there's plenty of orchestral repertoire that I've missed out on. But you can't play everything, and I'm glad that I've got to know more operatic repertoire than symphonic. I think that often operatic music has more to say and has more depth. I suppose I wish I'd had the opportunity to do a few more concertos; when they are so few and far between, they become quite daunting. Away from Opera North, a highlight would be a family holiday to Islay, swimming with seals and sampling the delights of several single malts.

At some point in your career you branched out and started playing the hand/baroque horn. That must have been nice to develop a new skill and play some different repertoire?

I've always loved playing the hand horn and I acquired Webb/Halstead natural horns at some point. I was fortunate to play both hand horn and baroque horn for a while with memorable trips to Esterhazy and Brisbane (!) amongst others. I so wish I had got into that whole scene earlier in my career – I love Haydn symphonies. It was lovely to re-connect with Christian Rutherford (on 2nd horn), whom I'd not seen since NYO days. It was great a few years back to play a bit of Gallay's *Grand Quartet*, Op.26 for a BHS event in Manchester. I wish I'd pushed myself or promoted myself a bit more on that front, but I suppose Opera North was my main concern and was quite a tie. In the end I sold my Webb/Halstead horns, and have been regretting it ever since! I recently acquired another Webb/Halstead horn (originally belonging to Lowell Greer) and am starting to pick up some work...

When did you first begin publishing music? It's funny how things like edition db seep into one's consciousness gradually.

Haha. It all started with Dougie Scarfe (who was then 2nd horn at Opera North) – d for Dougie and b for Bob – and we had some arrangements to

publish, and Dougie had some educational music to promote. I also had had a connection with composer Humphrey Procter-Gregg (universally known as PG) when I was a student at the RNCM, playing the first performance of his *Horn Sonata* in a recital alongside other pieces featuring Paul Cropper (viola) and Clifford Knowles (violin). This was a great opportunity to finally get the sonata and lots of PG's other music published. Sadly, Dougie had to stop playing the horn and went into management, and so was too busy to continue our collaboration. I've really missed Dougie's business acumen but I've somehow managed to keep it going on my own. It's quite a large collection of publications now, printing to order, with the list of composers and works still growing. I loved the recent collaboration with Jeff Bryant to get his *Warm Up* published. To date it's edition db's best seller!

Although you've left Opera North, I gather you haven't hung up your horn, and plan to keep playing? Will you still go and watch the odd show, or would it have to be something new or rare?

Definitely still playing: picking up what I can here and there and I've already been involved with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Academy of Ancient Music, both of which involve playing the hand horn, which I am enjoying enormously. I've always enjoyed practising anyway so that won't stop – still a horn geek. Must be careful not to get too busy though: my wife and I are about to enjoy our first holidays in the months of September and October (never possible before due to Opera North scheduling), we need more time with our children and grandchildren, and the allotment always needs attention. Oh, and of course there's the publishing! Yes, I expect I'll go to some shows/concerts and it'll be fascinating to see who ends up taking over from me at Opera North. **EL**



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The singularity

A single F horn in a modern symphony orchestra? Surely not? But **Carsten Williams** and **Tom Fisher** have other ideas, so it was **Richard Steggall**'s duty to find out more...

Disclaimer: this article contains some of the most obscene horn-nerd language used in this publication. If you are of a delicate disposition and recoil at the mention of tapered sections or 8D leadpipes, then look away now!

Most people have a set idea of who uses single F horns: beginners, period instrument players and the daredevils of the Vienna Philharmonic, along with those that try to imitate them. Surely that's it? Why would any modern orchestral player choose not to have a B♭ side readily available? But there is one such player making such a choice, and in one of the highest-profile orchestras in the UK.

In July 2022, I received a phone call from Carsten Williams, 4th horn of the Philharmonia. He was very excited.

CW Rich, I've got a single F horn that I want to tell you and the British Horn Society all about. Tom Fisher's made it for me. It's just amazing and I use it in the Philharmonia. It's a really beautiful-looking horn and sounds stunning; the best non-Viennese F horn ever made! British-made singles are the way forward and I'm going to convert everyone to using them.

Well, that's fighting talk. I had to find out more, so I asked horn maker Tom Fisher how the horn came about.

TF Early in 2021 I had an intriguing enquiry from Carsten Williams – a welcome event during the pandemic. Being a devotee of the single F horn, he was looking for someone to make up a new instrument to his specification to substitute for the elderly King horn he was then experimenting with using as 4th horn in the orchestra. He seemed to have several aspects to his motivations, one being to continue a family tradition – his grandfather was in the Berlin Philharmonic section. So this new instrument needed to be as playable as possible, and to nod to both the American and the Bohemian traditions.



A period of research and development ensued, to source a suitable bell, and match it up with appropriate tapered sections and leadpipe. That meant going back a step from the finished brass components to the tapered steel mandrels over which they are formed. We called on a network stretching from New Mexico to Bohemia and were fortunate that Jim Patterson allowed Bernd Sandner to use the bell mandrel he owns to create a single seamed bell with garland, to be matched with a first-branch mandrel made by us that was copied from a Conn Elkhart 8D, loaned from Tony Halstead. Bernd Sandner upholds the German horn-making tradition in his workshop in Markneukirchen, close by to Benjamin Kain, from whom we sourced the valves. With this noble tradition in mind, the details of the design were worked out to honour it. A recent job modifying

an old Bohland and Fuchs horn saw me developing the claw-like braces that are characteristic of early-20th-century horns from that region, which suited this design as well as the pair of spheres that details the other braces.

The bell is bent to match the proportions of an 8D, so although it is generous in the throat, it is quite compact. This meant care was needed to package enough parallel tubing into the wrap for a long F horn – the tuning slide is consequently long, and the coils of the tubing follow the body in two open loops. One design consideration was to position the valves as near as possible to the first branch because research by Gregor Widholm has shown that this helps smooth valve slurs. As is the way in developing a new horn model, late in the process of development the choice of leadpipe presented itself. We made up two pipes, one from my “Reynolds” mandrel and one with slightly less volume from a new mandrel that I made up, again in the spirit of the 8D. Both work well and, given that it’s important to be able to road-test a leadpipe with it properly fixed to the instrument, we made the two pipes detachable. (Carsten is currently favouring the Reynolds leadpipe as he says it has that “standing in front of a baritone sax thump in the chest” feel! He’s also finding it more secure in the higher register.)

I’m not sure what the collective noun for JoyKeys is, (a drain? a drip?) but the next step in the process was to install four, which mean gurgle-free playing, even with the complex wrap.

Finally, to honour Carsten’s musical forebears, we had the valve caps engraved to match the hand-engraving of mid-20th-century Alexanders. We were able to ask one of the leading engravers in the country, Angus McFadyen, to do this and they are a delightful adornment to what has been a fascinating and rewarding project.

If a horn player ever wants a controversial opinion, the go-to guy is Pip Eastop. Carsten bravely met up with Pip to talk horn-build and sound, and let him have a go on his new baby to see what he thought:

PE Well, it looks beautiful. I’m just going to play and think...

It’s very unlike any of my instruments. It’s very unlike my Schmid natural horn or my Schmid double horn, even on the F side. It’s got a lovely burn to the sound – a horn has to have this. What you have here is something slightly contradictory, a bell that gets thinner towards the edge which predisposes it to “shimmer” as it gets loud – to give a lot of colour – and a garland that holds that back.

CW That’s funny because the huge surprise for me was that if you compare this horn with the Cadillac of singles, the Alex 97 (a single B♭ horn with a built-in F-side extension and really long bell section) when you get just past fortissimo there is a point where the sound reaches a limit. It’s like a built-in rev-limiter, the body of the sound shatters like safety glass. That happens all over this instrument but obviously more so in the higher harmonics. So I reckon, if you had a Venn diagram of

this horn and an Alex 97 there would be way more in the middle than on the outsides. This horn behaves more like a “single” than an F-side as such. A double horn keeps on getting louder and a single F has a limit, just like a single B♭.

PE When you say “keeps on getting louder”, are you talking about sound pressure level or apparent volume, which is a different thing? Apparent volume is to do with colour. I’d really like to know what it would be like without the garland. If you saw a graph rendering of the relative levels of harmonics, as you get louder they all change and you’ll get some that peak at certain volumes but generally they’ll get brighter the louder you get. That’s the case with most instruments and that’s how you “hear” louder.

CW I don’t think it’s as big a deal as you make out. Tom said the garland would “calm it down a bit” and he was really addressing the brief I gave him, making the garland call. I said that I didn’t want to be “that low player down the end”, buzzing like a bag of wasps.

I sent Tom a load of YouTube clips of American jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery – big, fat semi-acoustic guitar, played with his thumb. I liked that sound and likewise this horn had to favour the mid range, be warm and soft and comforting, for a higher note to sit on top of.

You immediately focused on the top 4th of the range, but in a symphony orchestra a lot of the time I’m just not going to see those notes. I wanted a horn to suit my work, so in the same way that a B♭ single is chosen by 1st horns because they don’t see why they should be lugging around all that tubing they are not using, I thought I’d do the same. The horn has plenty of shimmer, and it’s really easy to change the colour by playing with the airspeed.





CW Well you could certainly make those changes happen but for the moment I'm just so happy with this configuration.

As an orchestral player, you have to fit in with the sound of the section and the orchestra, so I asked the Philharmonia's principal horn, Diego Incertis, what he thought of having a single F in the section.

DI So often, when chatting with colleagues from different orchestras and traditions the topic of "what the right instrument is" comes up: in the majority of orchestras around the world, the tendency veers towards a very specific set-up of uniform Alexander 103s in Europe or a specific vintage of Conn's or Geyer wraps in the US. The other school of thinking is that a player should play on whatever material they feel more comfortable with, since sound and tradition are carried by teaching concepts and other technical abilities rather than the instrument. These two approaches help to protect the sound traditions of horn sections which are getting diluted in the globalised orchestral scene.

Luckily for us in London, and at the Philharmonia, the latter is predominant and although I was unsure it would work at first, I found Carsten's idea of playing on an F single horn in the orchestra really appealing: it blends perfectly well in the section and gives us a different approach to certain repertoire. So far we've done everything from Brahms to Prokofiev (except Mahler and Strauss) on it, but more importantly, it brings a novelty and an "out of the comfort zone" element. This is vital for us horn players to keep improving and finding new ways of expression that, hopefully, will translate to something meaningful and enjoyable for the audience.

So Carsten's happy; Diego's happy; Tom's happy; Pip's, well, almost happy (his own personal choice of F single would have a couple of design changes to suit his own needs). Those of you lucky enough to watch the Philharmonia over the coming months and years may spot Carsten's F single holding the horn section together. But what's the future for this often maligned instrument?

CW I showed this instrument to Luke Woodhead and he totally loved it, got it straight away – the purity of purpose. He immediately started thinking about how he would make one, what wrap, valve arrangement, etc. He suggested the option of an interchangeable F single and B♭ single! Wouldn't that be awesome? So when my Masterplan comes off, more and more horn players will embrace the future and start playing singles. Of course, they'll also have to start embracing doubling fees; didn't Alan Civil say that double horns were the worst invention ever for horn players!? Get yours today folks.

Tom Fisher is a horn maker and academic based in Hathersage, Derbyshire. An early career as a furniture designer and maker led to three decades working in art schools, alongside active amateur horn playing. His horn making work developed with teaching from Mick Rath and Richard Seraphinoff, and has included several commissions for single and double horns, as well as servicing and repairs.

PE Previously it has been really unfashionable to have a sound that sizzled. When I moved to the thin hand-hammered bell it seemed to give me more colour when I played loud. Everybody else wanted a sound that went [adopting a low pitch] "Ooooo".

CW Well this horn absolutely doesn't "have" to sound like that – I thought it might, given the spec (i.e. largish bell and Conn 8D leadpipe) but it doesn't sound anything like a Conn, it sounds like an Alexander – it's mad.

PE When you said "bag of wasps", for me, that is the sound I want, probably we understand different things in that expression.

CW Well, it's not a binary thing, there's a graduation to the disintegration of the sound, I want to say "entropy". As you know, in Brahms's horn writing, there is often a *sfz* or accent on the loud punchy harmonics, say numbers 7-10. You can dial that "ssshing" in and out, just like on your Vienna horn.

PE [Plays various extremely loud long notes in and out of the usual registers.] There's plenty of colour there – that burning. Hmmm... There's more in the low notes, why would that be?

Do you remember that Strauss *Horn Concerto No. 1* on the Vienna horn? That horn made me crescendo and diminuendo even when I didn't really feel like it; it was so inviting – if you crescendo at any particular spot you'll get more colour – it just brightens up.

CW So what's your overall impression?

PE It's an excellent horn. I love the valves, I love the look of it. I think the bell is a good size and the whole feel of it is great. Personally, I'd like to try it in gold brass and without the garland. Tom's detachable leadpipe arrangement is a thing of beauty, no play at all.

"Corno not Corona continued...."

Anneke Scott tells us about her latest project

During the pandemic I instigated various projects mostly to keep myself entertained. Under the umbrella term "Corno not Corona", these can be read about here:

www.annekescott.com/-corno-not-corona

These then fed into a fortnightly series of videos in which I worked my way through my collection of horns. The goal in each of these videos was to select a piece of repertoire that matched well with an instrument (with the crucial caveat of the piano part being within my modest keyboard skills!) and to record both a performance of the piece in question as well as a partner video in which I explained the background to the work and why I chose the particular instrument. I also shared the various sources that inspired or informed the choices and performance practice involved. This series can be found here:

www.annekescott.com/historichornvideos

In 2021 I was one of the recipients of the Royal Philharmonic Society, in conjunction with Harriet's Trust, "Enterprise Fund". The Enterprise Fund was set up to support musicians in the wake of the pandemic and my funding was specifically in order to build on "a substantial digital outpouring of insightful, specialist content and films about the horn generated during lockdown."

Unlike the material under the title "Corno not Corona" described above, in which I mostly focused on unusual, unknown or rare works for horn and piano, this new project set its sights on the classic works of the horn repertoire. Each was performed on a suitable historic instrument influenced and inspired by the

great wealth of sources we have that can suggest performance practices, techniques and other approaches to the repertoire.

The works in this series are:

- Mozart "Rondo" from *Horn Concerto in E flat major*, K. 495
- Beethoven *Sonata for piano and horn*, Op. 17
- Schumann *Adagio und Allegro*, Op. 70
- Saint-Saëns *Morceau de concert*, Op. 94
- Glazunov *Rêverie*, Op. 24
- Dukas *Villanelle*
- Hindemith *Horn Sonata*
- Poulenc *Élegie*

As this series was recorded during 2021, the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dennis Brain, the series also explores his repertoire and the impact of his career.

Accompanied by pianists Steven Devine and Christopher Williams, I also produced a partner video for each videoed performance in which I explore the background to these works and explains more about the sources used and my approaches to these classic works.

You can find this new series either via my YouTube channel here:

www.youtube.com/annekescott

or via my website here:

www.annekescott.com/-royal-philharmonic-society-historic-horn-videos



This project was made possible with the support of the Royal Philharmonic Society and Harriet's Trust through their 2021 "Enterprise Fund", as well as the support of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (where all three performers are members of staff), The Royal Academy of Music, The Bate Collection and the Richard Burnett Collection.

Felix Klieser Masterclass

Many readers will have seen and heard the amazing **Felix Klieser** playing the horn. *The Horn Player* co-editor and member of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, **Ed Lockwood**, went to find out more about the teachings of this remarkable musician.

For the last two years, Felix Klieser has been the Artist-in-Residence with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. He is a remarkable player in his own right but, because he was born without arms, he plays the horn on a stand, using his left foot to operate the valves. This quickly becomes an irrelevance because it doesn't hold him back in any way, shape or form. To see him in action, visit www.felixklieser.de and go to the video section. He has quickly put himself on the musical map as a soloist and has recorded three CDs, won numerous awards and is in constant demand across the world.

Since his residency began with us, he has performed Mozart's *Horn Concerto No. 4* and *Quintet for Piano and Winds*, and Brahms's *Horn Trio*, Op. 40. In late September, on another concert day with the BSO in Bradford-on-Avon, Felix gave a masterclass which I was lucky enough to attend. It quickly became very clear that he is a very gifted teacher as well as an excellent player – it was a very enjoyable two hours.

Proceedings began with a very soulful performance of Franz

Strauss's *Nocturno* given by Charlie Mann. Originally from Dorset, she is currently studying at the Welsh College of Music and Drama having completed her undergraduate degree in International Music Management at Southampton University. It is much harder to find things to say when people play well but Felix highlighted one or two things which quickly made a difference. He stressed the importance of good posture so that all the energy from the air can reach the lips without tension, and he made her look up a little more to achieve this. In the same vein, he spoke about breathing efficiently without tension and that a yawn is the ideal model for us to copy. Next, he spoke about the use of dynamics and that we should never allow the music to become static. The line always needs to be going somewhere and suggested she play with the dynamics even more within a small range. Charlie latched onto this idea very quickly creating more ebb and flow in the music. Felix added that loud dynamics should never be overblown and that we should think of sound colours rather than decibels to achieve our goals.

During the stormy middle section, Felix suggested that Charlie



Nivanthi Karunaratne and Felix (Photo: Dave Pegg)

think of an image or scene in her mind and try to create this mood in sound rather than adhere to the markings doggedly. I like this idea very much because it helps people to play with much less technical thought, usually leading to better results. He added that when composers write music, the markings are a guide as to how they want it to sound. It's an imperfect system and we shouldn't feel completely bound by them but should use them as a starting point which we complete with our own musicianship and imagination. He quipped that no one will ask for their money back if you miss the accent on the second beat if it is heartfelt and beautiful.

As a final point, at the end of the middle section, he remarked that we shouldn't necessarily hint that things are coming to a close by slowing down but instead should let it be a surprise. He described an actor in a crime thriller who knows that something awful will happen would not give this away with their face prior to the event but let it be a surprise to the audience.

Next was Nivanthi Karunaratne. She gave an exceedingly impressive rendition of the first movement of Gliere's epic *Horn Concerto* (complete with cadenza). Nivanthi is American and a student of Anneke Scott at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music in London. Before coming to this country, she received a BA in Neuroscience from Princeton University and a Master in Music from Yale School of Music. As many of you will know, this piece is a real *tour de force*, and she carried it off with aplomb. I was particularly impressed by how relaxed she was even during the most physically demanding sections.

Felix reminded her of the piece's history, saying that it was quite old-fashioned in style for the music of the time and was more about conveying the Russian Spirit rather than being used as a showpiece. I liked the idea of using musical history to help shape a piece and will definitely give that more thought in the future. Towards the end of her slot, Felix asked if she would like to play the last movement to provide a little contrast. Nivanthi confessed that she hadn't looked at it for a few months and I suspect the pianist was hoping for a different answer but with the words "you only live once", she gave a very creditable account of that too! Felix spoke about the folk element of this movement and that the theme should always have direction.

After a short break, it was time for two younger players to take their turns. The first was Tilly Budd, aged 12 from Salisbury, who is a student of Fiona Brockhurst. She also played *Nocturno* by Strauss and it was interesting to see the different topics that were thrown up by these two performances.

Felix initially concentrated on airflow, stressing the need to keep the air moving throughout the phrase and not to let up until the end. He went on to talk about breathing for two reasons. Firstly (the traditional one) to be able to play longer phrases with a bigger sound and breathe less frequently. The second was to use the breath as a way of marking rhythm and therefore staying in time. Felix got her to sing a lot of the music so that she could incorporate these ideas without the added complication of the horn. Amusingly, she later informed me that she is a chorister at Salisbury Cathedral, so this wasn't particularly stressful for her. Once they were mastered with the voice, she played them on the horn again. He was also keen that the many ornaments



Tilly Budd and Felix (Photo: Sarah Budd)

were played rhythmically, and more singing ensued before being played again. He made her repeat them a lot, but this really helped cement the ideas in her mind and then fingers.

Finally, it was Gabriel William's turn. He played the first movement of Mozart's *Horn Concerto No. 1*, and Felix was very helpful on the subject of practising awkward, tricky passages. Sadly, there are still no short cuts, and he made him play a lot of it slowly, concentrating on making sure that the articulation was very clear with no hint of any tongue-stopping. He spoke about the need to know the accompaniment so that entrances weren't late, and suggested listening to the piece as a whole, to get the tutti sections into his ear. Eventually, Felix brought up the subject of staccato articulation again and there was a very interesting back and forth between the two of them where Gabriel was asked to imitate Felix's tonguing using a single note. It is a very useful tool because it simply requires listening and imitating. With a suitable amount of repetition, Gabriel's articulation moved closer to Felix's and a seed was planted for the future in that area.

It was a very enjoyable couple of hours and I'm sure that all four players got a lot out of it. They all received great advice individually, but nothing beats hearing players who are further on in their journey. During the evening concert, I was delighted to see that Gabriel and his family had stayed and that he was able to see Felix in action. **EL**

The Northman

Letty Stott tells us about her performances on this recent epic film

Blood, violence and Norsemen sailing from icy lands to raid and pillage: the Vikings are largely known for their brutality, and the plot of *The Northman* does nothing to dispel this. Loosely based on Norse mythology, the story centres around young Viking prince Amleth, whose aim is to avenge the death of his father, King Aurvandil. Prince Amleth was later the inspiration for Hamlet, with Shakespeare taking up the tale that was first told in Icelandic sagas of the 10th century. The Hollywood version sees director Robert Eggers (best known for cult film *The Lighthouse*) joining forces with Icelandic writer Sjón as well as his long-term collaborator, Björk.

The film aimed to be as period-accurate as possible, with Eggers working closely with archeologists, folklorists and historical consultants from the Universities of Uppsala and Iceland. Robert Eggers is known for his attention to detail, and the musical side of the film was no different. This was where I came in,



joining a team of specialist musicians including Visy Bloodaxe, whose throat-singing forms an integral part of the soundtrack, and Vicki Swan, whose virtuosic *nyckelharpa* playing can also be heard throughout. My role was to provide Scandinavian *lurs*, the archetypal battle-horns of the Vikings. However, first we had to make some! Whilst metal lurs are widely known thanks to Lurpak butter using them in their logo, these were too late historically for the setting of the film. Instead, wooden lurs would have been far more widely used, with instruments ranging in size and shape from heavy ithyphallic instruments (yes, you read it right!) carved from solid wood, to far more delicate birch-bark lurs woven from strips of bark. As someone interested in the historical side of brass instruments and horns in particular, it was fascinating to me to learn about the huge range of instruments used by the Vikings, a culture of people so synonymous with violence.

Dr Peter Holmes, my long-term collaborator in the realm of ancient forms of horn, made several instruments for *The Northman*, including the lurs mentioned above, as well as an animal horn that we hoped would play in a similar way to a Swedish *bukkehorn*. For anyone reading this article (especially if you have children), this is an instrument you will know very well already. Why? Because it features in pretty much the most popular Disney film of all time – *Frozen*. The TED Talk about her performance on the *bukkehorn* for *Frozen* by incredible musician Sissel Morken Gullord is absolutely fantastic and well worth a watch if you haven't seen it already.

<https://youtu.be/q5l0nZ5VrNE>





Dr Peter Holmes, Robin Carolan and Letty at AIR studios

What I love, especially having now contributed to *The Northman* as a specialist artist myself, is this interface between historical instruments and popular culture. Taking a really niche instrument, finding out about its background and origins, then using it for a soundtrack that millions of people will hear, is to me the best possible use of my skills as a musician. I want to find out everything about the instruments I am playing, researching them in great detail and really putting in the time to figure out archeologically and historically where they come from. However, the sound I make is for everyone and it gives me huge pleasure that millions of viewers around the world will listen to historically researched lurs without even realising. They will just hear Viking battle sounds that sound pretty good!

(For any readers who might already be engaging with Viking battles in their own homes via *Assassin's Creed: Valhalla*, the magnificent *carnyx* war-horn sounds were performed for the soundtrack by trombonist John Kenny, which I hope emphasises my point on the hugely popular appeal of all of these specialist instruments!)

However, although these instruments are already making their way into blockbuster films and games, the process of performing and recording on them isn't quite so simple for the artist. For the team of composers on *The Northman*, how do you write for ancient Scandinavian lurs? And will the melodies work, given the limited number of pitches available on each instrument? To me, this is the fun part, and for *The Northman* I was absolutely part of this creative process. With the film's director Robert Eggers present for my solo sessions recorded at AIR, the pressure was on! Luckily, I absolutely love being put on the spot and responded enthusiastically to the challenge of creating musical responses to the concept that the composition team wanted (led by Seb Gainsborough and Robin Carolan). With

a huge variety of sounds and melodies required, my role was to decide which of the instruments would yield the best sound for the cue and then work out how to play it. The hardest cue for me was definitely a stomach-churning "blood eagle" scene, which I had to watch several times in order to sync up a musical cue – sadly this didn't even make the film in the end, as it was downgraded to an R-rating (15+ in the UK) to be a bit less shocking to audiences!

Having watched the film myself when it was released in April this year, my favourite moment is the arrival of Viking warriors in their longships at the start of the film – the soundtrack (titled "The King", if anyone wants to have a listen) is absolutely dominated by loud multi-tracked lurs, which are all me! I hope that this will be just one of many Viking films that I can play these magnificent instruments on, and I hope that my playing of historically informed instruments enhances the soundtrack for the audiences that hear it. I'm currently working on my next big blockbuster film, which features a completely different set of instruments, but more on that next time, as I've signed several NDAs... **LS**

Watch "The King" from *The Northman* here:

<https://youtu.be/q-VuWICAVRg>

Huge thanks to Dr Peter Holmes, whose forthcoming books on ancient horns are extremely informative for anyone wanting to know more. My thanks also go to Middlesex University who helped to build the birch-bark and wooden lurs, as well as the brilliant Nick Wollage at AIR studios, whose skills as a music engineer, mixer and producer are just incredible and who was such a pleasure to work with on this project.

54th International Horn Symposium

Nivanthi Karunaratne travelled to Texas to attend the week-long IHS54. She returned to London with a wealth of experience and a prize to cap it all off.

Those of us who play the horn understand the natural kinship with other hornists. Playing the horn is like playing with a clawed cat; half the thrill is that it can turn on you at any moment, but the reward of understanding each other is incomparable.

Fittingly, the theme of this year's symposium was *Untamed Horn*, also an ode to its setting in southwest Texas, still known for ranching. IHS54, hosted by Dr. Jennifer Sholtis, marked the first year since 2019 that hornists from around the globe were able to revel fully in this camaraderie and gather *en masse* for the annual symposium.

It was also the first time that I had ever attended a symposium. Both the best and worst part of IHS is just how **much** there is to see and do and try. Inevitably, one has to choose between two unbearably enticing activities. I felt that Dr. Sholtis did a laudable job of recruiting an exemplary combination of researchers and performers that reflected the growing diversity of those who play our instrument. Approximately half of the featured and contributing artists were women, and both the researchers and performers showcased highly diverse cultural backgrounds.

Among all the fantastic performances during the week, several are etched permanently in my memory. Matias Piñeira,



originally from Chile, played Mozart as I've never heard it; his phrasing was highly unconventional yet absolutely sublime. He freely changed his stance throughout his performance to take advantage of the horn's directionality, a technique I found revelatory. On the new music side, Erin and Ross made for an electrifying funk duo, and when Erin Futterer wasn't blowing her horn, her voice (especially singing her upbeat and empowering original tune, "Blow My Horn") reminded me of Ella Fitzgerald. Dr. Jeffrey Snedeker performed Dukas's *Villanelle* on a piston horn following a mind-blowing presentation on how valve and hand horn techniques could be – and were historically – used *simultaneously*. And Anneke Scott, my own teacher, gave a recital as colourful as her rainbow-striped dress, chosen in support of the LGBT+ community. She performed repertoire – as she put it – "Beyond Beethoven." She also introduced the concept of preluding, a cadenza-like practice which shows off the capabilities of the performer and can also help the performer transition between pieces, even if they have different tonalities.



Two presentations I attended, by Christopher Brigham and Dr. Katy Ambrose, specifically paid tribute to horn players of marginalized communities. Brigham's presentation honoured the Jewish horn players forced to perform while imprisoned in the Holocaust; his archival research has managed to identify many horn players' names and even unearthed their photos. Dr. Ambrose

Competition winners with the IHS president Radegundis Tavares Rua Jacarandá

presented transcriptions of compositions by African-British composer Ignatius Sancho, enslaved as a child, and Afro-Caribbean-American hornist Francis Johnson; these transcriptions, which are important both historically and pedagogically, are appropriate for beginner and intermediate horn students. Historically, classical music has been a very Eurocentric field, and by bringing these musicians into the modern-day spotlight, Dr. Ambrose both pushes against that and acknowledges the horn's dual role in enslaved persons' lives. Gabriella Ibarra's premiere of an inspiring and noteworthy documentary on the organization Latinoamericahorns, which highlights the growing community of horn players in South America, also continued to chip away at Eurocentrism.

I very much appreciated the breadth of masterclasses offered, which I felt departed from the usual format of a short performance with some feedback. Pan Ye from northern China gave a masterclass equal parts comedy and wisdom; when emphasizing the importance of one's mindset, he opened with a hilarious story of how he was accepted to a prestigious music program when he was about 13. His friend, a string player, commented that his long tones were unstable. Pan told him that was all the instrument was capable of. The friend, of course, took the horn from Pan and played his first note exactly, perfectly, steadily in-

tune. Though embarrassed, this was Pan's first awakening that one's mindset can be limiting or liberating, a lesson we can all take to heart.

The symposium is so magical in part because of the way in which reunions and new connections happen unexpectedly. So many of us had the chance to interact with horn superstars, who are equally eager to meet their fellow participants; I happened to sit behind composition legend Kerry Turner at one concert, whose cowboy boots were as bold and unforgettable as his music. I am grateful to Anneke for encouraging me to attend IHS54 and undertake the Natural Horn Competition, for which I was awarded first prize. I learned so much from my fellow participants, the performances, and the wide selection of seminars. And from school-aged youths to university students to Texas professors to massed participant ensembles, everyone had the chance to indulge to their hearts' content while making new friends and creating glorious music together. Certainly a symposium to remember. Hopefully the next one will be even bigger, à *Montreal*! **NK**

Nivanthi Karunaratne is currently a second-year MMus in Historical Performance student at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. She previously studied at Yale School of Music and Princeton University.



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From the workhouse to the Opera House

Horn player **William Lightman**'s life started in desperate circumstances. Through his own determination, and with the assistance of the nowadays much-maligned Victorian social care system, he grew up to enjoy a successful career in the army and in London theatres, with a comfortable retirement in Battersea. **John Humphries** tells his story...

On 19th June 1857, Ann Lightman, her son William, aged six weeks, and his sister Caroline were transferred from St Luke's workhouse, Shoreditch to Marylebone workhouse. After a week, they were discharged, and by 1861, when they lived at 9 Bridport Street, Marylebone, Ann had found work as a charwoman. Disaster then struck the children's already troubled childhoods when Ann died in 1865. The children were separated, and William was taken back to the workhouse. Three weeks later, he was sent to the Southall School, nine miles from Marylebone, which provided homes for Marylebone's pauper children.

Intentionally, such schools were built far from their "catchment areas" to stop their students running away and getting home easily, but Southall, like many of these "Poor Law Schools" had a band to prepare their young inmates for careers as military musicians, and this was William's salvation. Aged 12 or 13, he joined the band of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd (Queen's) Regiment of Foot, who were then stationed in Guildford. According to Algernon Rose, who interviewed William for his 1895 book, *Talks with Bandsmen*, the first instrument he was given was a saxhorn pitched in A. "Then he took up the soprano. Next, after playing the B-flat cornet... the bandmaster directed him to transfer his attentions to the E-flat saxhorn."

From Guildford, the regiment moved on to Gosport, then Devonport, and in August 1873 they were posted to Athlone in Ireland. Before they left for Ireland, William was on leave in London. One morning at St. James's Palace, he heard one of the Guards' bands playing Weber's *Oberon* overture. Rose tells us that, "the rendering of the horn part was a revelation". Returning to his regiment, he secretly practised the horn, and when one of the usual players was absent at the Officer's Mess one night, he volunteered to deputise for him. "His *début* was so successful that the Bandmaster retained his services permanently as a French horn player. Mr Lightman's success was that he had cultivated the art of playing *softly*, and that he had carefully restrained himself from producing that effect in double-forte passages which is likened to slitting a sheet."

In August 1874, William's regiment were posted to Dublin, remaining there until June 1876, when they left for Aldershot. Though still a teenager, William was now able to undertake outside engagements, and during his time in Dublin, he worked at the city's Theatre Royal, and played 1st horn with the Dublin Philharmonic Society's newly formed orchestra.

In Aldershot he had a very brief meeting with Queen Victoria which was to

remain with him throughout his life. He was one of a guard of honour when he felt someone touch his arm. He looked round and realised it was the Queen. She asked him if he liked the army and music. He replied, "Yes Your Majesty", but that was the end of their conversation: she smiled and moved on!

In 1877, war broke out between Russia and Turkey, and, fearing Russian expansion into the western Mediterranean, the British Government strengthened its presence in Malta. William's regiment was sent there in September, and although their accommodation was poor, Malta was already becoming a popular holiday destination for the upper classes, and it must have been a pleasant posting.

By March 1878, the regiment's presence was no longer necessary, and they were redeployed to India. At first, they were stationed in Bareilly, 200 miles east of Delhi. It was in the throes of a cholera epidemic when they arrived, but while it had been a flashpoint during the Indian Mutiny of 1857, it was now relatively calm. The same could not be said for Peshawar, their next posting. Now in Pakistan, Peshawar was then on India's Northwest Frontier, just a few miles from the notorious Khyber Pass, India's principal route into central Asia, via Afghanistan. While the 2nd Afghan War finished a few months before the regiment's arrival in February 1881, this was still dangerous territory: "Frontier brigands" visited the station almost nightly. On one occasion, they stole horses and rifles, and on another, after cutting telegraph wires, they gagged and killed a sentry, entered the guardroom, despatched everybody there as well, and stole their arms and ammunition. The temperature, day and night, registered "about 114F [45.5C] in the shade".



Peshawar Barracks as William would have known it



We learn this from the memoirs of John Mackenzie Rogan, one of the most distinguished of all army musicians, but who in May 1882, aged 27, had taken over as bandmaster of William's regiment. When Rogan arrived, he discovered that William was among 17 band members who were shortly to reach the end of their period of service. William must have made a good impression, as when he left, on 21st April 1883, Rogan gave him letters of introduction to important figures in London's musical life.

Soon after his return, he met Maria Hephzibah Meredith, the daughter of iron plate worker James Meredith and his wife Mary. She was living in Prittlewell in Southend, though she was a Londoner from Borough, and during the autumn of 1884 they were married in West Ham.

The recipients of Rogan's letters may have included some of his fellow Freemasons, as William's first known appearance in London, in Forest Gate on 6th November 1884, was at a concert to raise funds for the "United Order of Total Abstinent Sons of the Phoenix Lodge". He played a solo called "Lucretia" and took part in a trio for clarinet, horn and piano. William himself became a Mason in 1895 and remained teetotal (and a non-smoker) for the rest of his life.

An obituary which appeared after William's death on 18th February 1934 gives an overview of the rest of his career, though it is tantalisingly vague in its detail. We learn that he played at the Lyceum Theatre, during "Henry Irving's successes", but it gives no dates. Although the great actor's most famous triumphs there were during the 1880s, he continued as manager until 1899. As William played in a brass quartet with the Lyceum's cornet player, Charles Appleford, from around 1890 to around 1896, it seems most likely that his employment coincided with Irving's final years at the theatre.

It also tells us that William played for Herman Finck "for 35 years". By 1911 William was employed at the Palace Theatre, where Finck had conducted since 1900, so they probably both began at around that time. Finck transferred to Drury Lane in 1922, and William may have gone with him as he is known to have played there and he did not retire until 1931.

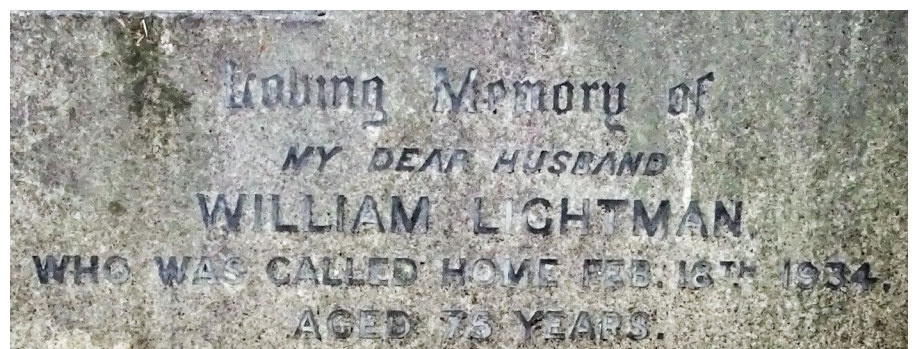
Under Finck's direction, the Palace Theatre Orchestra became one of London's finest, and when they recorded Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, in 1909, they became the first in the capital to record classical repertoire. The following year, they made the premiere recording of Mendelssohn's "Nocturne" from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Frederick Salkeld as the soloist, and William, who was a low horn specialist, almost certainly played second. He is also said to have played in the orchestra of "a leading gramophone company" for around 20 years, and at Covent Garden, though sadly his obituary tells us nothing further. In the case of Covent Garden, this was most likely a short-term engagement, as it was then the norm for individual companies to hire the theatre for a few weeks for their "season".

This must have been one of many freelance engagements he undertook. Others include a tour to Germany in 1894 as one of 24 players making up the London Military Band. They wore red uniforms and were accompanied by six pipers in national costume, and a Leipzig newspaper tells us that, "the exemplary purity of the intonation and correctness of the harmony made a splendid impression", though others were more taken with the pipers, who "created quite a sensation". William also played at the Saturday Orchestral Concerts at St James's Hall, including the last ever given there on 28th January 1905. He performed in lighter music, too: between 1901 and 1904, he took part in performances with the Mohawk, Moore and Burgess Minstrels.

William also performed with choral societies and orchestras in the provinces. Advertisements in local newspapers often listed orchestral players, and from these we can see that from around 1890 until the First World War, William was engaged in this sort of concert on a regular basis. From these we can judge the orchestral company he kept: apart from odd engagements with AE Brain Senior and the young Aubrey Thonger, few are performers who are remembered today, but Joseph Smith, George Wright, John Colton, Bertie Muskett, George Mounter, Egbert Windle, Herbert Thornton, Ralph Livsey, Hale Hambleton and George Manners were some of the busiest players of their day.

William and Maria lived in East London until 1887, when they moved to Battersea. They lived at various addresses there, but around 1915, they moved to 66 Shelgate Road, an attractive end-of-terrace house near Clapham Common, where they remained for the rest of their lives. At least three of their five children were musical, though not professionally. All four boys worked for London & Southwestern Railways, though their second son, Charles, was killed in action in Salonika in 1917, and James, the youngest, eventually became a gold miner in India.

William was also a conductor and is first heard of in this capacity directing a military band in Balham in 1886. Later, he conducted, and sometimes played double bass in the Fellowship Orchestra at Battersea Congregational Church and was also a member of their bowls club. His wife's church, Northcote Road Baptist Church, also played an important part in his life, to the extent that when he died, a local newspaper headline read "Local Church Worker dies". Maria lived on until 1941 and both are buried in Streatham Cemetery. When she died, she left £1916; as a terraced house in London was then worth about £500, this must have represented riches beyond William's boyhood dreams. **JH**



Detail from William's gravestone in Streatham Cemetery

The Operatic Horn

The Principal Horn of the Orchestra of Scottish Opera **Sue Baxendale** takes you through some famous opera excerpts

When I was asked to write this article, it got me thinking... Yes, there are plenty of technical challenges and complexities in operatic horn writing – think of the 3rd horn part of Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger*, “Siegfried’s Horn Call” or the obligato aria from Handel’s *Giulio Cesare* – but what I find compelling is the horn’s affinity with the human voice, the ability to paint a picture with sound and colour. Arguably, there is no other instrument in the orchestra which has such depth and emotional variety: drama, passion, rage, revenge...

Unlike playing solo in the orchestral repertoire, our role in opera is often to articulate the depth and range of human emotion which plays out on the stage. To do this effectively, it is useful to make time to find out what is going on up there above our heads – and this can vary from production to production.

I’ll give you an example. The opening of Act 3 of Puccini’s *Tosca* (Excerpt 1) is frequently used in opera audition pads – a triumphant unaccompanied unison horn passage played with a hugely flexible *rubato*. The declamatory octave concert E lays out Tosca’s plan to rescue her lover from imprisonment and imminent execution. A triplet headlong rush towards escape leads to a *sostenuto* passionate embrace, relaxing into the promise of a future of freedom in one another’s love. By the end of these opening bars (if we have delivered them well), the audience believes unequivocally in the certain success of Tosca’s plan, and the subsequent tragic turn of events at the end of the opera is both unexpected and cruelly devastating.

This opening phrase is always led by the in-breath of the principal horn and, as all four horns are in unison, it is critical that we maintain an even sound quality, fully centred notes and clear intonation, particularly so in the first three notes – if we play too loudly or overblow, this becomes impossible. Tosca’s determined heroism is in the beauty of our vocal timbre and our interpretation (and yes, quite often a conductor will just leave us alone to get on with it!)

It is the simple things that can often trip us up, particularly in auditions. Take the opening of the No. 3 Cavatina “Se vuol ballare” from Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro* (Excerpt 2) – on first glance, this is a simple duet (with a top A which glares out at us from the middle of the phrase), but it also has a unique dramatic context.

Learning that his master, Count Almaviva, wishes to exercise the feudal *droit du seigneur* (to bed his servant’s wife on their wedding day), Figaro cooks up a plan to thwart him. In the pit, the two horns and strings move together with clear purpose,



articulating Figaro’s wit, his controlled anger and his underlying desire for revenge.

*So, little master, you’re dressed to go dancing,
Dressed in your best to go strutting and prancing.
I’ll put an end to your fun pretty soon,
You may go dancing but I’ll call the tune, yes!
I’ll call the tune, yes
I’ll call the tune.*

(translation: Jeremy Sams)

Both horns need to feel the same clear sense of musical direction towards each cadence point, securely maintaining a one-in-a-bar feel and giving shape to the phrasing. It should never plod along in crotchet beats, feel boring or get stuck. If you play with your “invisible orchestra” in your head, understanding the vocal line and text, then this makes so much more sense, including how to approach that cadential repetition from bar 13.

The horn often depicts a voice of sublime emotion or seductive excitement in opera, and it is helpful to think about the context of each phrase we are given. In “Dance of the Seven Veils” (excerpt 3) from Strauss’s *Salome*, our sound is held within a unique colour combination with cor anglais, hecklephone, clarinet in A and upper strings. In performance, the musical line should be restrained emotionally, rhythmically, and dynamically, emphasising Salome’s complete control over Herod, and after rising dramatically in intensity (*piu espress.*), another veil is removed to a glorious climactic concert D. Rhythmically this needs to be completely secure, the triplets and duplets clearly delineated and the breath incorporated into the phrase, as a singer would breathe and articulate a sentence at a comma or full stop.

So, we can see that our operatic excerpts invariably reveal the emotional story of the characters and the hidden subtext in the orchestral lines. Spare a thought always for the meaning behind the music we are given and the characters on stage and, whether in the pit, at home or in an audition, hear and respond to the whole story being sung, acted and performed by all. An opera horn player should never feel alone! **SB**

Ex. 1

Tosca

3. Akt
Andante sostenuto $\text{♩} = 63$
I. II. III. IV. in E
Giacomo Puccini

Ex. 2

Hn. 1 Allegretto
in Fa/F p

Hn. 2 Allegretto
in Fa/F p

Ex. 3

wieder erstes Zeitmass (ziemlich langsam)

allmählich etwas fließender

in E. *espr.* p

più espress.

f

b^2 R 5

Sue has made a fascinating video to accompany this article. If you want to hear her playing these excerpts, as well as discussing them in further detail, then please go to the BHS website.

The video is in the members section so you need to be logged in to access it.

www.british-horn.org > members > videos [or click HERE](#)

From the Archives: Musical Times, 1922

This most interesting article, discovered by BHS Historian **Tony Catterick**, was first published in *Musical Times* 100 years ago

The author, Professor Walter Blandford (1865-1952) was a renowned entomologist and an enthusiastic amateur horn player. We know his name for the many articles he contributed to *The Musical Times* in the first quarter of the 20th century. He was a good friend of Reginald Morley-Pegge (1890-1972), a fellow amateur horn player and renowned author of *The French Horn*, published in 1960, which he dedicated to the memory of Blandford. The article seems very dated now, with quaint expressions, humour and odd language, but is a fine example of how horn playing was seen and generally perceived in 1922. How very different from one century later!

Blandford writes:

"The horn player is of course, a by-word amongst musicians only on account of his modest and retiring disposition. His aversion from anything savouring of publicity leads him to prefer the discreet anonymity of the opera or theatre orchestra to the limelight of the concert platform. Nowhere does that light beat more fiercely on him than in the performance of Beethoven's symphonies. It is not that their horn passages are so astoundingly hard; much greater demands are made by Schumann, Wagner, or Richard Strauss – by Beethoven himself in the scena "Komm Hoffnung" in Fidelio, which touches the climax of orchestral difficulties for the hand-horn. The trouble lies partly in the clarity of the solo passages – always in the foreground and hardly ever covered or doubled by other instruments – and partly in their extreme familiarity to the audience. The concert-goers sit there, as the executant knows, at least subconsciously, armed with, or with the recollection of, the score, or primed by analytical programmes. Their attitude is painfully like that of wolves waiting round the freed hunter. Unless his nerves are strong, the victim is obsessed with the fear of 'cracking' – the fear is translated into action, and crack he does! And so it happens that one man, who will deliver the 'Siegfried' horn-call without hesitation, blanches before this very solo, and another to whom the latter presents no special terrors passes a sleepless night before a performance of the 'Pastoral' Symphony.

Such idiosyncrasies have always to be taken into account; and it has been said by a player with years of honourable achievement behind him that they had taught him that 'nerve' – the antithesis of 'nervousness' – is the greatest asset a horn player can possess. Indeed, for lack of it, artists of great executive ability have been known to abandon a public career.

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Toccata and Fugue, "The Wanderer" (Fugue only), Parry. (Novello.)
"Sponsa Lira," Lullu. Arranged by E. H. Lomax. (Schott.)
The 10 selected pieces and the books set for the Essay for the January, 1923, A.R.C.M. Examination, are to be sent to those set for July, 1923.
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The horn player has been aptly compared to the juggler or equilibrist who accomplishes most difficult feats with but a hair-breadth margin between failure and success, but the comparison breaks down at an important point. Everyone knows what happens when a juggler attempts something exceptional which, no matter whether by design or accident, does not come off. Suppose now that, when the horn player cracked or wobbled in a trying passage, his failure were received with murmurs, not of disapproval, but of sympathy and encouragement; that the conductor immediately stopped the band; that in breathless silence the player repeated the passage two or three times until he got it right, whereupon amid thunders of applause the movement were resumed, while the gratified player bowed his thanks to a delighted audience. A pleasing and logical, but, we fear, Utopian parallel! There is no second try for the soloist; no amount of subsequent successes can retrieve his initial failure. If it were otherwise, the really great performer would not be the rare bird an eminent musician alleges him to be.

When complaint is made that horn players are not so good as they ought to be, the appropriate answer, in the words of a famous witticism is, 'They never were.' Uncertainty is inherent in the instrument; like feminine capriciousness, it constitutes one of the charms that keep men slaving at the horn, often with no prospect of rising above mediocrity, when they might be earning better and easier money as municipal employees under a Labour corporation.

By way of epilogue, and on behalf of the many artists whose talent we have admired, may we, being in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility, respectfully ask the Musical Critic, *sensu generico*, why he is apt to be so sedulous in his concert-going notices in reporting every lapse on the part of the horns? It is no sign of critical acumen to point out what was apparent to every listener – indeed, *per contra*, the horns have been known to be castigated for a wrong entry of the trombones; nor is it of interest to a reader who was not present to be told that the horn wobbled, was unsteady, or failed to reach its top note. Does the Critic realise that, disagreeable as a slip is (though little worse than the coughs or sneezes with which a winter concert abounds), it is far more distressing to the culprit than to anyone else; or that it may happen once in a while to the most highly-gifted player from any one of a multitude of causes of which the outsider takes no account?

Nervousness, over-confidence (a subtler form of the same complaint), fatigue caused by hours of hard work or rehearsals before the concert, a defective instrument (and few are perfect), a collection of moisture that could not be got rid of, even the untimely visit of the rate-collector, are among the multiplicity of causes, mental or physical, that may have inhibited the co-ordi-

nation between mind, nervous impulse, and muscular reaction on which success depends.

Let the Critic comment on defects of tone-quality, phrasing, or style, if they exist, and he may do good, as when he calls attention to defective voice-production or pronunciation, for these are remediable by study. But no horn player has ever yet been cured by a caustic remark in the newspapers of his tendency to an occasional mishap. On the contrary, he becomes more liable to lose his nerve, especially if the remark has called down a further censure from his conductor, and with it his engagement and his professional status. This is no fancy picture; chapter and verse can be given for actual incidents of the kind.

No one expects even the finest billiard-player or golfer never to break down at an easy hazard or a short putt. And, unless a horn player habitually ‘misses fire’, in which case the conductor can be trusted to attend to him, let the Critic pass over these misfortunes in kindly silence as ‘rubs of the green’ continue to point out that a good horn player is better worth £500 a night than many a prima donna (in which case he may perhaps someday get a fiftieth of that sum), and generally occupy himself with weightier matters of the Law.” **TC**

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Edmund ("Eddie") Alan Chapman (part 3)

Bob Ashworth collates anecdotes from an illustrious career

As mentioned in the previous article (*The Horn Player* Summer 2022), for anyone wishing to hear recordings of Eddie Chapman (all on 3rd horn), there's the three-CD set of Brahms Symphonies (and *Tragic Overture*) with the Philharmonia and Arturo Toscanini recorded live at the Royal Festival Hall in 1952 (on the Testament label SBT 3167) and the recording of the Overture to Weber's *Der Freischütz* with Klemperer and the Philharmonia from 1960 which is also available on a YouTube clip: <https://youtu.be/y4vjCALnRcg>

Anecdotes regarding Eddie abound in the horn playing profession. Through these stories he has acquired almost legendary status.

Pat Strevens, who played alongside Eddie firstly when, as a final-year student, he did some work with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden on a UK tour, remembers Eddie's perfect playing – "never a slip" – and his tremendous powers of concentration. Later, Pat was drafted in on 4th horn for the *Der Freischütz* recording with the Philharmonia mentioned above, which perhaps helped him get offered the job by Alan Civil a few months later.

John Humphries was once told by Barry Tuckwell what a fantastic player Eddie Chapman was, but Barry thought that Eddie never got the attention he was due because he preferred to sit in the middle of a section, not playing 1st.

Eddie refused to leave the pit to play the Long Call in *Siegfried* at the Royal Opera House unless being paid first, in cash! Now, through the mists of time this story has acquired several endings, the first being that the manager finally passed over his wallet to get Eddie to leave the pit, but my favourite comes down the grapevine from **Hugh Potts** (via **Ken Shaw**, who was at "The Garden" for many years). As it was a Saturday and the banks were closed, the cash had to be raised by Sergeant Martin (an ex-army man, who marshalled the front-of-house troops at the Opera House) from the takings at the box office and the ice-cream sellers!

There's a recurring theme here, as Pat Strevens recalls that if Eddie was engaged for a West End show, half an hour before curtain-up, Eddie would say to the fixer, "I don't go into that pit until I've got my fee!" The fixer then had to go to the box office and extract Eddie's fee from the takings.

Billy Bull (ex-4th horn of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra) told **Paul Kampen** that in Eddie's house he once overheard him on the phone saying, "25 guineas". There was a pause and then Eddie said, "I know that Dennis Brain only charges 23 guineas but if Dennis Brain was available you would not be asking me – it's 25 guineas!"



Later in his career, in a recording session with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, our Eddie dropped a mute in the last take of a recording session, thereby creating the need for overtime and an extra payment for the whole orchestra to enable completion of the recording.

Apparently Eddie was quite a smoker and surreptitiously kept the lit end of his cigarettes hidden in the palm of his hand. Apparently he created a "ring of fire" to protect himself from conductors with a series of scorch marks around him on the floor.

Tony Catterick remembers being told that when he played the unaccompanied solo at the opening of "The Miller's Dance" in Manuel de Falla's *The Three-cornered Hat*, Eddie used to cover the fingers of his left hand so that nobody would know what "trick fingering" he was using! A very crafty man indeed.

Tony Chidell recounts: "I was on a little BBC session and Eddie Chapman was playing 1st. We were sitting two-and-two, so I was right behind his bell as I was on 4th. I didn't know who he was. Dennis Scard was playing 2nd, mostly because he had a car and could give Eddie Chapman lifts to the various dates they were on, I was told. Sometime in the session Eddie had something like a quiet F-sharp entry and I couldn't believe what had just happened. I was close enough to hear the slightest start to the note but it just 'appeared' almost as if his horn had glowed and the note had appeared. I couldn't understand it. I told my young horn friends afterwards."

Jim Beck recalls: "On my first day with Welsh National Opera I sat on the 3rd horn chair and when this old fellow turned up to play 1st horn my heart sank. But after about 14-15 minutes, Eddie came in with a solo and I've never heard more beautiful playing in my life. I have no other memory of the production or where we played, but that tune has stayed with me ever since."

On tour, when the WNO orchestra was still a freelance band, the orchestra was paid in cash. On one pay day the orchestral manager was heard to say, "Don't worry Eddie, your fee is coming by armoured car!"

Jim continues: "When I played with Dennis Scard and Eddie in Swansea we stayed in the Langland Bay Hotel in the Mumbles. After performances we would play snooker, drink whisky and he would tell wonderful tales of his life as a horn player. One night we were discussing the solo in Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 5* and he said that during the intro he used to think of his

daughter whom he adored. The next morning we had a rehearsal and he played it for us. It was another moment I have never forgotten. The last time I worked with him was in *Fidelio*. None of it seemed to bother him and the ringing sound of his high notes seemed effortless. It was a real privilege to work with Eddie. He was so generous with his time and advice, and he remains my hero."

No doubt other stories will continue to come to light from other quarters in due course!

My thanks go to Tony Catterick for much of the information which enabled the compilation of this article, but also to Julian Baker, Jim Beck, Tony Chidell, Tony Halstead, John Humphries, Paul Kampen, Hugh Potts and Pat Strevens for their extra anecdotal material about the extraordinary Eddie Chapman – tough as nails and reckoned to have been an almost perfect player!

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Bromley Horn Day

On 25th September 2022, Bromley Youth Music Trust hosted the inaugural Bromley Horn Day in association with the British Horn Society. The afternoon featured lead artist Jim Rattigan (accompanied by the amazing Ivo Neame on piano), lead tutor Richard Steggall, the Royal Academy of Music Horn Quartet (Eleanor Blakeney, William Scotland, Hannah Williams and Kiersten Gustafson) and tutors Jane Hanna and Joel Roberts. The day comprised a mix of concerts, workshops and ensemble playing, culminating in a wonderful performance of “The Final Countdown” with 50 horn players.



“At the beginning of the day, I loved learning a new piece in a short period of time, with players of lots of different levels joining in. The activity where we learned how to play in a group with players from the Royal Academy of Music was great because we don’t normally get the opportunity to do fun learning games like this during band practice. One of my favourite parts of the day was when Jim Rattigan played his jazz pieces with such a wide range of sounds, and I especially enjoyed seeing my teacher having to do some improvisation for the first time!” **Leo, aged 10**

“I really enjoyed the French horn day because I had never met so many horns before, and it was nice to know other musicians who are my age! It was great to hear jazz played on the French horn - that was completely new to me. The teachers were really friendly and the music we played was super fun and sounded AMAZING! (Also the cake was really good.)” **Maeve, aged 13**





"I learnt so much in the jazz class with Jim Rattigan and I'm really encouraged to learn more about jazz and improvisation. Listening to the RAM quartet was so inspiring and the amount of horn players involved was just amazing!" **Emma, aged 14**

"Thanks for a great day on Sunday. It was interesting, challenging and, above all, fun! Richard Steggall's class on the psychology of performance and practice was really thought-provoking, and I'm looking forward to putting the ideas into practice. I challenged myself by playing bass-clef parts in the ensembles, which was a useful learning experience as it revealed some difficulties in pitching... something else to work on! And the massed blow was just brilliant. It was a very sociable day, like most horn events: great to spend time with other horn players and to hear insights from professional musicians which take us into another world of experience." **Fiona Clifton, adult**



Sally Benatar @BenatarSally · 25/09/2022

One of my best days since starting 🎶 - Bromley Horn Day 🥳 Playing alongside 50 + horn players, learning loads, laughing a lot & meeting new 🎶 buddies @fiona_clifton
A top day all round. Thanks 🙏 @OfficialBYMT @StegsHorn @britishhorns @rattiganjct @lvoneame @RoyalAcadMusic



The BHS is keen to support other horn days and festivals around the country. If you have an event and would like our support, then please contact Lindsey Stoker at bhschair@gmail.com

To hear "The Final Countdown" visit https://youtu.be/J9Ek_KB139I

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Send us your news from the world of horn playing. If you want to appear in a regular feature or have an idea for an article, we want to hear it. Pen your thoughts and email them to: richardsteggall@yahoo.co.uk

or

ed.lockwood72@gmail.com



Who were the members of the horn section of the very first course of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain in April 1948?

BHS Historian **Tony Catterick** tells us who these talented youngsters were

The National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain was founded in 1948 by Dame Ruth Railton. Trained at the Royal College of Music, she believed that the playing of classical musical instruments for young people would be generally beneficial to their lives. In 1948 she advertised for players to audition in London for the first course, to be held in the beautiful city of Bath. Five teenage horn players were approved, and two professional horn coaches were provided to give help and professional advice, in the shape of Frank Probyn and Victor Brightmore. Probyn was the renowned 4th horn of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

and Horn Professor at the RCM, and “Gus” Brightmore was a well known London-based freelance player. The overall Brass Tutor was the famous trumpeter Ernest Hall.

The five youngsters were Harry Brennand, Aileen Way, Robert Noble, Ronald Yeowell and Jean Borsley. From this 1949 photograph of the horn section, it can clearly be seen that they are all using piston-valve horns with presumably an F crook, except Bob Noble, whose horn seems to have rotary valves. It will be of great interest and even concern to horn players, that the conductor Dr. Reginald Jaques, had programmed the inaugural concert in the Assembly Rooms in Bath on April 21st 1948, to start with the overture to *Oberon* by Weber. For those who don't know this work, it starts very quietly with a solo horn all on his/her own! This moment looks nothing on paper, but can feel very lonely indeed. The renowned Professor of Music in Edinburgh, John Dalby, who was there, wrote afterwards, “We heaved a sigh of relief when the Principal Horn Harry Brennand, with the aplomb of a professional, floated the opening horn solo.”

In the photograph the seating is:

Back Row: Bob Noble (1932-1992) and Ronnie Yeowell (1935 -)

Front Row: Aileen Way (1931-2009), Jean Borsley (1931-2017) and Harry Brennand (1930-2013)

All had distinguished careers later in the profession, in the BBC, LSO, RSNO and English National Opera, except Jean Borsley, who gave up playing the horn soon after her NYO time. **TC**



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Ask Heidi

Quick fixes and when to stop!

Imagine that you are sitting in a rehearsal and something goes wrong with your horn. You have a concert that evening and need to sort out the problem but your trusted repairer isn't available in person or on the phone (perhaps they are doing a concert themselves!).

Some problems can be fixed on the spot if you have the right equipment, or at least keep you playing until you can get your instrument repaired.

I think it goes without saying that all horn cases should hold a set of oils, grease, spare string (if appropriate to the instrument), a screwdriver and some zip ties.

In addition, you might consider some or all of the following: small scissors or a knife for cutting string, a lighter to stop the string fraying, long-nose pliers, some tape (metal tape or electrical tape), Blu Tack or plasticine, a valve re-stringing diagram and enough mobile data to watch an instructional video. (In lockdown when we couldn't see customers, I made a small number of "how to" videos to help players and teachers who got in contact about horns that needed a quick fix to get them working again. The Woodhead Horns YouTube channel has some very simple videos showing some techniques to remove stuck slides, move stuck valves, and restring levers. Please get in touch with further ideas.)

We do see some ingenious solutions for quick fixes. Buzzing stays are held with Blu Tack or zip ties (no superglue please!), broken waterkeys held on with elastic bands, waterkey corks replaced with Blu Tack or paper, wine cork as a replacement for neoprene. I have seen a recent Facebook post where a missing neoprene was replaced by a Haribo sweet and some tape!

We often talk people through getting a stuck valve moving in an emergency – the video on the Woodhead Horns channel shows a technique of turning the collar (the part that sits on the valve spindle and moves between the neoprene stops on the bump plate) gently with some long-nose pliers. However, if you suspect the problem is a build-up of verdigris/calcium under the top bearing you may want to try turning the top cap a quarter or half turn, followed by a short, light single tap on the back of the valve (where the large collar screw is) with a small wooden mallet or a wooden spoon. This is a quick fix! Although it might get you through the concert, please don't leave your valve like this for too long after you have got it working – it needs to be properly seated again to help retain the longevity of your horn's valves.

A screw ring being stuck luckily doesn't seem to happen too often! This fix should only be attempted by someone who is confident with using tools as it could result in some denting to your horn spout and/or flare depending on your accuracy! One



person should hold the horn body upside-down between their legs while holding opposite sides of the bell rim in two hands. Gently twist while the other person taps the screw ring with a wooden mallet or wooden spoon. **Important:** If the bell really isn't moving just stop! A twist in your spout would be a much more complicated and expensive fix. Find a fixed-bell case for your horn until you can have it repaired professionally.

The truth is any repair attempt could end in more damage to your horn. Repairers often have to take this risk too; however, we are supported by experience and a workshop full of tools.

Finally, a big thank you to star letter writer Mark Sykes for his expert insight into dezincification! **HW**

If you have a question that you would like answered by Heidi in a future magazine, please email the editor of *The Horn Player* richardsteggall@yahoo.co.uk

www.woodheadhorns.co.uk
info@woodheadhorns.co.uk

Gender and the Large and Shiny Instruments

Co-founder **Letty Stott** tells us all about her new initiative

Gender and the Large and Shiny Instruments (GALSI) is an advocacy and education initiative, started in 2021 by percussionist Beth Higham-Edwards and horn player Letty Stott to promote a more fair and equal future for women, girls and non-binary people who play brass, percussion and other large and shiny instruments.

Emerging from a global pandemic, and with the music industry as a whole starting up again in many ways from scratch, the time felt right to look at the industry and those represented within it. It will (hopefully) come as no surprise to readers to learn that female and non-binary musicians are under-represented in the world of brass and percussion. What is more startling are the statistics around this, with data gathered around musicians holding jobs in symphony orchestras and professional ensembles. The percentage of female players in jobs playing timpani, for example, was revealed to be at a mere 5%, and for trumpet at only 7%. Why is this, then, when I have come across a number of females who perform to the highest level? The answer is, of course, a complex and nuanced one, with no easy solution. However, the deeply rooted and intransigent idea that large instruments are not traditionally viewed as “feminine” choices, is an attitude that continues to permeate our culture, with worryingly few jobs in brass and percussion held by women as a result.

A large part of what we do as a company is therefore about education, encouraging young people to take up brass, percussion and other large and shiny instruments and to view this as a viable career path. Visibility is a key part of this, in an industry that is at present extremely under-represented on the concert stage. GALSI's mission is to raise visibility of women and those identifying as female working within the music industry, both those in jobs and also within the freelance world, an area often left out of the dialogue around gender equity. It is extremely important to show children and young people that there are professional musicians working in this sector at the highest level who look like them!

Finally, through demonstrating a positive attitude towards this area of our industry, we hope to promote dialogue about the problems we face and possible solutions that might exist to tackle them. We want to engage with people from all ages and backgrounds to try and spark conversations that lead to positive change.

What have we done so far?

Launching at the Royal Overseas League in November 2021, Gender and the Large and Shiny Instruments is made up of a core team of three professional musicians, Letty, Beth and percussionist Rebecca Celebuski, as well as a team of Associate Musicians, including trumpeter Imogen Whitehead, trombonist Jane Salmon, and percussionists Rosie Bergonzi and Elaine So.



Since its launch (which also featured a guest performance from trombonist Helen Vollam), Letty and Beth have spoken at the Association of British Orchestras conference 2022 and in the panel discussion, *Rebound: The Gender Agenda*; produced blog articles with brass players including Hilary Belsey; and spoken on various podcasts including *Bold as Brass* and *Three in a Bar*.

Gender and the Large and Shiny instruments received the Guildhall Future Funds award to establish our first project in October 2022 at Trinity Laban Conservatoire: two-day workshops for young female and non-binary brass and percussion players aged 8 to 25. This course featured masterclass and ensemble sessions as well as a panel discussion about working in the music industry, led by top professional musicians including percussionists Elsa Bradley and Elaine So, trumpeter Imogen Whitehead and trombonist Jane Salmon.

What's next?

Following on from our two-day course, GALSI is delighted to be curating a Jazz Lates session at the Royal Albert Hall, working with self-styled *jazz tropicaliente* (hot-tropical-jazz) ensemble Collectiva. The event will take place on 24th November and tickets can be booked through the Royal Albert Hall website: www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/events/2022/late-night-jazz-colectiva

www.largeandshiny.com

Teaching notes: Storytelling (part 2)

Part one of this three-part series introduced storytelling and how to use it in your teaching and learning. In this second part, **Richard Steggall** explores different kinds of stories and how they can help us with more advanced pieces.

Finding themes and characters

Part one showed us how to find clues on the page – we can now start looking at the music. Introducing the idea of “themes” allows us to find the characters in our stories as we start exploring the notes on the page. The shapes of the phrases give us a feel for each character in our story, but these characters may change as the pupil gets more proficient at playing each theme. We can identify where themes return – are they repeated exactly as they were at the start or are they changed? This is a great way to start learning about musical form.

The music will suggest the characters in our story. A rollicking 6/8 piece might be about pirates; a march, about soldiers and battle. The music might suggest an action: a person waking up in the morning, skipping down the street or climbing a mountain. Experiment with playing themes in different styles to change the characters in the story.

Different types of story

We combine the clues that we’ve found with the sounds that we’re discovering as we engage our creativity to produce an overall story arc for the whole piece. It’s important that the pupil is fully engaged in this process, leading it if possible – it has to be their story.

Single-character story

Pieces for beginners are often very short with little time to develop much story, but there’s usually enough character in the music to find ideas with your pupil. For example, a piece might be called “The Clown”. Imagine how the clown acts, maybe there’s a bit in the music where they fall over if the music goes down or juggle if the music goes up.

Character – Development – Resolution

This is probably the most common story arc. You start with a character, who then has a certain experience and then reacts to that experience. As musicians, we know this as ABA form, but to a child they will understand the form from stories. Often a character has an encounter that puts them in danger, but then emerges victorious and stronger for it. As the character moves through the story their emotions change with the music.

Voyage and Return

This also works with an ABA form. It’s about a character going on a journey and then returning either slightly changed or exactly how they left. Voyages and journeys are excellent because you can pass through different scenery. Scenery can be very expressive: barren deserts, rough seas or lush jungles. The motion of a journey keeps the momentum through these scenes rather than being a static description.

A Quest

Think *Lord of the Rings*, a lost animal looking for a parent or even someone on a trip to the shops. This works well for many forms of music as you can explore emotions and changes of character, with potential for an exciting grand finale. This works particularly well for a theme and variations.

An example of a quest: “Rondo” from Mozart *Horn Concerto No. 4*

The only real clue on the page is the word “Rondo”, so we know we’re dealing with a recurring theme. Looking at the jaunty, *Allegro vivace* 6/8 thematic material might suggest someone riding a horse. A “quest” story might suit this well.

Working with the student, we could start by finding every version of the main theme.

This theme might represent our character (let’s call them “The Rider”) traveling around trying to find something or someone. The material between each version of our main theme might be the rider meeting other people that help or hinder their quest. There may be dialogue, and after each encounter the rider moves off on the quest again, but how has the encounter changed or affected their mood?

In my personal version of the story, the rider actually realises that their quest is not as urgent as they first thought and ends up going to the pub. In the lyrics that Flanders and Swann added, you may remember the protagonist losing his horn and taking up the tuba instead! Your pupil can find a story more suited to them. Again, add as much detail as possible: what is the quest about exactly, who do they meet and what do they find out? How do they feel as they ride off again after each encounter?



Using story to overcome technical challenges – 633 Squadron

Many brass players play the theme to *633 Squadron* by Ron Goodwin for their Grade 4. It has technical challenges, but we can use story to motivate us to work through these problems. We can find out from the title that it's a theme from a film and a quick Google tells us: *The plot involves the exploits of a fictional World War II British fighter-bomber squadron.* That's enough information for our imagination to take over.

We are flying a plane which is immediately engaged in battle.



It's firing its guns and soaring through the sky and we can separate the main theme into these two elements.



We could then extend both phrases to make two short exercises.



For the “machine gun” we need the constant accents to sound like rapid fire. The quavers need to be metronomic and there must never be a decrease in volume as the exercise progresses – that would mean the gun isn't firing properly.

For the aircraft motion, we need to focus on airflow to allow the plane to soar. If you lose concentration allowing the airflow to decrease, you will fall off the note, or it will get quieter or cut out; in your story the aircraft will crash.

Technical work is all done within the framework of the story by focusing on the sound that's needed to express the story. **RS**

To watch a video demonstration with further thoughts on learning *633 Squadron* using storytelling, go to www.british-horn.org > members > videos [or click HERE](#)

Part 3 of this series will look at how to improve technique using story.

Horn Health Matters with osteopath Kelly Haines



Practice makes perfect! Correct?

We've all heard it. Some of us may have said it to our students. Practice makes perfect. The more you do something the better you become. The harder you push, the stronger you become. True?

Yes and no.

It is true that repetition of an activity can make that activity easier, as our bodies and/or minds become used to doing it. We build fitness by going to the gym, doing "Couch to 5K", or HIIT classes, for example. We play scales faster and more accurately with practice. We become familiar with tricky passages of music with practice. But I want to discuss over-practising. Just like over-training can slow down progress, is it possible that practising too much can actually have a negative effect?

I've mentioned in previous articles that playing the horn is a bit like being an athlete. We practice (train), we perform in concerts, we adopt awkward postures, we push our heart rate up, sometimes things go really well, and sometimes not. We have to deal with the psychological aspect of performance, so there are many parallels, yet athletes often plan in rest days or do "recovery sessions". This isn't something I've witnessed much with musicians.

As horn players we recruit many muscles. Not only the facial muscles of the embouchure, but those in the jaw, throat, neck, spine, ribs, diaphragm, abdomen, pelvis and legs (to name but a few). Our shoulders and arms bear much of the weight of the horn, the muscles of the left forearm and hand provide the dexterity to move the valves, while the right arm contributes to sound and timbre.

In addition to this, we are recruiting the cardiovascular system and the respiratory system which control breathing, heart rate and blood flow. The nervous system is working to co-ordinate all these systems as well as processing the notes we see on the page.

The brain power to play an instrument is the equivalent of a full body workout. Almost all regions of the brain are involved. Studies have shown that playing an instrument enhances com-

munication between left and right sides of the brain, improves decision making and hand-eye co-ordination. Neuroplasticity in musicians can be high. The more we engage in an activity, the more the neurones all work together and form stronger links. This has widespread benefits to our overall health.

Adaptation

When athletes train, they don't get fit while they're actually running or lifting weights. It's during the rest period after this that tissue adaptation occurs. Reactions to the physical stress placed on their bodies encourages a cascade of changes within the body such as tissue repair, new cell growth and the neuroplasticity mentioned earlier. Building stronger muscles is a reaction to them having been worked hard, and this process takes time. If the athletes train hard and fast, working the same sets of muscles every day, they will not allow time for this adaption. Injury and burnout occur. This is known as over-training syndrome. To avoid this, athletes train in a number of ways. Swimmers don't spend all their time swimming in the hope that will make them faster. Dry-land training (weights, cardio, yoga, etc.) is equally important.

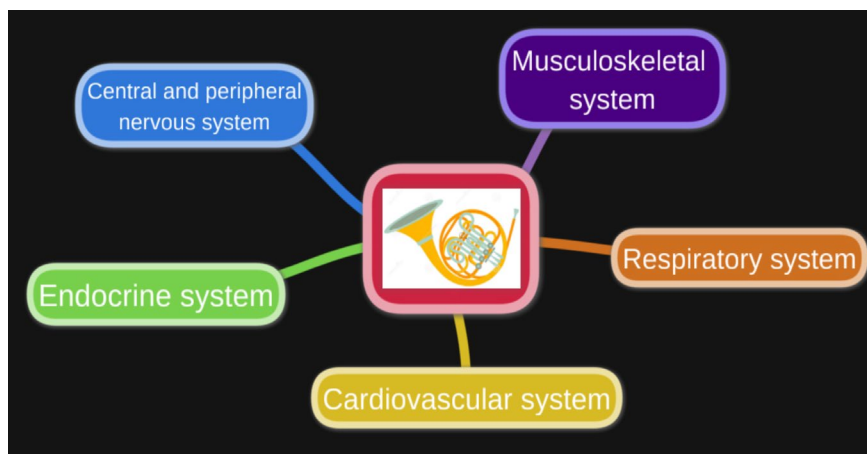
The same applies to horn playing.

When we practise we are asking the brain to make new connections and process information faster, so that it can send signals to all those body systems listed above to allow us to play the notes in a way we need to. If we want to build stamina after a break from playing and all we do is focus on this, then we run the risk of over-working the tissues: the lips could end up more fatigued. Another example is spending hours and hours on tricky passages and just not getting them right. Where's the logic? You've practised hard, focused intensely for hours and still can't get it right. It's because we're pushing the body to adapt and change quicker than it can; it can't keep up. Have you noticed if you take a break and come back to it then things feel better?

Adaptation is a highly complex and energy-sapping process. New blood vessels are formed, cells within each tissue change to accommodate the "stress" placed upon them so that, when next exposed to such stress, the body deals with it better. Muscles grow stronger, become more agile, co-ordination is quicker. The body needs time to process this; in some cases it can take a couple of days.

What's the solution?

Variety is the spice of life. Whilst it's important to practise all aspects of horn playing, doing



Music and the brain

Playing and listening to music works several areas of the brain

Corpus callosum:

Connects both sides of the brain

Motor cortex:

Involved in movement while dancing or playing an instrument

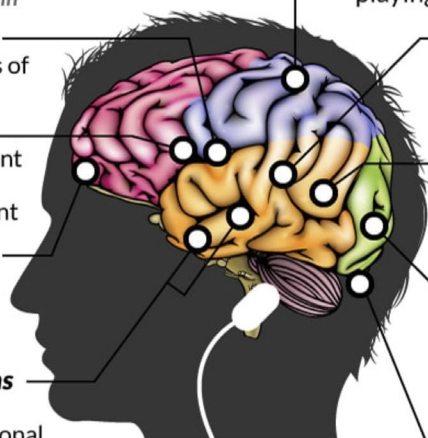
Prefrontal cortex:

Controls behavior, expression and decision-making

Nucleus accumbens and amygdala:

Involved with emotional reactions to music

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Sensory Cortex:

Controls tactile feedback while playing instruments or dancing

Auditory cortex:

Listens to sounds; perceives and analyzes tones

Hippocampus:

Involved in music memories, experiences and context

Visual Cortex:

Involved in reading music or looking at your own dance moves

Cerebellum:

Involved in movement while dancing or playing an instrument, as well as emotional reactions

it all at once might not be such a good idea. So, for example, if you have a practice session of stamina building, then the next day could be flexibility exercises. If you practise high notes, then follow this with an easier-register exercise. You are still working, but not in quite the same way. It's OK to take a break and have a rest; it gives the body chance to adapt, and can also recharge our batteries and make us focus more clearly.

I also wonder about overall physical health. If the cardiovas-

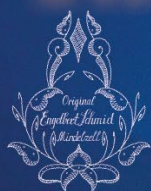
cular and respiratory systems have a work-out now and then, surely that will help with horn playing?

As always, I hope you've enjoyed this article. If you have something you'd like me to explore in future articles, then please do get in touch. **KH**

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Sarah Willis Mozart y Mambo: Cuban Dances

Sarah Willis (horn), Havana Lyceum Orchestra, The Sarahbanda, José Antonio Méndez Padrón (ALPHA878)

Review by Richard Steggall

As horn players, we like to know where we stand on various things: who our favourite soloists are, what repertoire the instrument is best suited to, or which players encapsulate the sound of a particular orchestral section. But sometimes our preconceptions are challenged.

Sarah Willis is always willing to stretch the boundaries of what the horn is capable of, looking for fresh audiences to fall for her beloved instrument. Her follow-up album to *Mozart y Mambo* (2020) was released in September 2022 with a flurry of social media activity, including clips of her salsa dancing with horn in hand. One of the world's best-known classical musicians, Sarah is better known to horn players as a world-class orchestral low horn player rather than as a soloist. For some, the jump from a powerful section anchor to a delicate Classical soloist may seem like an unnatural move, let alone the colossal leap to becoming a Cuban band leader!

My own baggage when approaching this album stems from arriving at music college many years ago believing the greatest ever wind quintet piece was Terence Greaves's "Mozart's Turkey Rock Mambo"! There followed a realisation, as Arturo Sandoval blasted across the college bar, that maybe French horns (not to mention bassoons and oboes) just weren't that "cool", and my quintet wasn't going to make it to Wigmore Hall playing "Beethoven's Fifth Bossa Nova". I thought I best knuckle down to music with a little more gravitas and grandeur, turning my back on all thoughts of Mozart and mambos...

If you have any preconceptions that make you reluctant to engage with Sarah Willis's *Mozart y Mambo: Cuban Dances*, then I would suggest you leave your baggage at the door; this album is absolutely wonderful. You can rest assured that Sarah Willis doesn't do anything in half measures; she puts her whole heart and soul into this project and the results are stunning. She describes the project as "exciting, unique and, I admit, somewhat crazy", but the craziness is certainly worth it as there are so many moments of beautiful music making on the album.

Like the first *Mozart y Mambo* album, Sarah combines Cuban pieces with Mozart concertos. *Horn Concertos Nos. 1 &*

2 appear on this album and the performances from both soloist and orchestra, the Havana Lyceum Orchestra, are incredibly stylish. Sarah combines crisp articulation and superb lyricism. Her use of a gentle vibrato when the music has space harks back to the great German traditions of Hermann Baumann and Peter Damm. This is not an orchestral player "having a go" at being a soloist – this is the real deal.

The main work alongside the Mozart concertos is *Cuban Dances* for horn, strings and percussion – a six-movement work containing six different dances from across Cuba by six different composers, commissioned by Sarah. Each has its own character, but the moments combine so well together that they create a complete and truly joyful work. For me, the highlight of the whole album is the fourth dance, "Un Bolero para Sarah" by Jorge Aragón. Sarah's tone and shaping of each phrase is just perfect and brings to mind Barry Tuckwell's playing on his album *A Sure Thing: Music of Jerome Kern*. I somehow doubt if Tuckwell's dancing was ever up to Willis's though, and her understanding of the Cuban rhythms makes her playing brim with confidence and authority. Although crossing into music more associated with the other (dare I say "cooler") instruments, this work is so definitely made for the horn that I have no doubt it will become a fixture in more soloists' repertoire.

There are three more tracks on the album, the stand-out being Aragón's arrangement of the classic Cuban song "Vicente Años". Here, Sarah is joined by the singer Carlos Calunga who listeners might recognise as one of the original voices of the Buena Vista Social Club.

Although it's fun to try to identify players who have influenced her sound and playing, this album is uniquely Sarah Willis. Do yourselves a favour: pour yourself a large glass of Rum, put on your headphones and sit back and enjoy this extraordinary talent. And if you find it just too intoxicating, you can always find four friendly wind players and have a go at "Mozart's Turkey Rock Mambo"; you'll be brought back down to Earth pretty quickly!



Salon Music for horn

Renée Allen (Horn), Zvi Meniker
(Piano)

Arcantus Audio (ARC 20017)

Review by John Humphries

A CD devoted to repertoire, mostly unknown, gathered together on the grounds that it was all published by the same 19th-century publishing house, A.E. Fischer of Bremen, and played on historic instruments by a player with whose name you may not know, sounds pretty “niche”, but this is one of the most memorable

and engaging recordings I have heard in ages, so please do read on...

The first track, Christian Rummel's *Fantasia* on 'Lucia di Lammermoor' is worth the price on its own. No, I hadn't heard of it either, but this barnstorming music is full of early-Romantic passion and features virtuosic playing from both horn player and pianist. And if you are worried that the use of historic instruments is going to be a hindrance to your enjoyment, then please be reassured that it won't.

Allen displays complete mastery of her chosen instruments throughout, including a rotary-valve horn made by Leopold Uhlmann and marketed by Fischer. Player and instrument create a wonderful, velvet sound in the quieter music, which broadens into something quite spine-tingling as the playing gets louder. Schumann's *Adagio and Allegro*, the one piece on the disc which most horn players are sure to know, benefits hugely from this lovely instrument: the *Adagio* is ardent, and the *Allegro* is brilliant.

And the remainder of the repertoire is very engaging, too. Louis Scharr's *Allegro*

deserves to become a horn players' “earworm”, and Allen captures the yearning qualities inherent in Louis Curth's *Abschied* perfectly. Her mid-19th-century Ignaz Lorenz hand horn, used in Henri Lübeck's *Le Congé*, Gally's *Fantasia: Le Baiser*, and in other repertoire too, is another beautiful instrument, beautifully played. While Allen exploits its capacity for veiled sonorities, more nervous listeners, concerned about the natural horn's capacity to snarl, will find nothing here to frighten them. Pianist Zvi Meniker gets his chance to shine in some carefully chosen short items by Chopin and Mendelssohn and these also serve as palate-cleansers for the main items on the menu.

The CD is complemented by Allen's own extensive and exemplary booklet notes. I hear that a follow-up recording is on its way. I can't wait!

To Diversify or Not to Diversify by Robert Parker

Should horn players play other brass instruments?* Purists will always say “never”, but various recent events have given me pause for thought, and reminded me of my early experiences doing just that. After leaving music college I dabbled in the decadent world of swing music, so I do know something about diversifying.

In June this year I attended Peter Hudson's funeral. He was 85 and had been a real musical force in the East Midlands for 40 years. Back in the early 1980s I had just started work as a full-time instrumental music teacher for Nottinghamshire, living in Newark. Despite being busy all day, I was at a loose end in the evenings, and that was when Pete encouraged me to join his Dandelion Days Dance Orchestra. I played the cornet (the instrument is an old Higham, and originally my grandfather's when he played in the Trumpington Town Band) as I didn't own a trumpet at the time. The DDDO was great fun – a slightly unusual combination of piano, double bass, rhythm guitar, occasional drums, alto and tenor sax, me on cornet, and three violins. We played lots of arrangements by Jimmy Lally amongst others, most of which could withstand all manner of expansion or contraction depending on the line-up of players available. We did gigs, and it introduced me to a whole new world of music that horn players seldom, if ever, encounter. The arrangement of

“Truckin’” (originally recorded by Fats Waller & His Rhythm in 1935) became my favourite number.

There was, of course, a downside. I had joined the Nottingham Philharmonic Orchestra on 4th horn, which met on Tuesday evenings, while the DDDO rehearsed at Kirridges pub in Newark on Wednesday evenings. I found it took me all of those six days until the next Tuesday to recover my horn embouchure! Pete told me not to worry – he'd started on clarinet, but wanted to play saxophone too. He initially found it tricky to swap from one to the other, but perseverance paid off. For me, playing the low horn parts seemed to help (I don't know if I would have managed had I been in the hot seat) and I was able to live in both worlds for about five years. Towards the end of my time with the DDDO, a real trumpeter (David Robinson) arrived on the scene, and I gratefully shifted over to the 2nd seat.

I mentioned “various recent events” earlier. We were a horn down for the Nottingham Symphony Orchestra's concert on 9th July this year and I thought of a very good player currently studying at Oxford University who had been principal horn in the Nottingham Youth Orchestra. Unfortunately, he was unavailable, and when I mentioned this to his mother, who plays flute in the Nottingham Concert Band which I conduct (it's a

small world) she said that he rarely plays the horn now. Apparently, when he got to Oxford he didn't get much horn playing, so turned to the trombone and is now in great demand. He had been playing the trombone "on the side" while at school and has now gone where the action is for him – depriving the horn world of a talented player.

The other "recent event" was when both the 1st and 2nd flutes of the NSO unfortunately got COVID and had to miss that same concert. One place was filled by a former principal flute of the NYO, who is now studying at one of the UK music colleges. During a brief conversation she said she was not getting much playing on the flute, and had actually got many more gigs on saxophone, despite her teacher not being keen on her "diversifying". When Mike Mower, who I knew from my schooldays, got into the Royal Academy of Music back in the late 1970s, he told me that his flute teacher, Gareth Morris (Dennis Brain's great friend and colleague in the Philharmonia), would have sacked him had he found out he was playing the saxophone too. Mike went on to form the highly successful saxophone quartet

Itchy Fingers. It seems that attitudes towards diversifying haven't changed much in the teaching world over the past 45 years.

So, what is the answer? As teachers we need to give students the leeway to follow their hearts, and if that means diversifying by playing another instrument, why not? (Provided they can understand the possible consequences of having to adapt from one embouchure to another). It certainly gives them more opportunities and employment options. For myself, I still occasionally play the "Last Post" on trumpet, but those dance band days are over.

Finally, I knew Gary Koop (formerly of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Orchestra) when he worked for Leicestershire Arts as a horn teacher. We met in the orchestra pit accompanying shows from time to time, and I could never work out how he did so many more than me – until I learnt that he also played electric bass!

RP

*The Wagner tuba doesn't count as it uses the same mouthpiece as the horn.

Malcolm Pfaff (1942-2022)

Malcolm Pfaff, long-time 4th Horn of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, has recently died. **Tony Catterick** tells us his life story.

Malcolm Reynold Pfaff was born on 16th May 1942 in Ripon, Yorkshire. His father was a distinguished musician and Head of Trent Park Teacher Training College in Enfield for many years. Malcolm had a younger brother, Graham, who became a

professional oboist. The family moved south from Yorkshire to East Ham, a suburb of London in 1955, where Malcolm began playing a piston-valve French horn with an F crook, aged 13, having lessons with a local peripatetic brass teacher. Moving on, Malcolm changed to an Italian compensating instrument aged 16, taught himself, and managed to play Principal Horn in Essex Youth Orchestra at this stage.

Aged 18, Malcolm won a place at Queen's College, Oxford to read music but left after one year. He bought himself an Alexander 103 double horn and went to study at Trinity College of Music, where he was taught by Jim Burditt. After one year at Trinity, Malcolm worked as a Lloyds Insurance Underwriter for another year before moving on to the Royal College of Music, where we first met. Malcolm studied there for a year with Douglas Moore, Principal Horn of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, before successfully auditioning for the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. After some rearranging of the horn section, he settled on 4th horn in 1967 and remained in the chair for 30 years until he left playing behind him and became Head of Finance and Administration of both the Bournemouth orchestras. For many years he was an enthusiastic member of Dorchester Bridge Club and was very well liked. He was also involved as Treasurer of the Thomas Hardy Society, based in Dorchester.

Malcolm Pfaff died on 23rd September 2022, aged 80. **TC**



Malcolm Pfaff at the Great Hall, Exeter 1973
(Photo: Tony Catterick)

Willi Watson (1942-2022)

Willi Watson, horn player to the Queen on the Royal Yacht Britannia, Sales Manager of Paxman Musical Instruments Ltd, co-founder of the British Horn Society, raconteur *par excellence*, inspirational brass teacher, friend to so many, and so much more, has recently died. BHS Historian **Tony Catterick** has compiled a biography with help from some of Willi's great friends.

On 25th September a message arrived from John Pignéguy with the following tragic news, "I'm sorry to have to bring you the sad news that Willi Watson passed away at home on the morning of Friday 23rd September 2022, aged 80. Those of us who knew Willi have fond memories of him. His strongly held and articulated opinions, balanced with his depth of knowledge and love of music, and especially the horn, inspired love and loyalty from his many friends and colleagues. He regaled us with wonderful stories of his life spending nine years in the Band of the Royal Marines, then studying at the Royal College of Music before going on to work at Paxmans, followed by many years as an inspirational brass teacher. We shall all miss him."

To all those who knew him, this has come as very sad news indeed. He had been bravely fighting illness for some years, but had not let this daunt him and his fortitude and typical "get on and do" character shone through to the end.

My first memories of Willi go back to the late 1960's when meeting him in Paxman's in Long Acre, London. When he was Sales Manager, this ebullient bearded fellow greeted everyone the same, whether it was a fellow pro, a student, a teacher, a customer or Gerd Seifert from the Berlin Philharmonic. I remember that morning very well; Willi called him "Gerd" to his face!

Willi Watson was born on 22nd August 1942 in Royal Tunbridge Wells Hospital. His father was the manager of a hop farm in Yalding in Kent, and Willi attended Miss Apps Kindergarten in Cranbrook. Together with Willi's elder brother Graham, the family moved to Brighton and the brothers were sent to Dulwich College Prep School. Willi himself recounts, "I joined the Royal Military School of Music (RMSM) in 1956 aged 14 years and 2 months and learned the horn from scratch on a pre-war Boosey single-F peashooter [dated 1905 – ed]. In 1959, aged 17 and 2 weeks, I played Strauss Horn Concerto No. 1 on that horn in the final of the Cassalls Silver Medal competition. I didn't win! The guy who did was a cornet player from a Welsh brass band background and he'd been playing "Zelda", his chosen piece, since he was about 2! A few weeks after this, I suddenly had to change my old banger for one of the new double horns being issued throughout the RM Band Service; they were all

silver-plated B&H "Imperials"! I joined the Royal Yacht Band in Portsmouth in 1960 and quickly earned enough dosh to order a brand-new Paxman gold-brass full double which was numbered 1260... December 1960... in the days when Paxman hand-built one horn a month in a pre-Merewether near-103 design".

Willi left the Royal Marines in 1967 and enrolled as a horn pupil at the Royal College of Music (RCM) on a three-year course, under Douglas Moore (Principal Horn of the BBC Symphony Orchestra), exchanging his beloved gold-brass Paxman for an Alex 103. After his studies, Willi worked as a freelance player where he was Principal Horn with the London Festival Ballet and undertook extra work with the London Symphony Orchestra. However, he developed problems with his teeth, and in 1971 joined Paxman Musical Instruments Ltd, becoming their very successful Sales Manager for nine years.

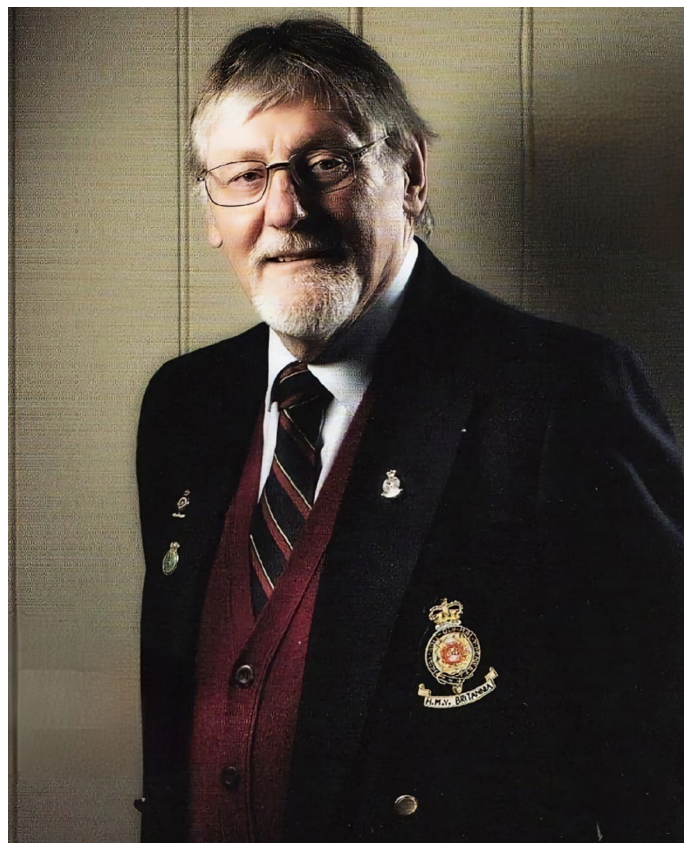


One of Willi's greatest friends, Frank Lloyd, writes, "Willi was to spend nine years in the Band of the Royal Marines and delighted in regaling wonderful stories of his life in band, with memorable tours of service in the RM Band on HMS Centaur and The Royal Yacht Britannia. His years as a freelance horn player included a stint working as a roadie in the Maynard Ferguson Band!"

"At that time he started working at Paxman where his close friendship with Richard Merewether, the chief horn designer of Paxman at the time, saw the company go from strength to strength. He was a co-founder of the British Horn Society in 1980 and accompanied Paxman at numerous exhibitions as part of the International Horn Society symposia around the world.

"There followed many years as an inspirational brass teacher in Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, nurturing many a talented brass player to success in the profession and beyond. After his teaching career, he settled in Norfolk with his wife of 50 years, Lesley. As keen gardeners, they spent years developing and nurturing a spectacular garden that would become their pride and joy, accompanied by their ever-present and much-loved cocker spaniels."

Another great friend of Willi's, Bryan Walker, a former Royal Marine Bandsman writes, "I spoke to Willi, albeit by email, a few days before his 80th birthday. As a horn player, I first got to know him in 1977 when I bought my first Paxman horn. I remember the day, it was the 7th of the 7th, 77! I was at the Odeon Leicester Square with Commando Forces Plymouth Band, playing for the world première of *The Spy Who Loved Me* which gave me the opportunity to nip over to Paxman at Covent Garden and collect my horn and play on it for the first time that evening. Willi was one of the founders of the British Horn Society and organiser of the annual Horn Festivals. These were wonderful occasions as we were able to rub shoulders with the likes of Barry Tuckwell, Alan Civil, Ifor James and our very own Frank Lloyd."



For me, Willi was one of the most interesting, intelligent, funny, warm-hearted characters I have had the privilege of knowing. I will miss our long phone calls, some going into overtime especially! We all send our condolences, love and best wishes to Lesley.

There will be no funeral as Willi had decided he wanted a direct unattended cremation. If anyone wishes to give a donation in his memory, perhaps they could send it to the Hillside Animal Sanctuary at Hilltop Farm, Hall Lane, Frettenham, Norwich NR2 7LT, marking it: "In memory of Willi Watson". **TC**



Vienna horn, model 109D

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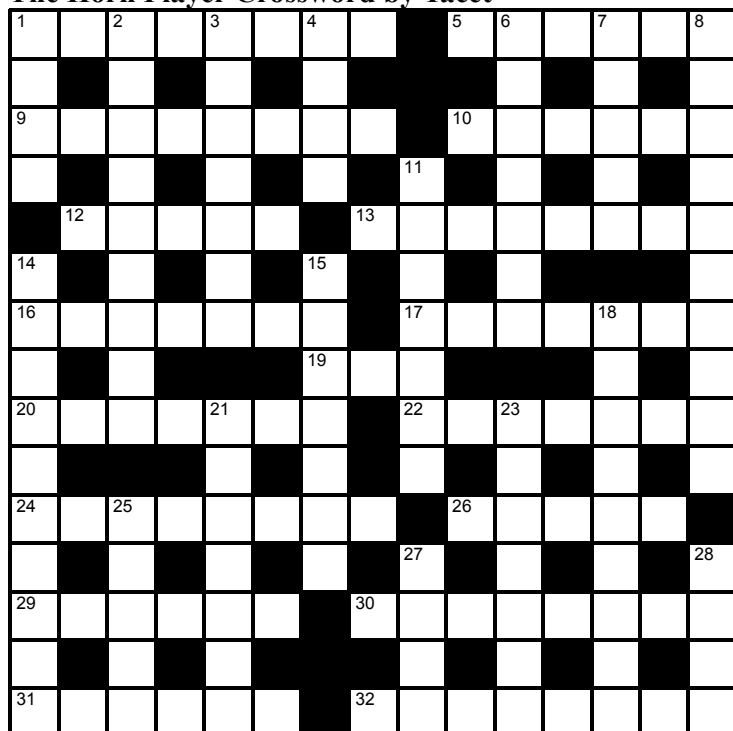
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Naturhorn, model 510

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Email: luke@woodheadhornrepair.co.uk

The Horn Player Crossword by Tacet



Across

- 1 In reversing see a learner behind vehicle getting bash in Notting Hill? (8)
- 5 Composer of 30, 24, 9 often accompanied by Liszt (6)
- 9 Suitor, no beginner, true to form making advance (8)
- 10 Small rodent trapped in bag out immediately (6)
- 12 Eg Caesar hurried round old Forum's East end (5)
- 13 Passionate ex-GI enthrals macho types (8)
- 16 Swallows sing and set off (7)
- 17 Where heart of Milano repeatedly welcomes Tosca (not having to)? (2,5)
- 19 Equipment useful for Alps' kilometres (3)
- 20 King Lear endlessly breaks bond (7)
- 22 Old French language translated by actin' CO (7)
- 24 Loo - it's backed up after what's offered at college celebration (8)
- 26 Android maybe gives garbage after inputting of bull initially (5)
- 29 Nerd's articles about alternative Mozart catalogue reference (6)
- 30 Don, possibly a rotter abused mice (8)
- 31 Sign up and pay attention - two at back come to front! (6)
- 32 This opener under another name could sound like Handel (8)

Correct solutions were received from: Fiona Clifton, Kate Coles, Simon Cove, Kate Flannery, Hazel Fox, Bruce Hebblewhite, Ronan Heffer, James Holloway, Fiona Hughes, Marian Kirton, David Lowe, Robert Parker, Charles Smith, Andrew Stockall, Roger Swann and Sam Wood. 23 ac. SHEET STEEL caused a few problems. Prize draw winner is Hazel Fox of Cheddar, Somerset.

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Email (optional)*.....

Please send solution with name and address to arrive by 15th January 2023 to:

The Horn Player Crossword, 23 Lane Ings, Marsden, Huddersfield HD7 6JP. Correct solutions received by the closing date will be entered in the prize draw for a gift token. A photocopy is acceptable, or scan to candsley@gmail.com

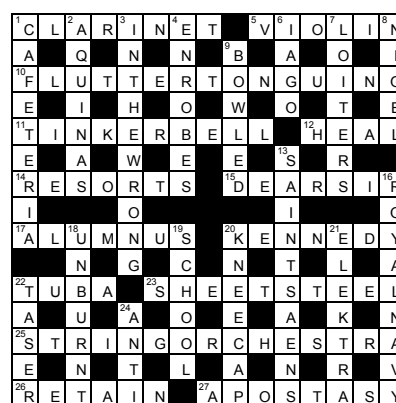
All contact details kept confidential.

* Not required if I already have it - CL.

Down

- 1 Where to find live or oven-ready chickens (4)
- 2 Harmonium playing in rose garden with no end of tenderness (4,5)
- 3 Weeping, I'll get over new rents (2,5)
- 4 Hairstyle for fabulous groups on way up (4)
- 6 Go back heading for right exit (7)
- 7 In this pad I've got full board! (5)
- 8 Composer of 1 across of the 21 in Paris without reserves eats in sadly... (5-5)
- 11 ...Composer of 12, 1 across, 9 is only just overdrawn we hear! (7)
- 14 Being mouldy, all Brie off menu (4,2,4)
- 15 Spear carried by some brass eg aide-de-camp (7)
- 18 Kids' toy superhero cannot aim when disassembled (6,3)
- 21 After an outbreak of inhumanity bang up beasts (7)
- 23 Dog must have colder - not half - fish stew (7)
- 25 Frown from steeplejack at first mounting chimney cover (5)
- 27 What's heard repeatedly gets hard CEO angry (4)
- 28 Mild eruption, one that's not striking (4)

Solution to previous puzzle



Notes; Across: 1 Blew, anag. incl. L, 5 Fiddle, i.o.l in vin, 10 Horn, anag., 11 Fairy, tinkler, bell, 12 Better, first letters, 14 Breaks, re, sorts, 15 Gent, anag., 17 Grad, anag. less p, 22 Brass, hidden, 23 Bodies, he in set + homophone of steal, 25 Wind, anag. incl. r,r, 26 Hand, hidden, 27 God, A post + anag., **Down:** 1 Ca., fete + air rev., 2 quin in a, a, S, 3 anag. incl. t, 4 rob in anag., 6 First letters, ref. Othello, 7 alternate letters, 8 anag., 9 homophone of bold, 13 anag., 16 Roy + Al + n + a + v(er)y, 18 (S)unburnt, 19 2 mngs., 21 anag., 22 anag. less r & lit, 24 homophone of anti.

