



The reference to "he and I" is in *The Horn Call*, Vol XXXV, No. 2: "He and I agree that small doses of Propranolol (10-20 mg) should be safe for most individuals. However we must emphasize that no one should start Propranolol without the supervision of a physician." At this point the reference to "He and I" stops. Possibly, I should blame the Editor or printer for not starting a new paragraph after "supervision of a physician." Honestly, I don't see how these lines are "unfortunate." Again, as Propranolol is a prescription drug, a physician must prescribe it. Presumably, any physician prescribing a drug will discuss the drug with the patient.

Glenn Dalrymple, M.D.

To trip or not to triple....?

I read Mr. Cerminaro's article rejoicing the triple horn in the latest *Horn Call* with great interest. Especially this statement was touching: "Phrasing with triple horns transforms fluid vocal ideas into confident musical realities." Congratulations to all who find an instrument with which they are really happy, it be a certain make, or, as in this case, a model with many features. However, I would like to comment on the prediction in this article about the future of instruments for horn players.

From my point of view the development of the horn seems to be going in several directions, the key words being diversity and versatility. The natural horn (from various periods) is now clearly back in business in Europe. I, for one, have been increasingly busy through last decades, performing orchestral or chamber music by Bach, Händel, Telemann, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn and other great composers, on instruments similar to what they had at the time. This includes Brahms op. 40, with a piano from 1853 and an old violin with gut strings. Indeed Brahms did have some very special sounds in mind!

Today the natural horn can be studied as the main instrument, for example in the distinguished old Leipzig Music Conservatory in Germany. There are many groups around performing and recording on period instruments or copies of such. More and more frequently conductors ask for natural horns in classical works. Smart students study natural horn on the side, in order to be better prepared for possible opportunities and challenges in their professional future. The single horns (in F or B^b) are also coming back in use, based on the desire of some groups and conductors to create a sound picture closer to what was there at the time of the composers.

The use of the high F-horn (in various combinations) in Europe did go through several stages after it was first introduced in the sixties. In the beginning it was welcomed by many players as the solution to all their problems; even some low horn players took to the high F-horn in order to feel more secure in the high range. Only after some years of experience one realised that players could miss notes on the high F-horn as well, those clams being far less discreet than those on longer horns. In addition, the sound often became thinner and less rich in overtones than on longer tubes.

Hermann Baumann was a great pioneer of descants at the early stages of his career; however, later he came more and more back to the double horn and to various natural horns. In Germany today the use of the regular double horn is considered the norm. In addition, most principal players are equipped with some sort of descant horn as a backup for the extreme range, in some cases a triple.

An interesting side effect of working more on the original lengths of tubes is the psychological one. For some players, the option of using shorter tubes may function temporarily as a "drug." But where is the next option when the novelty of the F alto horn rubs off? A flugelhorn in B^b? After having worked on D- and C-basso and such crooks for a while, the regular B^b horn comes back in its right perspective, in my experience, simply as a sufficiently secure alternative to the longer F-horn.

Of course I do understand the excitement of getting more fingering options and another "string" on the otherwise "two-stringed" double horn. I also see the need for these instruments for the specialists of today, the ones who have conquered the full range, including a fourth or so above the c^{'''}. However, I do not believe that all the rest of us will be taking to the triple — and the triple only — because it supposedly can cover everything. The double horn is already an acoustical compromise, and the triple horn much more so. Single B^b horns, when made very well, are generally better than the B^b side of a double horn. On a triple this only gets worse, forcing the triple players to use the F (or E^b) alto side of their horn more frequently than would have been necessary if the B^b horn side had been really good. From my observations, players with three horns at hand tend to choose the shorter option more and more often, even if the sound is not always the most suitable for the music in question. The quick fix is just all too tempting. The players themselves will try to ignore possible sound discrepancies, but the audiences may notice.

Frøydis Ree Wekre (Oslo, Norway)

In reply to Ms. Ree Wekre's very fine letter:

While I believe my devoted colleague Froydis Ree Wekre lends a bit too much weight to the place of period instruments in the current job market, I do feel she eloquently expresses the attitudes and perspectives of today's professional double horn players — and even single horn players. I also agree, that if one must play a double horn, having a descant horn at-the-ready is a necessity.

My article, however, looks to the future. A future in which competitiveness and complexity will exceed all previous generations, with all indicators pointing to even greater demands yet to come. Anyone familiar with the trends in contemporary music can attest to the extremes in range and dynamics; expectations that can no longer be sloughed off merely as "novelties" or "specialties" of composing, but amount simply to: The Music of Our Times.

I hope Ms. Ree Wekre will forgive me now for scolding her in the most kind hearted way I am able when I say that she must please not imagine that I myself, or Philip Myers, Marty Hackleman, William Lane, Bill VerMeulen, Roger Kaza, those



fabulous four of the AHQ, or any of the other front line triple experts, are in some manner using triple horns as a "quick fix" to put one over on our audiences. On the contrary, each of these gentlemen has given the maximum of themselves, delved more deeply and sacrificed more dearly than any other horn players known to me — all for the sake of their art. Far from seeking short cuts to artistry, this triple horn playing "band of brothers" now stand at the vanguard of today's finest in horn playing, and rival all previous generations for excellence and depth of artistry. *That* is progress. And, try as one may, most honored friend, Froydis, it cannot be halted!

John Cerminaro (Seattle)

I really enjoyed Nicholas Caluori's February 2005 article on Lorenzo Sansone. Having been an amateur horn player for about a half century, I have seen the Sansone name frequently, but really know little about him.

In about 1956 when I was a high school student in Brooklyn, NY I acquired a used Sansone double horn for the vast sum of \$50. This was one of his horns with the reversed sets of B^b and F horn slides. The entire horn is brass color; not the slightest hint of any silver. There are no strings on the valves; all metal linkages. The valve stops are twice as thick as on any horn I have ever seen. The keys are very stubby. There is a mounting bracket for a lyre.

The markings on the bell are: 604, Lorenzo Sansone, New York, U.S. I'm sure about the "04" part of the number, but the "6" is somewhat of a guess because it is not well engraved. (The quality problem discussed in the article?)

I always assumed that the "U.S." meant that this was an army horn. But I have no idea if it is one of the Empire Series discussed in the article or if the Empire Series was only for the five valve B^b horns.

I used that horn throughout high school and college. I always liked the reversed slide sets for the reason discussed in the article (B^b side fills up with water faster) plus the fact that I felt that there was less of a possibility of damage to the first and third slides with the reversed system. I still have this horn, but the condition of the valves has made it a living room decoration and memory generator rather than a functioning instrument.

Victor B. Godin (Boston)

To the editor:

Nicholas Caluori's article on Lorenzo Sansone (*The Horn Call*, February 2005) continued a great deal of information that is of great interest to those of us interested in the development of horn making and performance in the twentieth century. Caluori raises two points to which I would like to add some comments.

First, in his discussion of the five-valve B^b horn developed by Sansone, the author surmises that it was superseded by the double horn (in particular, the Conn 8D) in the Los Angeles studios as "Vincent DeRosa's career flourished" (p.52). This

did happen eventually, but rather later than the 1930s as implied in the article. I studied with Arthur Frantz, a studio contract horn player, in Los Angeles during the early 1950s and he was not alone in continuing to play the five-valve B^b horn (in his case, a fine Sansone model built by Alexander in the 1930s). There were good reasons that these horns were so popular in Los Angeles with busy studio and freelance players: they allowed the same range and accuracy as a double horn without the weight of a full double or the stuffiness of a compensating double. Most of the players of that generation played "off the leg" and advocated standing while practicing, so the lighter the horn (within reason) the better. Also, a lighter, more edgy sound recorded better in the period before sound recording became as sophisticated as it is now. The combination A/E and stopping valve also allowed alternate fingering for awkward passages. Frantz ultimately switched to a double horn in order to fit in with the changing demands of the film and recording studios, but always regretted giving up his five-valve instrument.

Second, Caluori mentions other models that Sansone developed and cites a double horn with "reversed sets of B^b and F horn slides" (p.54). Sansone was not alone in this and maybe not the first: other makers, such as August Knopf, also offered these horns. Caluori wonders why they did not find favor, given the theoretical convenience of easier access to the B^b valve slides. There was a basic design problem that offset any perceived convenience: the larger, lower F third-valve tuning slide tended to hit the bell branch when pulled out. Tilting the entire valve chest at an angle so that the tuning slides cleared the bell branch created other problems which, combined with the need to reroute the windways between F and B^b sides of the horn, discouraged most horn makers from developing this model.

Sincerely,

Richard V. West (Seattle)

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to some rather misleading remarks made about my doctoral thesis by Nicolas Caluori in his recent article about Lorenzo Sansone. In his article, Mr. Caluori presents an edited excerpt from my thesis, and then writes that the statement is inaccurate. My response is that when taken out of context, and edited so as to be incomplete, the statement is inaccurate. I say that Caluori's remarks are misleading for several reasons. First, he presents his argument in such a way as to imply that I was commenting on Sansone's five-valve B^b horn, which I was not. The quote comes five chapters into the essay, during a discussion of the resurgence of custom hornmakers in the second half of the twentieth century. In an effort to clarify my statements, I present the paragraph here in its entirety:

Although Sansone made horns well into the 1970's, the way in which he approached the task of making a horn places him in a different historical position from the other custom makers of the late