

# Cornucopia

News and articles for anyone interested in the horn

March 2009



Gail Williams

## Coming Home to Ithaca

by Gail Williams

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

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

After graduating from Ithaca in 1973, I earned a Masters in Music at Northwestern University, always expecting to use my education degree. With some luck in auditions, I performed with Lyric Opera of Chicago for four years before winning the audition for the Chicago Sym-

phony Orchestra. Being hired and shaking hands with Sir Georg Solti was one the most thrilling moments in my life. Performing the orchestral music with such great musicians has been immensely important in my musical life. To hear the best soloists in the world rehearse and perform inspired my interpretation of my own solos in all types of repertoire.

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

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

### Cornucopia

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

For further information, to add your name to the mailing list (email or regular mail), to send a contribution, or to submit material, contact:

#### New England Horn Society

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1 Concord Greene #8  
Concord MA 01742-3170  
USA  
978-369-0011  
mbkloss@comcast.net

#### Horn New England and Northeast Horn Workshop

www.HornNewEngland.org

#### International Horn Society

NEHS encourages membership in IHS (\$40/year). For further information, contact:

#### IHS Executive Secretary

Heidi Vogel  
PO Box 630158  
Lanai City HI 96763-0158  
exec-secretary@  
hornsociety.org

#### IHS Online

www.hornsociety.org.

## I found my horn was a bit of a devil to play

Reviews in *The Economist*, *the Wall Street Journal*, and *The Horn Call?* What kind of book is this? *A Devil to Play* is fun, funny, and (as the subtitle says) one man's year-long quest to master the orchestra's most difficult instrument - the horn. The book has also been turned into a one-man show in London (review in *The Horn Player*).

The title comes from the ditty by Flanders and Swan, sung to the last movement of the Mozart Horn Concerto K495 - the British title from the beginning of the line, the American title from the end. The author, Jasper Rees, had played horn, not very seriously, through school. Then, approaching age 40, he dragged his horn out of the attic, joined the mass horn choir at a British Horn Society festival, and decided he wanted to really learn to play the horn and needed a goal. His goal was to play Mozart's 3rd concerto K447 at the next BHS festival.

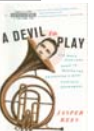
Rees is a journalist for the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Independent*, and the *Sunday Times*. He skillfully weaves history and anecdotes about contemporary horn players into a recounting of his year's quest. He attends the Kendall Betts Horn Camp and seeks advice from horn players around the world. Horn players will recognize many names, and they and non-horn players alike will learn about the horn and its history.

Rees states that the [French] horn workshop has never

been held in France - an ironic swipe but not true; the 1982 workshop was held in Avignon. Rees compares the IHS as a "worldwide organization" to baseball's World Series. That's harsh considering how the society has bent over backwards to bring in non-US members, charging them the same fees (the BHS charges extra for foreign members), offering national horn societies special rates, publishing articles in various languages, electing 41 non-US Advisory Council members (out of 103), and electing 25 non-US Honorary Members (out of 58). Of the past 40 workshops, 13 have been held outside the US, including Manchester UK. The IHS even has a project to provide membership for players in countries where economic conditions or currency regulations make regular membership impossible.

Rees is self-deprecating and humorous. His style is breezy, with British vocabulary and turns of phrase. The book includes a useful bibliography and comprehensive index; photos would have been a plus. Highly recommended - and when you've finished, pass it on to your significant other or a friend. A non-musician friend sums up, "It was consistently interesting, entertaining, and laugh-out-loud funny." ❖

*A Devil to Play*, Harper Collins, New York, 2008, or *I Found My Horn*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London 2008.



## News and Events

**Jamie Sommerville** (BSO) stepped in to perform Britten's Serenade when the Cantata Singers was unable to obtain the documents for Michael Thompson to come to the US. *Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal*, originally to be part of the Serenade but removed by Britten, was also on the program.

**Erik Svenson** (781-862-3296 erik.svenson@microsoft.com) is organizing the annual Esprit de Cor concert, Friday, May 22 at noon in Lexington. Rehearsals are Thursday evenings starting in the middle of March.

**Scott Burditt** (Hampten ME) Bangor Symphony principal horn, is playing the last movement of Mozart 2 with the combined University of Maine Symphonic Band and Timberlane High School Wind Ensemble at Symphony Hall, April 15, 7:30. Scott is getting an MM at UMaine.

**Paul Capehart** and **James Nickel**, former NEC students, and **Roger Kaza**, a former NEC student and member of the BSO, took part in the recording of *Texas Horns* (Crystal Records) by the 12 horns of the combined Houston and Dallas sections. James is now third horn in the Washington National Symphony, teaches at Catholic University, and lives in Fairfax VA. Paul is a native of Dallas and joined the Dallas horn section in 1971. Roger is a native of Portland OR and associate principal in Houston.

**Daniel Bloor** (Littleton CO) is principal horn of the Littleton Symphony Orchestra.

**Alison Young** (Westfield) was married recently and is now Alison Chaloux. "I'd rather have an electronic version, if available." Yes, definitely available! Anyone else interested, send me an email (see masthead).

**Jim Decker** (deckerhorn1@aol.com) writes that he is working on ten more audition works for the IVASI system.

**Ed Deskur** (Kilchberg, Switzerland) reports the birth of his second child, Maria Leokadia (Maja) Deskur.

**Andrew Spearman** (Wilmington CT), **Lucile Cronin** (Langhorn PA), **Phil Hooks** (Finksburg MD), and **Louise Wing** (Danvers) have sent contributions. Andy, of the Hartford Horn Quartet, writes, "I really enjoy receiving Cornucopia." Lucile writes, "I learn something from every issue. I learn things about horn players I have met at various conferences." Phil writes, "Thanks for your hard work." Louise moved and missed several issues; now she's back on the mailing list.

**Lost:** Kim Kamensky (USAREUR Band), Gerald Cohen (Flushing NY), LaDonna Swetnam (Henderson NV), Helena Giammarco (Block Island RI), Erica Chenworth (North Pole AK).

**New members:** **Catherine Redsell**, Kingston ON; **Katie McCarthy**, from St. Louis, a student of Doug Hill at University of Wisconsin; and **Gabriel Radford**, Toronto, recently playing extra in the BSO. ❖



### 2009 Northeast Horn Workshop

March 13-15, Ithaca College, Ithaca NY

Gail Williams, Adam Unsworth, American Horn Quartet  
Host: Alexander Shuhan 607-274-3344 nehw09@gmail.com  
School of Music, 3322 Walen Center, Ithaca NY 14850  
Mass choir, exhibits, recitals, master classes, lectures, etc.  
Registration, exhibitor forms, accommodations online  
[www.NortheastHornWorkshop.org](http://www.NortheastHornWorkshop.org)



### 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  
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  
Join founding IHS president Barry Tuckwell down under

### Susan LaFever plays Christoph Forster

Sunday, March 15 at 4 p.m., Hackensack NJ  
Forster Horn Concerto No. 2 with Bergen County Youth Orchestra  
[www.bergenyouthorchestra.org](http://www.bergenyouthorchestra.org)

### Jim Mosher in Strauss 2 on Cape Cod

March 28 at 7:30 p.m., Falmouth Academy  
With Simon Sinfonietta. See [www.somonsinfonietta.org](http://www.somonsinfonietta.org)

### NEC Brass Bash

April 5, 7 p.m., Jordan Hall, Free, Faculty and students performing  
Featuring Chris Martin, principal trumpet, Chicago Symphony

### Gus Sebring in Wyner & Brahms Trios

April 25, 7:30 p.m., Concord Public Library, Concord MA, Free  
Gus is a native of Concord and BSO Associate Principal  
Harumi Rhodes, violin and Yehudi Wyner, piano  
Reservations required, can be made after April 11 at  
978-318-3301 or [www.concordlibrary.org](http://www.concordlibrary.org)



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Jasper Rees

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