

Book and Music Reviews

Heidi Lucas, Editor

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Books

Brass Instruments: Purchasing, Maintenance, Troubleshooting, and More by David Fedderly and Sally Wagner. Meredith Music Publications; meredithmusic.com. HL00233563, 2017, \$14.95.

While many print and electronic resources are available on the subject, *Brass Instruments* is the first volume I've seen to present such a wide range of information so concisely (83 pages). The authors have over 70 years of experience between them; David T. Fedderly with 31 years as Principal Tuba of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Sally S. Wagner with 40 years as a public school music teacher. They bring to bear a wealth of knowledge in both pedagogical and practical matters.

The dilemma with a single-volume text dedicated to the purchasing, maintenance, and minor repair of the common brass instruments is not what information to include, but what to omit. The authors clearly lay out the scope and purpose in the introduction: "This book, while not conclusive, contains information to guide in purchasing quality brass instruments at a fair price, maintaining those instruments, and a list of typical problems with a variety of solutions."

The first chapter is devoted to general information that applies to all brass instruments. Topics include instrument selection (new and used), maintenance and storage, troubleshooting, mouthpieces, mutes, and tuning. The troubleshooting section is quite good, and touches on everything from stuck slides and mouthpieces to determining when professional chem-cleaning is necessary. Although ultrasonic cleaning is mentioned, a pros/cons list between ultrasonic and chem-cleaning would have been helpful. The section on assembling a "Basic Brass Toolbox" is a goldmine of useful information, especially for new music educators.

Following the General Information chapter, the authors deal individually with trumpet/cornet, horn, trombone, baritone/euphonium, tuba, Sousaphone, and other marching brass. As with the aforementioned chapters, the horn chapter

contains great information, although brief by design given the scope of the book, and focused on models and brands that high school band/orchestra directors and students are likely to encounter. The storage and maintenance information is especially good, and should help keep school-owned horns in working condition for extended periods between professional cleanings and adjustments. Because of their uniqueness to the instrument, a few more pictures of string linkage rotary valves might have been helpful. And though the authors direct readers to internet videos for guides on how to restring valves, it would be nice to have some of that information all in one place. Again, the information and recommendations for mutes, mouthpieces, and cases is geared towards public schools, and makes perfect sense when viewed in this light.

One minor criticism is that the section on marching brass is a little too brief for my taste. Depending on how integral marching band is to the music programs in an area, these instruments could account for a significant portion of a band's instrument budget. As a horn player, I thought more information on mellophones, B^b marching horns, and mouthpiece selections for these instruments would be helpful. However, this is a small issue with an otherwise excellent book.

I highly recommend this book for all current and future music educators, as well as college professors teaching high and/or low brass technique classes. James Boldin, University of Louisiana-Monroe (JB)

Etudes

40 Progressive Melodic Studies for Brass: Horn by Corrado Saglietti. Warwick Music; warwickmusic.com. TB1063, 2017, \$13.95. Range: f – g^{b2}

Corrado Maria Saglietti is the recently retired principal horn of the RAI National Symphony Orchestra in Turin, Italy. In addition to his extensive career as an orchestral, chamber, and solo musician, he is also an avid composer. His catalog includes multiple compositions for horn, and many other chamber and solo works for winds and brass.

Published in 2017, his *40 Progressive and Melodic Studies* are "designed for beginners, for sight-reading, transposition, or just for fun." There is a real need for high-quality studies for beginner to intermediate players by contemporary composers, and Saglietti has provided some excellent material for that purpose.

These charming etudes progress from simple rhythms and diatonic melodies to more adventurous writing, including one study composed using the 12-tone method. The brevity and simplicity of the first dozen studies make them ideal for sight-reading and/or transposition practice. The later studies are longer and more complex, and help facilitate the progression from beginner to intermediate player. The more advanced etudes also present a variety of styles and technical challenges: hunting calls for natural horn, disco, Latin dance, Italianate aria, asymmetrical meter, stopped horn, echo horn, lip trills, and various articulations. The tessitura focuses on the middle two octaves, which is ideal for developing tone and phrasing



concepts. Key signatures range from four flats to three sharps, in both major and minor keys.

These are well-crafted, musically satisfying to play, with sound pedagogy behind them. Both the layout and engraving are of excellent quality, making everything clear and easy to read. Corrado Maria Saglietti's *40 Progressive Melodic Studies for Brass* are a welcome addition to traditional etude repertoire, and I highly recommend them for both teachers and students.
JB

Horn Solo

***Dreams of the Casbah for Solo Natural Horn* by Jeffrey Snedeker.** Faust Music; faustmusic.com. 000265, 2016, \$8.

Dreams of the Casbah is an imaginative new work for solo natural horn. The program notes describe hazy, dreamlike images of a Middle Eastern bazaar. The piece depicts a day traveling through the market from sunrise to sunset. It is written for natural horn in E, but Snedeker gives a variety of different ways to perform this piece. It can be performed on any crook of the natural, on valve horn using hand-stopping and natural horn technique, or it can be played on valve horn using valve technique and a mute, preferably a stopping mute. This flexibility in performance makes the piece accessible to all players regardless of what equipment they own.

Using hand-horn technique, whether on a natural horn or a valve horn, creates an interesting sound in the piece. In the Composer's Notes, Snedeker notes that he uses a scale made up of exclusively stopped notes (full-stops or partial-stops). This creates a unique sound characteristic for this work. When played using hand-horn technique, the variety of timbre is augmented by the variety of fully and partially stopped notes in this scale.

The piece opens with a shofar-like call written in a free tempo. The tempo gradually becomes faster and more active. The middle section is in 7/8 time and the tempo is marked at quarter-note equals 152+. After another free section, the 7/8 music returns and gradually fades away.

Dreams of the Casbah is a unique, flexible piece for solo horn. The variety of options makes it accessible to a wide swath of the horn-playing community. When played using natural horn technique, it is highly effective while providing an excellent opportunity to hone hand-horn technique. No matter what technique you use in performance, *Dreams of the Casbah* is a compelling work for solo horn. *Martin King, Washington State University*

Horn and Piano

***Fancie for Horn and Piano* by Larry Alan Smith.** Tallow Tree Music Publishing, Theodore Presser Music; presser.com. 494-03041, 2017, \$11.99.

Fancie first premiered in 1982, at the New York Chamber Music debut concert of composer Larry Alan Smith. Dedicated to David Wakefield, that first performance featured Wakefield on horn and the composer at the piano. One of several premieres that evening, *Fancie* was described by *New York Times* critic Edward Rothstein as "rich and promising" for its "instrumental instincts."

The writing is indeed satisfyingly idiomatic for the horn, featuring techniques like glissandi, flutter tonguing, and stopped passages that are well-prepared and approachable for advanced players. Approximately six minutes long, *Fancie* opens with an exciting prestissimo section in mixed meter which immediately showcases the upper range of the horn by skyrocketing to a *fff c* in the second phrase. Next is a contrasting and contemplative adagio which, at times, features the horn alone. The piece continues in this alternating fashion, much like a conversation, with the piano interjecting reminders of the original prestissimo while the horn seems to prefer the adagio. The two voices eventually reconcile together on the final page, where a new and driving triplet-based motive brings *Fancie* to its exciting conclusion.

This edition is excellent, with large, readable print and well-planned page turns. Every detail of Smith's writing is carefully noted, with clear performance indications that are appreciated given the wide variety of articulations required, including the previously mentioned stopped horn and flutter tonguing. Advanced hornists looking for a challenging concert piece should consider *Fancie*. *Katherine Smith, University of Wyoming*

***Horn Sonata for Horn in F and Piano* by Gregory Sullivan Isaacs.** Musik Fabrik (Fabrik Musical Publications – ASCAP), 18 rue Marthe Aureau, 77400 Lagny sur Marne, France; classicalmusicnow.com. Mfgi015, 2016, €29,95. Range: A-d

Gregory Sullivan Isaacs has a multifaceted career: among his many activities, he is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated composer, professional opera and musical conductor, private voice teacher, and music critic for *TheaterJones* and other publications. His catalog of compositions includes an opera, a cantata, choral works, and numerous chamber and solo pieces.

Though he has written other works with horn, his Sonata is by far the most substantial. Dedicated to David Cooper, former Principal horn of the Dallas Symphony and now Principal horn of the Berlin Philharmonic, this four-movement work makes no concessions to the horn player or pianist in terms of difficulty. Isaacs explores the full range of musical and technical possibilities, within a tonal, Neo-romantic framework. According to the composer, David Cooper asked him to compose a major sonata for horn, comparable to Poulenc's Sonata for Violin and Piano. Indeed, the writing does at times resemble a string part, with long lines encompassing a wide range and rapid slurred arpeggiations. However, the work would not be unreasonably difficult for a professional or advanced student who has full control of the range and ample technical abilities.

Special mention should be made of the second movement, "The Angel's Pavane." This hauntingly beautiful movement was composed last, and can be extracted and performed as a self-contained work. At the request of Cooper, the movement is dedicated to Vadym Kholodenko, Gold Medal winner at the Fourteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. In 2016, Kholodenko suffered a devastating personal tragedy with the deaths of his two daughters. In light of this event, the second movement bears two inscriptions:

"After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music." – Aldous Huxley