

# The Orchestral Audition Repertoire for Horn: Comprehensive and Unabridged

## Introduction and Table of Contents

You have before you what we believe to be a unique and extremely valuable resource. Please do bear with me through this introduction, so that I may explain what this publication is intended to be and what it is not.

As horn playing and horn pedagogy have evolved over the years, many of the former "great debates" seem to have been largely resolved. Now, in the United States as in the rest of the world, the vast majority of hornists stand when they perform solo repertoire. Increasingly, most hornists seem to concur (though in some cases perhaps grudgingly) that such repertoire should be performed from memory. Likewise, not so long ago, most horn players and pedagogues seemed to be coming to the conclusion that one should always study the orchestral repertoire from the original parts, rather than from an excerpt book. The excerpt books traditionally available were notorious for their inaccuracies; in an attempt to be concise they tended to omit important passages from many works and, inevitably, several standard works were excluded altogether. So, most of us began trekking back and forth from orchestra and conservatory libraries to the local photocopy shop, painstakingly building up our personal collection of complete parts. The procedure was time-consuming and ultimately costly, but students with professional aspirations saw no viable alternative.

Recently, a few new excerpt books have appeared which attempt to address many of the deficiencies of the old collections. Unfortunately, many student hornists have, in the interest of convenience or savings, begun short-sightedly entrusting their careers to those books. Please don't take my statements as an indictment of the efforts of the compilers of those excerpt books. I am certain that they have approached their undertaking with great expertise and nothing but the best of intentions, and, as I indicated, these books do represent a considerable improvement over their forerunners. Unfortunately, though, there are a few fundamental problems which no excerpt book can overcome. The name says it all: "excerpt books". They are by definition incomplete. To illustrate the danger posed by abridging the original materials, I would cite the example of some mock auditions I participated in adjudicating some years ago with a number of very talented students performing. We had included on the repertoire list the second movement of Brahms' Symphony no. 2, and were surprised when a number of the students simply stopped four measures before the end of the passage we wanted to hear. Apparently, the editor of the very popular excerpt book upon which they were relying didn't consider those measures to be important. Unfortunately, we did. We provided the affected players with the complete part but - believe me - in the majority of cases it was unpleasant for all parties concerned to have these players sightreading those measures under pressure, not least because the passage in question requires the somewhat awkward transposition of horn in B natural.

A further universal concern with excerpt books is the fact that they reengrave the parts. That may seem, at first thought, an advantage. Certainly many of the traditional orchestra parts that we've been reading from for years were poorly engraved in the first place or are reprinted from plates which are now simply in very bad condition, sometimes to the point of being nearly illegible. Why not read from a modern, clear, computer-set book? Allow me to present a scenario: you're on stage in \_\_\_\_\_ Symphony Hall (fill in the blank to fit your personal aspirations), ready to audition for the job of your dreams, and you are

asked to play from the orchestra's own parts, since they have marked all the passages the committee wishes to hear. Do you really want, at that moment, to be seeing the scruffy scrawl of the low horn parts to Don Quixote for the very first time?

Hopefully, this gives you some idea of why I continue to believe that it is absolutely essential to study and perform orchestral repertoire from the complete, original parts. Having seen that young hornists, to their detriment, were moving away from this notion, I determined that the best way to reverse this trend was to make those materials readily available to all hornists, so there could be no excuses. Thus, we decided to produce this volume. We have endeavored to address the questions of convenience and cost. Here you have in one volume virtually the entire orchestral audition repertoire for both high and low horn positions, reprinted from the original orchestral parts. We make available over a thousand pages of complete parts for less than the cost of the full set of many of the old excerpt book series. We present the parts in a top-quality D-ring binder in order to make this collection as functional as possible. Our intent in doing this is to allow the user to easily remove and carry with them (perhaps in a smaller binder) only those parts which are actually required for a given audition, lesson, practice session, etc..

Now, on to a few necessary caveats, beginning with a word about the selection of repertoire presented here. I strove to include absolutely all of the repertoire which hornists are commonly asked to prepare for orchestral horn auditions. Obviously, there was a practical limit to just how inclusive I could be, lest the resulting volume be of ridiculous proportions. Nonetheless, I believe that most people will agree that we have included an impressive amount of repertoire, including some works which have been traditionally hard to locate, such as the Schoenberg Chamber Symphony or the Shostakovich Cello Concerto. I am equally certain that many hornists will be disappointed to find their favorite semi-obscure excerpt missing. Indeed, after compiling the list of excerpts to be included, I discovered that one of the works from our own audition lists had not made the cut -- the Mozart Bassoon Concerto, which appears on our Associate Principal audition list. However, I couldn't honestly say that I had ever seen it on any other list, so I couldn't justify including it here. Many audition lists have their own peculiarities, and clearly, I could not foresee all of them. I recall several years ago seeing an audition list which seemed to include practically the complete orchestral works of Shostakovich, many of which are rarely played and virtually never appear on an audition. Coincidentally, the music director involved happened to be Maxim Shostakovich!

Some will no doubt complain that it is sacrilege not to include, for example, all of the symphonies of Beethoven. One can legitimately argue that the first, fourth or fifth symphonies of Beethoven are orchestral works of utmost significance, and therefore, well-rounded hornists would do well to be familiar with them. I do not disagree, but I would ask when any of those works was last seen on a professional orchestral audition repertoire list. Likewise, there are many works with prominent or challenging horn parts (the works of Nielsen, Sibelius, Copland, Janáček, Orff, and Barber come immediately to mind, but there are many others) which are nonetheless not normally used for auditions. Further, there are many monumental works of the orchestral repertoire (e.g. Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique* or Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra*) which seem to contain important excerpts for virtually every other instrument, but not much, honestly, for horn.

With that said, I should point out that there are six works which I felt should have been included in this volume but which we were unable, despite our best efforts, to publish. These are *Feste Romane* (Roman Festivals) of Respighi, *Le Baiser de la Fée* (The Fairy's Kiss) of Stravinsky, and four works by Ravel: *Alborada del Gracioso*, *Bolero*, the *Concerto for Piano in G*, and his orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures from an Exhibition*. To our great disappointment, the publishers who control the rights to those works refused to collaborate on this project. I would have understood their position if those publishers themselves made these parts available separately. However, as far as we are aware, it is simply not possible to acquire the complete, unadulterated parts to these works through any legal means. One would think

these publishers would have preferred to collect a fair royalty for the inclusion of their works in a sanctioned collection to forcing the horn playing community to resort to illegal photocopies from which they obviously will receive no revenue. In contrast, we would like to thank all of the other copyright holders who did cooperate with us in this effort.

I have tried to cover the repertoire commonly required for auditions for every horn position in the orchestra. Some will point out, no doubt, that there are far more first horn parts included than any other part, and they may take this as a slight to the importance of the low horn repertoire. Nothing could be further from my intention. The disproportion in the final repertoire selections simply reflects the somewhat narrower variety of works generally requested for section positions, and the fact that, even for auditions for section positions, some first horn parts are often included. I should mention that there appear in this volume, rather by "accident", many parts which on their own would probably not merit inclusion, but which happen to be printed paired with an important part. This is especially true of the French works, which are traditionally printed with two horn parts together in the same book. For your information, these "piggyback" parts are indicated in parentheses in the table of contents.

Finally, with respect to repertoire selection, please bear in mind that the focus of this volume is on orchestra, not opera, auditions. Therefore, I have included only those works from the operatic literature which are frequently performed in concert version or are often included on orchestral auditions by virtue of the extreme prominence of the horn part. Thus, we do include, for example, what many hornists will consider a rare gem: the complete, original "Long Call" from Siegfried, in context as that solo - somewhat illogically - is requested with great frequency for orchestral first horn auditions. Nevertheless, any hornist considering a career in the pit should definitely supplement the materials given here with other standard operatic passages, as this volume makes no claim to being comprehensive for that genre.

A few other caveats remain. In those cases where there is more than one standard edition of a given work, we have tried to provide the one most commonly, or traditionally, played, not necessarily the "definitive" or "urtext" edition. It is true that changes, mostly minor but sometimes significant, can be found as a result of recent scholarly research on the works of not only the baroque and classical composers, but also those of Mahler and Bruckner. Nonetheless, it is the traditional editions of these works which are found most often in orchestral libraries, and as a result, typically it is these editions which are used for auditions and performances. Of course, in the case of nearly all the baroque and early classical works, the articulation and dynamic markings are primarily those not of the original composer, but of subsequent editors, and this should be borne in mind when studying these works. Also, hornists should be aware of Stravinsky's habit of revising his most popular works. We have tried to include here the most frequently performed versions, which are identified by the year of the revision. However, should an audition list ever specify a version other than the one given herein, I strongly recommend that every effort be made to obtain the exact part requested. Even though Stravinsky may have made these revisions mainly in an attempt to keep the works under copyright protection for a longer period of time, he often did alter the orchestration appreciably. Likewise, one should be aware of the potential for confusion in the numbering of symphonies, especially those of Schubert and Dvorák. We employ here the numbering most commonly used today, but it is always wise to double-check which work is intended, perhaps by reference to the subtitles traditionally assigned to most of these works. For example, should "Dvorák Symphony no. 5" appear on an audition list, it would be worth verifying that it is truly the modern number 5 (a work with some very prominent and enjoyable horn writing, but which is unlikely to be requested as an excerpt, outside of the Czech Republic, at least) which is wanted, and not the old number 5, which is now number 9 -- the all-too-familiar "New World Symphony".

Please note that in several cases we include complete ballets, even though sometimes only suites or selections are required for a given audition. This is valuable for those occasions when an audition

repertoire list doesn't specify that only the suite is required, but says, for example, simply "The Three-Cornered Hat". In that work, as with many others, there are some rather tricky moments in the complete ballet which do not appear in the suite, and once again, sightreading those passages for an audition isn't advisable. Further, I feel it is important that hornists preparing, for example, the "Nocturne" from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, be aware of the context in which that passage occurs. It is a very different sensation to play that solo in isolation than to come to it well into a sizeable work, and after having just finished some high playing in A. Further, some will no doubt be surprised to discover that when one finishes the "Nocturne", one is hardly home free, as the same melody recurs in the following number, and the war-horse "Wedding March" which follows can prove surprisingly dangerous. In the case of the Ravel *Daphnis and Chloé*, since it is divided into two suites, each of which appears, often separately, on audition lists, we have indicated where each suite begins and ends. Other than this, I have not attempted to mark in any way "important passages for study" or "potential excerpts" in any work. To do so could potentially defeat the whole purpose of providing the complete parts, should students take such necessarily subjective indications as definitive and proceed to study those passages to the exclusion of the rest. I believe such determinations should be left to the informed judgment of each individual, perhaps with the guidance of a teacher well-experienced in the orchestral repertoire.

I am sure that this volume will not prove to be above criticism, but I sincerely believe it to be a valuable resource for the horn-playing community. I am convinced that there could be no better "required text" for Horn 101 at any institution. We welcome your reactions and suggestions for additions or improvements to future editions of this publication. Best wishes.

David B. Thompson Solo Horn, Barcelona Symphony Orchestra  
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