

# Cornucopia

News and articles for anyone interested in the horn

September 2008



Páll Sólstein

## Cornucopia

is published four or five times a season. It is free, although contributions are welcome.

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www.hornsociety.org.

## Music in the Faroe Islands

by Páll Sólstein

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

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

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

After playing with the Jerusalem Symphony and a

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

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

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

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

## What comes after the warm-up?

by Jonathan Stoneman



Reading Lydia Butler-Blais thoughts on not warming up (March 2008), I was reminded of a lecture given last year by British pro Bob Ashworth on practicing. His big question was "What do you do after you warm up?" (assuming you're at home rather than in a concert hall or rehearsal room). Nobody came up with lasting or memorable answers at that lecture, and I've been thinking about it since. There are a lot of warm-up routines around, many of them excellent, and most of us have some kind of routine. But if we're not practicing for a concert, or preparing a piece for a lesson, what should we do after we warm up?

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

I had a thought today as I was walking the dog. Max,

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

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

Jonathan plays in a community orchestra in Devon UK and works at the BBC.

## News and Events

About 31% of subscribers have opted for email delivery. If you would like to help the campaign to keep down costs, email [mbkloss@comcast.net](mailto:mbkloss@comcast.net).

**Jason White** (Cambridge) reports that Vento Chiaro released its debut CD with music of David Maslanka, Bach, Poulenc, and von Zemlinsky, available through Ongaku Records and other distributors, including iTunes and CD Baby. See [www.ventochiaro.org](http://www.ventochiaro.org).

**Bretchen Snedker**, a graduate student at Eastman, died in April in a head-on collision (the other driver crossed the center line) while she was on her way to Colgate for a teaching job.

**Alberto Suarez** is now Principal Horn in the Kansas City Symphony.

**Carolyn Barber** (Lincoln NE) is Director of Bands at the university. "Although I'm 95% conductor now, I do still play and enjoy keeping up with what's happening around the country."

**Dick Gerstenberger** died in March in Windham NH at age 84. Dick was born in Lawrence MA, served in the Army during WWII, and earned a BA from NEC and MM from BU while playing with local ensembles. He taught at Rutgers, then at Drake University and in the Des Moines schools. He played horn in the Kansas City Philharmonic (1948-49) and later in the Des Moines Symphony. Dick and his wife, Martha, retired to a family camp in NH. Services have been held in Des Moines and Lawrence.

**Susan Salminen** (Easton PA, originally from VT) teaches English as a second language to adults at a college. "I usually dust off the horn in the summers if I can find something to play in and might think about a local orchestra for next semester."

**Rebecca Boehm Shaffer** has published a reference for horn ensemble music. See [www.thehornguide.com](http://www.thehornguide.com).

**Loren Fields** held a Maine Horn Day in June and is planning a New Year's Horn Day on January 10, 2009.

**Lydia Busler-Blais** and the Heritage Brass Quintet performed at the Saint Gaudens National Heritage Site in NH in August.

The 2008 Improvisation Workshop for Horn Players in July in Heath MA, led by **John Clark** (jazz horn), **Jeff Agrell** (classical horn), and **Evan Mazunik** (piano and sound painting), was an intensive weekend of learning and performing, often involving natural sounds. Participants were Mel Bienenfeld, Thea Calitri-Martin, Lucy Colwell, Stan Corfman, Nannette Foley, Tim Gallagher, Cynthia Harkleroad, Angela Haynes, Pamela Marshall, Jim Phelan, Mike Simpson, and Les Patlove. "I learned a completely new approach to practicing," says Jim Phelan.

**Abby Mayer** (Cornwall NY), **Martha Gerstenberger** (Windham NH), **Lisa Maxwell** (Dedham), **Elizabeth Rhodes DeMaine** (Grosse



### 2009 Northeast Horn Workshop

March 13-15, Ithaca College, Ithaca NY

Host: Alex Shuhan 607-277-6066 [ashuhan@ithaca.edu](mailto:ashuhan@ithaca.edu)  
3322 Whalen Center, Ithaca College, Ithaca NY 14850



### 2009 IHS International Symposium

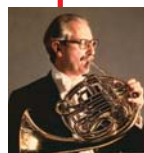
June 2-7, 2009 at Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois USA

Host: Randall Faust 309-298-1300 [RE-Faust@wiu.edu](mailto:RE-Faust@wiu.edu)  
WIU School of Music, 126A Browne Music Hall, Macomb, IL 61455

Recitals, clinics, presentations, horn choirs, exhibits, etc.

Special competitions for ensembles and solo jazz

[www.wiu.edu/horn](http://www.wiu.edu/horn)



### 2010 IHS International Symposium

July 19-25, 2010 in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Host: Peter Luff [p.luff@griffith.edu.au](mailto:p.luff@griffith.edu.au)

Join founding IHS president Barry Tuckwell down under

Pointe Farms MI), **Bob Moffett** (Milton), and **Caesar LaMonaca** (Billings MT) have sent contributions. Abby writes, "I thoroughly enjoy receiving Cornucopia and sometimes see my name in print ..." Lisa writes, "Thanks for the effort you put into Cornucopia. I'm working full-time as realtor, but I still play with the Merrimack Valley Philharmonic as well as the occasional musical or wind quintet." Elizabeth writes, "I enjoy receiving Cornucopia through the mail. I have moved a number of times and have always appreciated your keeping me on the mailing list." Bob has put off signing up for email delivery because he loves getting things in the mail, but now, he says, "The price of stamps is so high, it doesn't make sense any more."

*New members:* **Malcolm Perkins**, 9th grade in Belmont and BYSO, and Nathan Hsieh, 11th grade in Carlisle and NEC Youth Rep Orchestra, both students of Jim Mosher; **Win Quayle**, Lincoln, Rivers Symphony; **Páll Sólstein**, Faroe Islands; **Britt-Marie Jonsson**, Göteborg, Sweden; **Trajanus Scherlund**, Järoo, Sweden; **Jacob Keiding**, Vanløse, Denmark; **Johann Björn Ævarsson**, Reykjavik, Iceland; **Kennert Torlegård**, Stockholm; **Joe Walker**, Boston, recent NEC master's grad, looking for gigs; **Rebecca Shaffer**, Fort Collins CO, teaches in Laramie WY; **Alex Lasky**, Lisle IL; **Serene Karplus**, Nederland CO, taking up horn again after a hiatus; **Victor Paulis**, New Smyrna Beach FL; **Margda Waern**, Frolunda, Sweden; **Chris Griffin**, Fort Mill SC; **Peter Yurovich**, University of Oregon; **Charlie Lomas**, Klamath Falls OR; **John Dutton**, Billings MT; **Laurie Heidt**, Seattle; **Melinda Forthofer**, University of SC; and **Randall Faust**, Western Illinois University. ❖

