

The most common orchestral excerpts for the horn:
a discussion of performance practice

by

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ABSTRACT

This study describes in detail the preparation that must be done by aspiring orchestral horn players in order to be sufficiently ready for an orchestral audition. The general physical and mental preparation, through to the very specific elements that require attention when practicing and learning a list of orchestral excerpts that will be performed for an audition committee, is investigated. This study provides both the necessary tools and the insight borne of a number of years of orchestral experience that will enable a player to take a given excerpt and learn not only the notes and rhythms, but also discern many other subtleties inherent in the music, resulting in a full understanding and mastery thereof. Ten musical examples are included in order to illustrate the type of additional information that a player must gain so as to develop an in-depth knowledge of an excerpt. Three lists are presented within the text of this study: 1) a list of excerpts that are most commonly found at auditions, 2) a list of those excerpts that are often included and 3) other excerpts that have been requested but are not as commonly found. Also included is advice regarding the audition procedure itself, a discussion of the music required for auditions, and a guide to the orchestral excerpt books in which these passages can be found.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie beskryf in detail die voorbereiding wat deur horing spelers gedoen moet word an voldoende voorbereid te wees vir 'n orkes oudisie. Die algemene fisiese en geestelike voorbereiding, tot en met die spesifiee elemente wat aandag verg wanneer daar aan 'n lys orkesuittreksels geoefen word vir optrede voor 'n oudisie komitee, word ondersoek. Hierdie studie verskaf beide die nodige gereedskap en insig, wat stem uit 'n aantal jare se orkes ondervinding, om dan 'n speler te vermag om 'n gegewe uittreksel te neem en nie net die note en ritmes te leer nie, maar om ook die vele ander subtielsteite inherent aan die musiek te kan waarneem, wat tot 'n voller begrip en bemeestering daarvan sal uitloop. Tien musikale voorbeelde word ingesluit om die tipe informasie wat 'n speler moet opdoen te illustreer, om sodoende in diepte kennis van 'n uittreksel te ontwikkel. Drie lysse word voorgelê in die teks van hierdie studie: 1) 'n lys van die mees algemene oudisie uittreksels, 2) 'n lys van die uittreksels wat gereeld ingesluit word en 3) ander uittreksels wat al gevra is, maar wat nie dikwels voorkom nie. Ook ingesluit is advies oor die oudisie prosedure self, 'n bespreking van die musiek wat in 'n oudisie verwag word en 'n gids tot die orkes uittreksel boeke waarin hierdie passasies gevind kan word.



KEYWORDS

- Music
- Orchestral repertoire
- Orchestral excerpts
- Horn
- French horn
- Transposition
- Auditions
- Phrasing
- Articulation
- Warm-up routine
- Excerpt books

SLEUTELWOORDE

- Musiek
- Orkes repertoire
- Orkesuittreksels
- Horing
- Franse horing
- Transposisie
- Oudisies
- Frasering
- Artikulasie
- Opwarm roetine
- Uittreksel boeke

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Coming from a small town with a population of 10,000 in the middle of the state of Ohio in the USA, I grew up playing in bands. I played the mellophone in the marching band, horn in the concert band, wind ensemble and brass band, and piano in the jazz band. We did not have a string program in our small school system; therefore there was no school orchestra. Music was something that my friends and I did for fun, but we considered other career options. My chosen field of study was to be pharmacy, but after one year of this five-year programme, I decided to transfer to Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio in order to study towards a Bachelor of Music degree with a specialisation in Music Education.

Unfortunately, due to the extensive coursework required to earn this degree, I rarely had time to fit the university's Philharmonia Orchestra into my schedule as many of the courses met at the same time that the orchestra rehearsed. During the first, second and half of the third year, the music education major learns to play most of the orchestral instruments – violin, viola, cello and double bass; flute and piccolo; clarinet and saxophone; oboe and bassoon; trumpet and horn; trombone and tuba; and percussion.

The student must also complete many other requirements including accompanying techniques, classroom music, and general education classes such as educational psychology. In addition to these, there was also a large-group ensemble requirement, so I played in either Symphonic Band or Wind Ensemble. Since there was a large number of Music Education majors who participated in these two ensembles, the rehearsal times were specially selected so that the greatest number of people could work these groups into their schedule.

Even though the Philharmonia played relatively few concerts each term, generally two or three within a sixteen-week period, it was still valuable experience for those who took part. For me, personally, there was a large gap in my own experience. For instance, the

one semester I did play in the orchestra, the major work on that term's symphony concert was the Mozart Requiem, which requires no horn players. I had worked on excerpts with my studio teacher, however this cannot compare to actually playing the works with a student ensemble, where the members get extensive rehearsal time on some of the standard orchestral repertoire.

Upon leaving university, I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to take up the principal horn position in the Natal Philharmonic Orchestra, a full-time symphony orchestra in Durban in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This was a position I held for nearly three years. Thereafter, for two and one-half years I held the position of principal horn of the New Arts Philharmonic Orchestra, an opera and ballet orchestra based at the State Theatre in Pretoria in Gauteng Province. Since the closure of the State Theatre in July 2000, I have been working as a freelance musician.

There are many semi-professional and student players who do not have the benefit of a teacher to consult on a regular basis. This could apply to those who, like myself, are already in the early stages of their career, or to those who have chosen to pursue another field and continue playing at a semi-professional or amateur level. Many times I have found myself at a loss, not having a teacher nearby to answer my questions. In fact, my former teachers are ten thousand miles away, in Ohio and New York, so I have indeed been on my own since coming to South Africa. Colleagues have been very helpful, but they have had their own parts to practice, and as a professional musician one should in any case be prepared before coming to rehearsal.

In my case, problems with basic technique were not the issue. I had never had much trouble with tone production, tonguing and the like. However, due to my background, I found myself quite lacking in the knowledge of how to apply my technical skills to these works that I was now performing each week. I would listen to recordings and consult various excerpt books, but began to see that these texts were not detailed enough for my purposes.

1.2 Motivation for the study

There are many different volumes of excerpt books in existence, which were written by many different people. The basic principle behind these books is that they take the most common solo passages for the instrument in question and compile them into one resource. Some are very general – including symphonies, concerti and overtures; selections from ballets and operas; and even the very difficult *corno obbligato* parts from Bach cantatas. Others focus on specific types of passages, for example one text consisting entirely of opera excerpts from 19th Century Italy and another solely on the tone poems of Richard Strauss. Even though I myself have books by six different publishers, I believe that there are a number of factors that detract from their effectiveness.

The first, and in my opinion, the most serious issue is that excerpt books take short passages out of context and seldom include hints on performance practices. This sort of information is of vital importance to the player in order for the excerpt to be properly understood. In other words, the player must be aware of exactly what is happening while they are playing the passage. In addition to learning the notes and rhythms of the passage, extra time must be spent doing research into other areas such as:

- the interpretation of articulation markings
- the interpretation of dynamics relative to the texture of the music
- what happens before the passage
 - a repetitive tutti passage which will tire out the player?
 - a long section of rest, resulting in the lips and the instrument getting cold?
- where to breathe within a phrase
- which other instruments are playing at the same time

The second shortcoming is that these books tend not to be comprehensive enough. Many smaller solos are left out in order to include the bigger, more obvious ones. This can lead to a false sense of security – leading the player to think he or she knows the entire piece because they have mastered the couple of phrases that are included in the book. In addition, many of the small solos from the second, third and fourth horn parts are often omitted. The player may have a look through the parts for the coming season,

see nothing that looks difficult and then during the first rehearsal, find they are in the middle of a tricky section that they did not expect.

Thirdly, there is a lack of continuity in that not all of these books tell the player exactly where these passages come from. It will usually say “Mvt. IV” and might possibly provide measure numbers, but even this is not guaranteed. Although following along in the excerpt book when listening to a recording is helpful, the player may still encounter difficulties in recognising an excerpt when the orchestral texture is dense, especially if the measure numbers were omitted from the passage in the book. A student may be confronted with an excerpt in a text that simply says “Dvořák Symphony No. 9” and, after finding a recording at a library or CD store, have to listen to the entire symphony before finding the passage. This, in my opinion, wastes valuable time that could be spent actually practising the music.

1.3 Aim of the study

It is my intention to compile a list of the most common excerpts for all four horn parts, and to include annotations that address as much of the aforementioned information as possible. I hope that this will help the player to perform these passages as the composer envisioned and/or the conductor expects. For the purpose of this study, however, the number of excerpts that are annotated must be somewhat limited due to the scope of the project.

I have taken what I consider to be the most important horn excerpts, judging by their occurrence on audition lists and symphony concert programmes, and included the information that I feel must be considered in order for the player to more fully understand what is happening in the particular passage.

This will be preceded by a section in which I will give the player general advice about orchestral horn playing. For example, what to expect from auditions; how to practice a passage in order to play it under the added stress of a performance situation and how to come to terms with the fact that a conductor may require that a passage be played differently than one expects.

Also, how to deal with different situations including working as a freelance player, holding down a principal position and coping with the role of the utility player. In other words, having to play third horn in the overture, second in the concerto, and “bumping” or helping out the first horn player in the symphony. A player might be required to play second horn during the week and then have to play a light music concert in the principal chair on the weekend.

Personally, I would have found such a text to be an invaluable help in the beginning stage of my career. In this respect, I hope to provide a resource that helps a player to better prepare for any eventuality. It is only through years of playing that I have gained this knowledge – by performing some of these pieces over and over again. Many times people are asked to play works without the benefit of having had such experience. I would like to make it easier for other players by sharing this knowledge with them.

1.4 Target group

The main target group will be young players: those who are still studying or are just starting out in their careers. In addition to this group will be those people who are semi-professional or amateur players – those people who teach music for a living and play, for instance, in a part-time orchestra, or those who have trained in another field and play for their own enjoyment.

Another group which will be targeted will be those who are going through changes in their careers. For example, a third horn player who is preparing for a principal horn audition will need a source that gives him or her the extra information that I seek to provide. Having heard the principal player of the section play these passages is very different to playing them under the pressure of a concert or even an audition. The player must be able to cope with a conductor or an audition committee asking for a passage to be played faster or slower, louder or softer or in a different style altogether.

1.5 Methodology

An important part of this study has been the compilation of a list of excerpts from the orchestral repertoire that I believe to be the most common. To compile this list, I

consulted other studies in which people have shown which excerpts have been on audition lists and how often each was included. I also consulted different volumes of excerpt books and did a similar study of my own, in order to discover how many times each excerpt occurs in these texts.

Another valuable resource is the extensive archive that a colleague of mine has of concert programmes from almost every symphony concert he has performed in since coming to South Africa from the United Kingdom almost thirty years ago. He was first a member of the SABC orchestra, followed by the National Symphony Orchestra of the SABC, the National Symphony Orchestra and finally the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra as these orchestras evolved one into the other.

Other books that were also consulted are those that deal, for example, with Beethoven's symphonies or Mozart's operas, which provided more general stylistic information. More detailed advice on articulation styles, lengths of notes, etc. comes from articles and other studies devoted to these specific topics. In addition to this, much of the information concerning the actual performance of the excerpts which will be discussed comes from my own personal experience and through the study of existing texts that are devoted to excerpts. I also discussed my views with colleagues and students to ascertain whether other people share my view on the subject, and what their thoughts are on these issues.

1.6 Presentation of the study

Chapter 2 contains advice concerning the individual preparation that is required of the player: suggested practice regimens, warm-up routines, preparing for an audition and audition procedures, as well as mental preparation.

Chapter 3 discusses the expectations of horn players in two different types of orchestral situations: the professional, and the semi-professional or amateur.

Chapter 4 looks at what, in my opinion, are the shortcomings of many orchestral excerpt books, in the light of my own experience in dealing with these inadequacies.



Chapter 5 is a list of the most common horn excerpts from the orchestral repertoire in which various passages are dealt with. Performance practices for some of these passages are discussed in great detail and others in more general terms, with musical examples included.

Chapter 6 comprises the summary and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

PREPARATION

Philip Farkas, world-renowned horn player and teacher, makes the comparison between playing music and reading in an unfamiliar language. He says that the reader may be pronouncing the words correctly, but if there is no understanding of what is actually being read, even one who speaks the language will not be able to decipher what the reader is saying. In his book entitled *The art of French horn playing* (1956) – an essential part of any horn player’s library – Farkas states: “the composer has a musical thought which he can only approximate with a string of individual notes. If the performer plays only these notes, no matter how correctly, without grasping in his own mind the musical idea which the composer had, the phrase is bound to sound as lustreless and unintelligible as a sentence read aloud by an uncomprehending reader” (Farkas 1956:54).

It is our duty as performers to learn the language of our instrument as well as possible in order that we are doing more than merely playing the dots on the page. A university band conductor of mine, Professor Mark Kelly, former Director of Bands at Bowling Green State University, once said to the ensemble in which I was playing, “That’s not just a dot of printer’s ink!” Certainly, we need to be able to play exactly what is written on the page. In other words, the composer has put the notes, rhythms and performance indications there and it is our job to play what is there. However, it is only through diligent and consistent practice that the synchronisation of the mind, fingers, lips, breathing and tonguing is possible so that we are then able to concentrate on bringing out the musical content of the piece.

2.1 General physical preparation

The performer must develop all of the elements that make up the horn-playing technique (intonation, tonguing, breath control, etc.) to such a degree that the playing itself becomes second nature. The “artistic” side of the brain can then take over and judge how a passage is being played in relationship to what is happening throughout the rest of the ensemble. Barry Tuckwell, former principal horn of the London Symphony

Orchestra, one of the most recorded solo artists and first President of the International Horn Society, makes a very insightful statement in his book *Horn* (1983:157-8):

The horn player must have a split personality; he must have a warm heart, but it is essential to combine it with a cool head. One half of his mind tells him how a piece, a phrase, even a single note should be played while the other half constantly analyses his physical condition, the degree of fatigue in his face muscles, the amount of usable breath left in the lungs, the pitch of the instrument, the relative intonation of other players, the amount of water in the horn and in which bends it is situated, the behaviour of the instrument on a particular note – whether it is a good or a defective harmonic. All these things and many more are what a player has to think about during a performance.

These are by necessity instantaneous decisions. If a player is to be able to handle these situations, as previously mentioned, a high degree of proficiency as far as the technical aspects of playing the horn is required. I agree with Tuckwell in that the foundation must be laid before one can build on it; however, if too much of a player's thoughts and energies are focused on what is happening while it is occurring, I believe that the music can then suffer. This issue is more of a mental rather than a physical nature and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Working daily on problem areas or even potential problems is essential. Lip trills, for example, are a very difficult part of the horn player's arsenal. While preparing a Mozart concerto, or another from the same time period, the player will be working on trills every day. However, once the performance is over, and work begins on other pieces, études, chamber music parts or orchestral parts, things like lip trills tend to be forgotten. The player may then find, as I did when playing for the first time with my new brass quintet and rehearsing a movement from Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, that this very important part of the technique is now not up to standard. As many aspects of playing must be included in a player's daily practice as possible, however, this can be difficult due to the fact that there are so many things that need attention. If lip trills, for instance, are touched on only every third day, this is much better than doing them only one time in a month's practice.

2.1.1 Warm-up routine

No two people will have exactly the same warm-up routine. When I was studying at university, each year the first-year horn students (horn performance majors and music education majors alike) were given a photocopy of our teacher Herbert Spencer's warm-up and were expected to use it every morning. Within a week or two everyone was playing it differently – extending some of the lip slurs, doing more long tones if much playing had been done the previous day, or adding more tonguing work if that happened to be the day's focus.

Whether this is done first thing in the morning or when the player first picks up the horn for the day, most musicians will agree that the warm-up is an essential part of their daily playing. For some, fifteen minutes may be sufficient, whereas others may find that it is only after thirty or forty minutes of warming up that they are ready to begin serious playing. This process is also helpful when coming back, after a few hours' break, to another practice session or rehearsal. A shorter version of the warm-up can be used before a performance to get the lips in working order.

Some teachers and professionals advocate buzzing on the mouthpiece before even playing the instrument, however this is generally a matter of personal preference. It is a good idea to start with long tones on the F-horn side of the instrument, trying to keep a clear and steady tone. The extra resistance that is caused by the longer length of pipe will help to get the air speed going right from the start.

When playing long tones, start on a note in the middle register and extend upwards and downwards through the range of the instrument, playing everything at a medium volume level. Concentration should be on the attack of the note, making certain that it has a clean and clear beginning and steadiness of sound while sustaining the note. Next, extremes of dynamic can be introduced to the long tones; starting as softly as possible, gradually getting louder and louder and then fading back into nothingness. Uniformity of the tone quality and pitch are the main considerations here.

Progress next to lip slurs, also starting with a basic exercise and extending through the registers. Begin on the open horn (using no valves), and work down through the valve

combinations by length of tubing – next only second valve, then first valve alone, first and second valves together, further to second and third together and finally using all three valves at once. For an example of such an exercise, see Figure 1 below.

Figure 1:



The player must ensure that the lip slur is smooth and clean. The vibration of the lips has to be constant so as not to have a break in the sound or a “bump” in the slur. If either of these takes place, “the *legato* quality [of the passage] will be impaired, if not destroyed” (Farkas 1956:46). The synchronisation of the lips, the column of air and the fingers is a very difficult part of horn playing.

The warm-up routine is also a good way of keeping the embouchure in top shape. When Barry Tuckwell was in Durban for two weeks in June 1997 to conduct the Natal Philharmonic Orchestra, I had the wonderful opportunity to play Mozart’s Horn Concerto No. 4 at a symphony concert. After meeting with him to discuss my interpretation of the piece – what tempo we would take the slow movement, how my cadenzas ended, etc. – we had a very interesting conversation.

Tuckwell stressed the importance of taking the time to warm up not only before beginning to play, but every single day, even if the player has no time to practice anything else. The time which is spent warming up is not only important for short-term development, but also as an investment in the player’s long-term plans. He remarked that if he had not been as dedicated to this process over the years, he would not have been able to carry on performing as long as he did. He said that he believes it is due to this daily maintenance that he was able to play the most difficult of concertos until the very end of his playing career in January 1997 at the age of sixty-six.

2.1.2 Practice regimen

While the warm-up routine sets the player up for the day's work that lies ahead, the practice regimen prepares the player for lessons, rehearsals, and any other public performances – exams, playing at performance class or master classes, solo recitals, auditions and orchestral or chamber music concerts. It is very important to always go “back to basics” and build upon these skills. Whether a player thinks of extended lip slurs, double-tonguing, interval training and the like as the end of the warm-up or the beginning of the practice session is an individual matter, however, it is an essential part of what a player must do to keep in shape.

When a player is a member of an orchestra or free-lancing regularly, the amount of playing which is done on a daily basis – three or four hours within an ensemble and one or two hours of individual practice – keeps one in tip-top shape. When not in such a situation, it becomes very easy to say, “I’ll practice tomorrow...”. Performances, and even rehearsals, can be stressful at times: if that tomorrow gets put off too often, the player will start to get out of shape physically and can even lose confidence in his/her playing.

Between 1999 and 2002, I studied a Japanese martial art called Kobujutsu. The word Kobujutsu is a much shortened version of the name of the style which, literally translated, means “the society for the promotion and preservation of Ryukyu classical martial arts”, Ryukyu being a group of islands in Japan. I enjoyed very much learning the very basic techniques, and progressing through unarmed *katas* (prescribed sets of movements) to *katas* with the various weapons that are included in the style, and then on to applications of these basic movements.

After first earning my yellow belt, followed by orange and green, I soon found that I was missing too many Kobujutsu classes. The time I had for individual practice of the *katas* we learned as a group was getting less and less as orchestral performance opportunities became more and more frequent. I felt unprepared when I did manage to attend a class, and was not enjoying myself anymore. When I became a permanent member of the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra and was not able to attend any classes for six

weeks at a time during symphony seasons it eventually led to my having to drop out of the class.

It has been my experience that the better one's preparation is, the more one enjoys the task at hand. I very much wanted to do well at Kobujutsu; this was not the problem. Regardless of the chosen discipline, one cannot expect to do well at something if the requisite amount of time is not spent learning and maintaining the basics. It is only after the basic principles are firmly set in place that a student can move on to the process of expanding their knowledge of the body of information that awaits them. If the student is not ready, the level of success will be nowhere near the level it could have been had sufficient preparation been done. For a musician, the daily practice regimen should include elements such as clarity of attacks and releases, steadiness of tone, note accuracy, single and multiple tonguing, various scales and arpeggios, and staccato and legato playing.

Practising extremes within these areas is something else that is very important for the player to keep in mind. It is easy to fall into the trap of only practising those elements that can already be done well – it can be very satisfying to work only on things that sound good and are accomplished without too much effort. However, this can lead a player to a false estimation of his or her abilities. It is only by practising the extremes that the things a player is required to do on a daily basis become a bit easier and thus progress can be detected. For example, an individual must practice being able to control a diminuendo so that it is indeed “fading away into nothingness”. When that player comes across the word *morendo* in an orchestral work, it is then possible to do exactly what the composer asks.

Practising is another concept that Philip Farkas discusses in *The art of French horn playing*. He states that “one of the fundamentals of practice is to do a sufficient amount of it to assure repetition, which is our principal means of learning. This, plus correct instruction and constant, intelligent analysis are the three essentials of practice” (Farkas 1956:30). This is the only process that will solve the aforementioned problem of synchronising the lips, tongue, breathing and fingers to ensure the presentation of an acceptable final product.

2.2 Preparing for an audition

“Getting a job as a performer is not just the logical result of a talented young player coming of age” (Hill 2001:47). It takes much time and effort to learn all that is required from the horn in the passages from the orchestral repertoire. In addition to acquiring the knowledge necessary for the technical execution of such passages, an aspiring player must learn about orchestral music in more general terms. Areas that should be considered include composers, conductors, professional performers and different schools of horn playing throughout the world.

An example of the application of this information is that a variety of different qualities of sound are required of the player when playing works by various composers. A performer’s “mental picture of tone must change each time you consider a different type of composition. [The horn player] needs many tone qualities and the flexibility to change to any quality within the scope of his instrument” (Farkas 1956:53). For instance, when playing a work by Ravel or Debussy, the sound should be different than when playing the bass aria from Bach’s Mass in B minor. The sound should again differ between performances of a Brahms symphony and one by Beethoven. The player’s ability to demonstrate this in an audition situation shows the committee that that person will be able to play a program such as one that was once required of me including a Wagner opera overture, a Mozart piano concerto and the Saint-Saëns ‘Organ’ Symphony.

Listening extensively to recordings of orchestral works and following along in an excerpt book or, if possible, a complete horn part or even a full score will help give the player the information needed to understand the passages properly. Douglas Hill, Professor of Horn at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin stresses the importance of listening to more than one interpretation of a work and making comparisons between them. Once these steps have been followed, “...tempos, rhythms, timbral relationships, blending needs, musical direction, and the appropriate styles will have their places in your perspective” (Hill 2001:47).

2.2.1 Expectations of an audition committee

John Dressler, a well-known teacher of the horn in America, conducted a survey in which he took a look at what is required of a candidate at an audition. The results of this study were published in a very interesting and helpful source, the *Brass Anthology*. This volume is a collection of articles that were published in the *Instrumentalist* magazine between 1946 and 1990, covering a multitude of issues concerning brass instruments and their predecessors, the actual playing of these instruments and also various other physical and mental aspects of brass playing.

Dressler found that there were forty-five vacancies in orchestras and military bands in the US and Canada between the years of 1976 and 1979. He then polled these groups, asking them questions concerning their audition procedures, excerpt lists and the solo repertoire they required. The orchestras that responded to Dressler's request, including the Baltimore Symphony, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Rochester Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony, gave some very helpful feedback as far as the qualities they expect applicants to exhibit. Dressler reports that these ensembles "described similar musical requirements including accuracy of pitch, intonation, relevancy and consistency of style, accuracy and steadiness of rhythm, and correct breathing spots" (Dressler 1982:641).

Some of these issues are technical ones – e.g. are there too many split notes, does the player have good intonation and can he or she play with a steady sense of rhythm? The phrases "relevancy and consistency of style" and "correct breathing spots" refer to the interpretation of the player. This is where the applicant must show the panel that he or she has an understanding of the passages they require; that extra time has been put in other than that needed to just learn the notes of the excerpt in question.

In my own experience of being on audition panels, another area that is extremely important is that of the player's ability to convince the committee that the player is completely in control of the instrument at all times. The quality of the sound – is it pleasing to the ear and will it fit in with the rest of the existing section? The uniformity of the player's sound – is it homogeneous throughout the different registers? *Forte* and *piano* playing – does the player utilise the entire range of dynamics? Tonguing and

slurring – is control and ease exhibited at both slower and faster tempos? Phrasing – does the player handle the phrase musically within the confines of the correct style? Another consideration is the question of how the player is able to deal with the pressure of the audition situation.

A former colleague of mine named Ian Holloway had been the principal clarinet player of the then Natal Philharmonic Orchestra for many years, but resigned from the orchestra in 1997 in order to start a private business venture. Ian wished to join the orchestra again in 2000 when the principal position became vacant, but had to do an audition in order to get his position back. He once told me that he was more nervous for this audition (in front of six of his colleagues), than when he played a concerto before a full audience in the Durban City Hall.

The player must take all of these things into consideration and stay focused on them during the entire preparation process. Otherwise, one inconsistency of pitch could turn that person into ‘the one with bad intonation’, or one cracked note ‘the one with accuracy problems’. A committee can tend towards generalising, even though these generalisations may not be entirely accurate. Simply put, this is the impression that they are given by mistakes that are made under the pressure of an audition situation.

The player’s aim must be to prepare so well that the best possible product is presented to the committee. It must be kept in mind that this group of people may be sitting through many, many candidates. Their job is to choose the candidate whom they think will best fit into the vacant position. This goes back to what was previously mentioned about looking for the player whose style, tone and dynamic range matches the rest of the horn section.

2.2.2 The audition procedure

Though the existing audition procedure is not necessarily perfect, it is fairly similar throughout the world. Ideally, the candidates would be given a chance to rehearse and perform with the orchestra. However, this is both expensive and time consuming for the orchestra and would certainly be nerve-wracking for a candidate if he or she had to wait for three or four months until the rest of the applicants had been heard. “Instead, you

will have to prove your prowess and worth to a small group of orchestra players and a conductor in a matter of minutes – all by yourself” (Hill 2001:47). Hill goes on to say that a player’s curriculum vitae merely provides the committee with the information concerning who that person is and what they have done. It is up to the player to prove in the audition the level of knowledge, and the capability of doing the job that is required.

In most cases, the applicant is asked to prepare a short selection of works from the solo repertoire for the first part of the audition. The panel will then hear excerpts from the orchestral repertoire. These are usually prescribed in advance, but Dressler does note one instance in which a major orchestra in the United States does not publish a repertoire list for auditions. The personnel manager of this orchestra says that their belief is that “candidates are expected to be familiar with the standard orchestral repertoire and to read selections as requested during the audition” (Dressler 1982:642). Generally speaking a list is provided, the orchestra often sending out the music with indications as to which sections are expected.

The specific excerpts and the frequency of their appearance on audition lists will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. However, in Dressler’s previously mentioned study, he notes that the number of excerpts on high lists varied from 4 to 34 passages, and on low lists from 7 to 21 passages. The term “high list” refers to the list of excerpts for a first or third horn position, or a combination of the two in the instance of a co-principal position in which the player plays mostly third horn, but is required to play first horn from time to time. The term “low list” refers to the list of excerpts for a second or fourth horn position, or again a possible combination of the two.

The level of preparation must be so complete that during the audition, the player can cope with whatever the committee requests. It may be that the applicant is only asked to play the exposition of one of two concertos that have been prepared and just five of the twelve excerpts on the list. Preparation requires that each excerpt be practised individually, working through the list provided.

When this process is completed, the passages should be played in succession, leading eventually to the stage where the sequence is altered at each practise session. The

player will then ultimately reach the level where the entire list can be played any way the committee might request.

This same procedure is usually followed for auditions for 'extra lists' or 'call lists' i.e. the list of players that would be phoned in the case of one of the contracted players falling ill or having an accident which renders that person unable to play for a period of time. The same is also true of many smaller orchestras, be it a regional orchestra, a chamber orchestra, a part-time orchestra, an amateur orchestra, or any organised group with regular players that wants to be sure that the best players in the area are being used. The lists of solos and excerpts for some of these groups may be slightly shorter; however they will be similar to and probably based on those of the major orchestras. Therefore, whatever types of organisation a player is considering auditioning for, the same type of preparation is necessary.

2.2.3 Solo literature

The solo works required by the aforementioned orchestras vary somewhat. However, Dressler found that Mozart's Concerto no. 4 was most often named for high horn auditions, and his Concerto no. 3 for low horn auditions when pieces were actually specified (Dressler 1982:641).

In some auditions the applicant may be asked to choose one or two prescribed works in contrasting styles and/or time classifications. In a study by Hill, which has since been incorporated into his new book *Collected thoughts on teaching and learning, creativity, and horn performance* (2001), he compiles a list of solos requested in numerous auditions held between 1973 and 1983. These works included Mozart's Concerto no. 2 and Concerto no. 4, Strauss's Concerto no. 1 and Concerto no. 2, Beethoven's *Sonata, Op. 17* and Schumann's *Adagio and Allegro*.

In other instances the freedom is given to the applicant to perform two contrasting concerto movements of his or her choice and, in only a few cases, no solo literature is heard at all. In some cases, admittedly quite rarely, excerpts from the chamber music literature might also be requested. Hill lists the following works in his study: Nielsen's

Quintet for winds, Milhaud's *La Cheminée du Roi René*, and Mozart's *Serenade*, K. 388 for winds.

2.2.4 Orchestral Literature

There have been numerous studies done to determine the frequency of appearance of the various passages at an audition. A fellow horn student at Ithaca College Conservatory of Music, where I studied, did just such a survey, albeit on a small scale, for one of our graduate-level research classes. He compiled a list of the excerpts that are most often required, going on to list a further group that are regularly required, and yet a further group that have been asked for less frequently, but more than just once or twice. There are excerpts from symphonies, concertos, opera overtures, arias and choruses, ballet music, masses and tone poems on these lists.

Each orchestra's audition list will consist of excerpts that require the performer to show what they are capable of in the least possible amount of time. In addition, the pieces and excerpts will range from very high to very low, and from tricky technical passages to long, lyrical phrases. A first horn audition might require the passage from the first movement of Ravel's Piano Concerto in G, which has a high C above the treble staff, and the tutti passage from the Fifth Symphony of Shostakovich, which goes down to the B-flat just over three octaves below this. Also on the same list could be the very technical solo from the bass aria from the Bach Mass in B minor, as well as the beautiful, and very well known lyrical solo from Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony. Many times, an audition will contain passages from pieces that are coming up on the orchestra's schedule in the near future.

2.3 Mental preparation

These days, musicians must be prepared for many different scenarios. This certainly applies to physical preparation, but I have come to believe that a player's mental preparation plays a tremendous role in determining how these different situations are dealt with. In my experience, no two people will conduct a piece in exactly the same way; a passage may be slightly faster or slower, louder or softer than it was the last time the piece was performed. Another possibility is that one could be playing the same part,

but with another conductor and different players in the horn section; or one might be playing a different part altogether. In addition, especially if a player makes their living from freelancing, the amount of rehearsal time any given ensemble has before a concert tends to vary quite substantially.

2.3.1 Rehearsal schedules

I am currently the principal horn player of the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra. The “JPO” is a professional orchestra (though its members are employed on a free-lance basis – signing a contract for each season as opposed to a permanent one) that holds approximately four rehearsals on Monday through Wednesday, before presenting concerts on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Throughout the course of the year, four five-week seasons are presented, as well as other concerts such as the Johannesburg Pops, a weekend tour to Nelspruit in the province of Mpumalanga, and an opera or ballet season.

If one is booked to play with a semi-professional orchestra the rehearsal schedule will look a bit different. This group may rehearse on a Tuesday night every week, and then each night during the week before the monthly Sunday afternoon concert. The money required to put on a concert will be about the same for eight rehearsals and one concert with this orchestra – the fees paid to the musicians will be slightly less – as for four rehearsals and two concerts with the professional orchestra.

To the sponsor it is the same; however, from the musicians’ point of view, presenting a concert after only four rehearsals is a much more stressful situation. Firstly, there is much less actual time for the orchestra to rehearse together as a group. Secondly, due to the fact that a new concert programme is being prepared each week, there is much less time for individual preparation. In these two instances, the music is usually made available to the players shortly before the first orchestra rehearsal, which again highlights the fact that orchestral excerpts are an essential part of a musician’s training. The necessary background knowledge will help a player to better cope with these situations when they arise.

2.3.2 Concert situations

There is another type of orchestral engagement for which the number of rehearsals may also vary, depending on the situation. Musicians are frequently booked for corporate functions or once-off concerts, which may or may not be corporate-sponsored. The first ones that come to mind are the Johannesburg favourites, the Nedbank “Last Night of the Proms” and the Jacaranda Pops. These two examples are full orchestras with vocalists, rhythm sections and microphones for amplification through a sound system. However, the size of the group that is used for other such events might range from a full orchestra or a slightly smaller one right down to a woodwind octet, a string quartet, or a brass quintet.

For jobs of this nature, there could be only one rehearsal – if a repeat programme is used for audiences at two different corporate events, and then again for a popular picnic concert which is open to the public. In other instances, a typical schedule would include an orchestral rehearsal in the afternoon with singers coming to an evening rehearsal. The next day would probably then be at the actual venue, if the first day’s rehearsals were held somewhere other than this. The concert taking place in the evening, there might be a full rehearsal or a one-hour sound balance rehearsal beforehand, with about a one hour break in between.

A player might also have rehearsals and/or performances for two different engagements on the same day. For instance, one afternoon I was playing an orchestral rehearsal for Bizet’s *Carmen* in a small, very dry rehearsal room. That same evening, I was playing a concert of pop music with amplification and a rhythm section. The venue was very large and the acoustic was quite lively, which made it very difficult to hear myself. I include this example in the discussion on mental preparation because, in this situation, a player must make a conscious decision to ‘play by feel’ alone, so as not to cause damage to the embouchure by playing too loudly. This is similar to a choir that is trying to sing louder than an orchestra. All that is accomplished in the end is that they end up nearly shouting and hurting their voices, instead of concentrating on singing together and blending with one another.

These situations can affect any number of things from players' nerves to the place in which a breath might be taken in a phrase. For instance, a passage may have been practised one way at home and the player realises that this way will not work, having to come up with an alternate way of playing it in a pressure situation. As in a previous example, the conductor may ask for something to be played differently. When playing into a microphone, whether it be for a live concert where the entire orchestra is amplified or for a recording session, the player may not want to take as many risks and opt to 'play it safe', breaking a long phrase into shorter, more manageable ones. If the venue is an outdoor one, the sound will probably be totally different than the player is used to. It is very easy in this situation for the player to play entirely too loudly. This due to the fact that it may sound as if one is playing totally alone, in order for a player to hear what he or she is playing; the volume level and therefore the degree of pressure on the lips can thus reach dangerous proportions.

2.3.3 Thought processes

Making such decisions is a necessary part of performing. However, as previously mentioned, this can be detrimental to the actual performance if too much energy is spent on this process. If the player is preoccupied with what the audience (or the audition panel, or his colleagues sitting around him) is thinking, the full concentration will not be on the music. There have been numerous occasions when I have played a difficult solo as well as I could have, mentally congratulating myself while the music is still going on. As a result I have ended up missing the next entry or fluffing a note within the next phrase. On the other hand, getting upset about missing a note or not playing a solo passage, or even a difficult tutti passage, as well one would like to play it can also be very damaging to the player's self-confidence.

Barry Green and Timothy Gallwey, in the book *Inner game of music* (1987), discuss the mental issues connected with the playing of music in great detail. Their view on this running mental commentary is, quite simply, that the more mental interference there is while a performer is trying to achieve their objective (be it an audition, a concerto with orchestra, or even just a tutti passage), the more problematic it can become. If a player is really concentrating there should be an awareness of things falling into place, thus leaving the performer too absorbed to be thinking consciously about what has already

happened in the past or what is still to come in the future (Green & Gallwey 1987:25). When this goal is achieved, the player will see a marked improvement in the level of concentration.

David Tippett, lead trumpeter and bandmaster of the Toledo Jazz Orchestra, is a former teacher of mine from the summers that I spent with the Glassmen Drum and Bugle Corps from Toledo, Ohio. In the evenings after a competition, the brass line would spend approximately fifteen minutes doing a 'warm-down' to get the lips back into shape for the day ahead. Then he would ask the members of the brass section if we could remember anything from our twelve-minute performance. If the answer was no, he would tell us that it was due to the fact that we had been concentrating properly; not dwelling on mistakes and not worrying about what was still to come. If someone was brave enough to answer yes – that they remembered missing an entrance due to some or other reason such as almost colliding with someone while executing a move in the marching drill – he would help that person find a solution to the problem. Perhaps he would then tell that particular player to relax and to use his peripheral vision to be more aware of the people moving around him if he was ever to find himself again in a similar situation.

To sum up, Green and Gallwey bring light to this issue by saying that “to reap the full benefits of anything we are doing, it is important for us to be aware of three things: the quality of our experience while we are doing it, what we are learning as we do it and how close we are coming to achieving our goals” (Green & Gallwey 1987:37). Whereas the first of these obviously happens while the task at hand is being undertaken, the other two can be analysed once it is finished.

2.3.4 Setting goals

It is very important for a player to set goals in order to have a frame of reference against which to measure his or her progress. This should be a series of attainable goals and not just one that will possibly only be reached after many years, if at all. For instance, a goal that I could set for myself is to become the principal horn player of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. There are many steps that must be taken before this dream could possibly come true, some of which have already been accomplished.

First, as previously mentioned, I completed a Bachelor of Music degree in music education. Towards the end of these four years, I decided to pursue a Master of Music degree in horn performance. It was during the first year of this 2-year program that I was offered the opportunity to play for a year in a full-time symphony orchestra, thus beginning a journey which could indeed lead to the fulfilment of this goal.

However, when the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's principal horn position does become vacant, the person who gets the job will be one of many equally qualified, talented and experienced players who are invited to audition for the panel and/or play a trial period with the orchestra. It will be the person who is the most consistent throughout the audition process who will fill the position. This level of consistency comes only with constant attention to detail in preparing for performance situations and being aware of exactly what is expected of one as a player in a section.

CHAPTER 3

EXPECTATIONS

In the introduction to a 1978 study entitled *A horn player's guide to orchestral excerpts*, Linda Anne Farr notes that Philip Farkas is known to have said that winning an audition and holding down a position are two quite different things. Success in both of these situations is dependent on the player's knowledge of the orchestral literature. However, there are many more factors that come into play when the player has passed an audition and becomes the newest member of a horn section.

3.1 Professional players

For the purposes of this study, I would first like to discuss what is expected of the horn player who has a position in a full-time orchestra as well as the freelance musician. As a member of a professional orchestra, the player would be required to attend sessions i.e. a rehearsal or concert, as set out in a schedule drawn up by the orchestra's management. For someone who is freelancing, music is still the means by which this person earns a living. In this situation however, one's work may come from many different sources. It is therefore up to the player to decide how many sessions can be fitted into a week, and if there are any schedule conflicts between the different ensembles.

In my case, I perform on a regular basis with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of South Africa, the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra and the Johannesburg Music Initiative. In addition, there is recording studio work for television advertisements and most recently a film score. I have also been asked to play in other parts of the country such as Cape Town, Durban and Bloemfontein, even as far afield as Windhoek in Namibia and Beira in Moçambique. This is usually for a week at a time to perform in a symphony concert, concerto festival or the like, but can also be for a longer period of time to participate in the run of a ballet or an opera.

Like myself, many freelance musicians play for more than one orchestra, trying to fit as many performance opportunities into their schedules as possible. A number of my

colleagues play fewer orchestral sessions and fill up their schedules with teaching, with others having jobs that vary from a chef to an occupational therapist. This is a choice that individuals must make for themselves and, whether playing an average of five sessions per week or fifteen sessions per week, the expectations remain the same.

3.1.1 Individual preparation

Professional musicians are expected to be fully prepared for the first rehearsal of a symphony program, a ballet, etc. This will allow the conductor the freedom to concentrate on the ensemble as a whole, instead of, for example, correcting one player for playing a wrong note and another for playing *piano* instead of *forte*. In most cases, the music will be made available to the players beforehand for their own individual preparation.

If it is not possible to secure the music in advance, well-known London freelance player Paul Pritchard gives the following advice in a very helpful book that he compiled and edited entitled *The Business: The essential guide to starting and surviving as a professional hornplayer* (1992). Pritchard advises that if a player will be sight reading, they should "...arrive early enough to have a good look at the part, noting not only any solos or tricky-looking passages, but pauses and 'tramlines' and passages that appear to have significant or sudden tempo changes" (1992:93).

3.1.2 Ensemble playing

Players who are working in professional situations need to have sufficient control over their instruments in order to be more aware of what is happening around them in the orchestra. This is only possible if sufficient individual time has been spent on mastering the technical difficulties of the instrument, and learning the part that is being played. The player is then free to spend the required energy on listening to what has come before in order that he or she can blend in with the existing texture of the phrase.

During my year of study at Ithaca College, I played in a woodwind quintet that was coached by Michael Galván, one of the clarinet professors at the university. Professor Galván tried to ensure that the five of us were constantly aware of one other, saying to

the oboist, “when you enter here you are actually the ‘fl-oboë’ because you are taking over the melodic line of the flute” or to the bassoon player, “in this case you’re not playing the bassoon, but the ‘clari-soon’ since you finish off what the clarinet started.” It was a very different concept to any that I had come into contact with before that time, but it is one that has stayed with me to this day. Each time I have an entrance, I ask myself who is currently playing and how I can best fit in with the instruments that are already playing. This is especially helpful if a starting pitch is quite high in the range and should be soft in dynamic. If I imagine that I am playing with the line beforehand, in my experience, it makes entering into the existing texture a much more successful event.

3.2 Semi-professional and amateur players

There are certain things that professional players do as a matter of course that many younger players may not be aware of. As the newest member of a professional orchestra, a player must be aware of other things in addition to the music which is being played. There are established, yet unspoken, rules and traditions that one must follow in order for the adjustment to be made smoothly. In an amateur orchestra, these traditions may be much less obvious. These are discussed below.

3.2.1 Ensemble etiquette

A player must do everything possible to ensure they arrive on time for rehearsals. This includes being seated, warmed up and ready to play at the downbeat. The warm-up should be used to get the player prepared for the hours ahead, not to show off to the rest of the group. Something that is frowned upon and considered rude is playing others’ solos before/after a rehearsal or in a break.

A player should also be sensitive to the habits of the principal horn player of the section. If that player raises the instrument an entire measure before an entrance, the rest of the section should follow suit. The first player then does not have to worry about whether the other players are ready to enter at the appointed time in the music. In addition, as a courtesy to others sitting nearby, a player should rid their instrument of water as unobtrusively as possible. It can be very distracting for a first horn player who is in the

middle of a solo passage if the person next to them is moving around unnecessarily and making a big show out of emptying the horn.

It is acceptable practice to mark in a small number of fingerings for stopped horn notes and/or tricky passages. However, transpositions should not be written in the parts. If other notes are pencilled in under (or above) the notes that are to be played, it becomes incredibly difficult to determine what is actually printed and what has been added in. In fact, numerous times in my orchestral career, I have played from parts in which the transposition for every single note of a piece has been painstakingly put in the part. On one occasion, the player had transposed an entire movement into the wrong key, i.e. the notes which were pencilled in were all incorrect, being a whole tone lower than they should have been. This is not only a huge waste of time, both for the player who has done this and also for the one who has to remove it from the part, but a hazardous process.

3.2.2 Accepting engagements

If a player accepts work from an orchestra and doesn't check his or her schedule carefully enough and ends up with a conflict, it can be both embarrassing and detrimental to the player's future prospects to phone the orchestral manager and ask to be released from a rehearsal or, even worse, a concert. Once a commitment is made to play an engagement with an orchestra, a player must not cancel, even if a better offer comes up – this shows a sense of loyalty to the group.

Players must do their absolute best not to miss rehearsals, except in emergencies. If a player is seen to be reliable, he or she will continue to be asked to play. On the other hand, if one is in the habit of being late or not coming to rehearsal at all, that person can end up with the reputation of being someone who cannot be depended upon. Obviously, the ensemble suffers when a player misses rehearsals, but the individual suffers as well. The player has lost an opportunity to get to know the music better, thus lessening his or her chances at a good performance in the actual concert.

3.2.3 Level of preparation

In an on-line article by Marilyn Bone Kloss, from the International Horn Society's journal *The Horn Call*, Richard Pittman, who was music director of the Concord (Massachusetts) Orchestra for nearly thirty years, and more recently of the New England Philharmonic, is quoted as saying of the orchestral musician, "you are a member of a crew and you have to pull your oar.... You have to train enough to stay with the level of the ensemble, meet the challenge to get ready for the performance" (Kloss 1998: 65).

Kloss goes on to say that amateur players tend to take preparation less seriously. This may be due to the fact that many amateurs may be working all day or the belief that, with so much rehearsal time, there is no need for practice in advance of the first meeting with the orchestra. At whatever level, if the music is made available to the player beforehand, every effort should be made to acquire it and prepare as much as possible. Even a few minutes a day of just looking at a part in a lunch break, or listening to a recording of the piece while driving to work will help the player to become more familiar with the music.

CHAPTER 4

ORCHESTRAL EXCERPT BOOKS

Excerpt books are indeed a necessary part of any orchestral musician's library. They can definitely be helpful, however it is my opinion that a player should take these resources and build upon the information that is provided in them in order to be able to play the excerpts properly. As previously discussed, I find that there are a number of things that a player must keep in mind when using one of these texts.

The following are just a few examples of the extra unnotated knowledge a player must acquire about these passages before they can be successfully performed with security and confidence. Nevertheless, much of this type of information will be interpreted differently by various players. In other words, part of what is so wonderful about music is that it is never exactly the same. Each and every performance of a work, be it live or yet another recording of a work which has already been released numerous times, will be different. This being the case, a player should still have as clear an understanding as possible of both the 'traditional' ways these orchestral passages are usually played, and other possibilities in respect of interpretation.

4.1 Passages taken out of context

Many of the excerpt books that were available in the past contained errors; other books left out shorter, albeit difficult passages, and some important passages were excluded altogether. I believe that it is for these reasons that there is a growing trend towards players studying orchestral excerpts from the complete original parts. Even though there may be sections of a work where the horn player doesn't play very much, or is playing an accompanying role, it is helpful to see the passages exactly as they appear in the orchestral part. David B. Thompson, solo horn of the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, has compiled a volume of over one thousand pages of orchestral horn passages entitled *The orchestral audition repertoire for horn: Comprehensive and unabridged (1995)*. In the introduction to this text, Thompson describes the contents as "virtually the entire orchestra audition repertoire for both high and low horn, reprinted from the original orchestra parts [which] have not been excerpted, cut, edited or otherwise adulterated."

This is a very useful source; however, it is very cumbersome and also expensive. It is published in a three-ring binder for the purpose of taking out the necessary pages which will be required for the next audition or lesson, etc. This is very convenient, and much preferred to ordering individual parts from publishing companies and/or checking individual parts out of a music library and making one's own copies of the parts. However, in my opinion, being able to take individual parts out of the volume actually defeats the purpose of publishing everything together, and the player runs the risk of losing the removed pages at the most crucial moment.

There is also a source by Daren Robbins, to which I have recently been introduced, which consists of a selection of forty-six of the most common orchestral excerpts for horn. These are available in the form of a text entitled *Orchestral horn excerpts: a collection of excerpts as they appear in the original parts (2004)*, which comes with a set of nine compact disc recordings of the excerpts as performed by various orchestras. Robbins has also created a website (<http://www.hornexcerpts.org>) from which it is possible to download these pages and the accompanying recordings. These are not complete parts or sound recordings, but much effort has been made to include several measures before and after each passage.

In my opinion, sources such as these two examples are better than most which have traditionally been available. However, in the case of many texts, short passages are taken completely out of the context of the work from which they come, and are then compiled into one or more volumes such as the seven volumes of excerpts compiled and edited by James Chambers and published by the International Music Company or the three volumes of *French horn passages (1943)* "extracted" by Max Pottag. There are passages from over one hundred compositions included in these books, but they look completely different from the originals, and some are difficult to decipher. Regardless, if a player is using a text which presents the excerpts in their entirety, or one that gives the player short sections of a work, the following section is a short discussion of the areas a player should look at in order to fully grasp what is taking place in the music.

4.1.1 Interpretation of articulation and dynamic markings

The player must be familiar with the note lengths of a passage before the rehearsals for a concert begin, in order that the conductor can guide the players to ensure that everyone in the ensemble is interpreting the music in a similar manner. For instance, if there are notes with staccato markings under a slur, followed by either staccato or slurred notes, the difference must be audible between the two indications. The different accents that are found in music must also be carefully observed. The time period from which the work comes will have much to do with how articulation markings are interpreted. For example, the wedge-shaped accent (^) can be used in some works to denote added stress on a note, whereas a composer from a later time period may use this same marking to indicate that a note should be played very short. The more common accent mark (>) and the tenuto marking (-) must also be differentiated between

The player will also need to determine if the dynamic marking of a section can be played as marked or whether it needs to be played louder or softer than is indicated. If a passage is marked *forte* and is being played with the woodwind section, it may be necessary to play it much softer than one which is played with the rest of the brass section. Similarly, if a solo is marked *piano* it may have to be played much closer to a *mezzo-forte* than a true *piano* in order to come through a richer orchestral texture.

4.1.2 Preceding measures

Another situation that can occur, as in the case of the Fifth Symphony of Dimitri Shostakovich, is that there is a long tutti passage before a very high and taxing solo. If the player plays this entire passage, it is very likely that he or she will not make it through the coming solo without a mistake – an attack that is not clear or a slur that has a break in it – due to the lips being tired. Ideally, a first horn player should have an assistant player, or “bumper”, to help him or her play such tutti passages in order to remain fresh for solos like this one. If an assistant is not present, the player must avoid the temptation to play the preceding measures and mentally prepare for what is to come.

On the other hand, a player may have a long wait before a solo, resulting in the instrument growing cold and the lips stiff. In Bach’s B minor Mass the horn player waits

for approximately forty minutes before playing the bass aria, which is again very high and technically difficult. This situation is made especially difficult if the performance is in a church or cathedral in the winter months. These venues tend to be cold and drafty, and the player might be sitting on an uncomfortable chair, in a cramped space or behind a pillar. Thus, the preparation of the excerpt itself and the player's warm-up on the day must be sufficient to overcome these obstacles.

4.1.3 Phrasing

Breathing is one aspect of horn playing that can be a very personal thing. I have found that there is a lack of these indications in some excerpt books, and in others the ones which are provided may not necessarily work under pressure or if the lips are tired. If a situation such as this arises, preventing the player from breathing in the usual place, he or she must be comfortable enough with the passage to pick an alternate place within the phrase in which to breathe. When a player is in the middle of a performance, this may be an instantaneous decision. However, if the correct preparation has been done beforehand, the stress of this situation can be significantly less. For example, I performed Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony with the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra when I was six months pregnant, making it quite difficult if not impossible to play the same lengths of phrases as I do when I usually play this piece. Obviously I knew that this would be the case and was able to prepare myself for the concert by deciding exactly where I would breathe within a phrase.

A good way for a player to prepare for the out-of-breath feeling that can result from nervousness is to run up and down a staircase, immediately return to the horn and try to play the excerpt. Practicing an excerpt such as the notorious first horn solo in the fourth movement of Dvořák's Ninth Symphony at the end of a long practice session is a way to simulate having to play this at the end of a symphony concert when the lips are tired. I can say from experience that to sit through the eight measures prior to this solo thinking "Will I be able to get the high note?" is definitely not a pleasant situation to be in. Here again, if sufficient preparation has been done, a player can decide to take that extra breath in the phrase – thus resulting in a split second in which the lips have a chance to rest – giving that extra bit of help for the high note.

4.1.4 Orchestral texture

Another aspect of which a player should be aware is which other instruments are playing at the same time. In the Brahms Second Symphony there is a very difficult first horn solo in the second movement; it is made difficult by the fact that it is in an incredibly awkward transposition – that of H basso in which the player must transpose down by the interval of an augmented fourth. (In other words, if the note is a third-space C in the treble clef, an F-sharp below is played in order that the correct note sounds.) Within this solo, the first bassoon is playing a counter-melody with the horn, at one stage providing the horn player a place in which to breathe that makes it sound as if the melodic line has carried over without a break. Thus, a greater awareness of a passage not only has the potential to help a player with the job that is required, but can also lead to special moments within the musical texture that otherwise could go unnoticed.

Another instance in which it is helpful to be aware of the orchestral texture is if an entrance is a particularly difficult one – for instance picking out a note at the top of the range of the instrument after not having played for several measures. Many times the notes of another instrument's music will be included in the preceding bars rest. This will generally not appear in the excerpt book; therefore when the player sees these notes in the original part for the first time, it can sometimes be difficult to hear the instrument that is indicated in small notes. For example, if a line appears before a horn entrance that says "flute 1" above it, the orchestral texture may be too dense for the horn player to hear it, due partly to the position of the various sections of the orchestra. A quick glance, however, at the time when the flute is to begin will give the horn player a visual cue which can be just as effective.

Another problem with these "cues" is that in horn parts, they often appear in the transposition in which the other instrument is playing. For example, sometimes a cue will be in concert pitch – the actual pitch that the other instrument is playing – and other times a cue will be transposed into the key of F in order that the horn player sees the notes that would be played if that line was being played by the horn player himself. Another situation that sometimes occurs is that the first horn may be playing in horn in G (a tone higher than the notes printed on the page) and have in their part a passage from the third horn who is at that time playing in horn in D (a minor third lower than the notes

printed on the page). The player must then remember to play in the correct transposition when it is time to enter. This can be very confusing for the inexperienced first horn player, after watching a number of measures go by in which the third horn player is playing a minor third below the pitch indicated, to then play his or her own part a major second higher than the pitch indicated.

4.2 Lack of comprehensiveness

In her book *A horn player's guide to orchestral excerpts*, Linda Anne Farr provides an index, by composer, to over nine hundred excerpts contained in fifty-four volumes of horn excerpt books published between the years 1940 and 1978. These fifty-four texts fall into three different categories: thirty-nine deal with multiple genres i.e. symphonic works, operatic works and chamber music such as the Beethoven Septet; ten focus on single genres – nineteenth century Italian operas, for example; and five contain the complete horn parts of the works that are in the books (1978: 6).

4.2.1 Incomplete passages

The very word “excerpts” informs the player that the excerpts are extracted from a larger work. The point I would like to make here is that for various reasons the degree of completeness of the individual passages may vary from book to book. The material may not be in the public domain, causing the person who is compiling the text to have to contact the various publishers of the works in order to ask permission to include the excerpts. David Thompson discusses the fact that there were six works which he would have liked to include in his book, but was unfortunately unable to secure permission to reprint them.

The author may also be limited by considerations of time. For example, Daren Robbins mentions that due to the fact that his book was the product of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin he had to keep these factors in mind, and work within certain boundaries. He says that he has “assembled an excerpt book that I believe to be the best possible compromise between the comprehensive but hefty *Thompson Edition* and the convenient but deficient and visually discrepant excerpt books” (<http://www.hornexcerpts.org>). For example, for some works he has tried to

include more passages than some of the excerpt books that were traditionally available, however, in a work such as *Ein Heldenleben*, including the entire part would have been nearly the only way to include all of the difficult passages.

Thompson illustrates the danger of preparing for an audition from an excerpt book. Although the case in point was actually a series of mock auditions at which he adjudicated, the audition panel requested the participants to prepare the previously mentioned first horn solo from the Second Symphony of Brahms in the transposition of H basso. When several of the players stopped four measures from the end of the passage, it came to light that they had all done their preparation from the same source. The candidates were then given original parts but Thompson remarks that it was “unpleasant for all parties concerned to have these players sight-reading those measures under pressure” (<http://www.thompsonedition.com/>).

4.2.2 Incomplete data

The lengths of rests between passages are also often omitted from the excerpt book. This is a big disadvantage in that there is no indication given by, usually, the double bar at the end of the passage whether the next part is the very next thing to play, or if there are a number of tutti sections in between, etc. The player cannot tell from practicing these individual sections by playing through them one after the other how to pace himself in the context of the actual work.

There are often multiple parts included on a single line of music. This can make the notes very difficult to read, players can get confused by the accidentals when they are so close together, and the correct transpositions can be more difficult to determine. A case in point is that of the excerpts from Mahler’s First Symphony as published in one of the volumes by the International Music Company. On the first of fifteen pages of excerpts from this symphony, the first two lines are a duet between first and second horns – with both parts on one staff. The next four lines are dedicated to the first, second, third and fourth parts respectively for eight measures of music. There is no double bar at the end of the line, with the music continuing on the next line with only the first and second horn parts for six more measures. The next two lines are for the first and third horns, each on a separate line, for six measures with a double bar at the end. The last two lines on the

page are bracketed together and have the first and third horn parts on the top line and second on the bottom line. This can obviously lead to confusion when a player has been instructed to prepare “Mahler – First Symphony, first movement”.

4.3 Ambiguity

Not only can there be confusion as to which part of a work must be prepared, it can sometimes be difficult to find the correct piece altogether. Passages may be referred to by different names, symphonies may be catalogued by different numbers, and a book may be in a language other than the titles the player has on an audition list.

4.3.1 Various headings

Farr (1978:7) cites an extreme example of this by drawing her readers’ attention to a passage published in volume three of Max Pottag’s *French Horn Passages*. It simply says “Haydn, Joseph – Symphony” with the marking Adagio immediately preceding the excerpt. In the 1981 publication that I have of the text *Passi difficili e “a solo” per corno* compiled by Fontana, the same passage is listed as “1.^a SINFONIA di G. HAYDN”. Farr refers to the same book (obviously an earlier edition), saying that the passage is listed as Symphony No. 45. In yet another source, *Orchester-Studien für horn* by Albin Frehse (1973), it is credited to Mozart but footnoted as “not recorded by Köchel and probably not authentic”. Farr goes on to say that “research has shown that this excerpt was composed neither by Haydn nor Mozart, and with no other identifying information, this selection remains an anonymous contribution to the horn orchestral literature” (1978:7).

4.3.2 Different numbering systems

When searching for a certain excerpt, care must be given to making sure that the player is indeed preparing the one that is asked for on an audition list. The symphonies of Dvořák spring immediately to mind when discussing this topic. If an orchestra asks to hear passages from the Fifth Symphony by Antonin Dvořák, it would be a good idea for the candidate to confirm whether it is the Fifth Symphony as we know it today or whether it is the “New World Symphony” – the modern Ninth Symphony – which they want to hear.

Catalogues of composers' works are contained in, amongst others, the *Dictionary of composers and their music* (Gildel: 1978). Dvořák's symphonies are listed as follows: Symphony No. 1 in C minor and Symphony No. 2 in Bb major in 1865, Symphony No. 3 in Eb major in 1873 and Symphony No. 4 in D minor in 1874. After these came Symphony No. 5 in F major (old numbering: No. 3) in 1875, Symphony No. 6 in D major (old numbering: No. 1) in 1880, Symphony No. 7 in D minor (old numbering: No. 2) in 1885, Symphony No. 8 in G major (old numbering: No. 4) in 1889 and Symphony no. 9 in E minor *From the New World* (old numbering: No. 5) in 1893. Of the nine symphonies that Dvořák wrote, five of them were at one time known by other numbers.

Confusion with Schubert's symphonies lies with the fact that between his Symphony No. 6 in C major (1818), and the Symphony No. 8 in B minor the *Unfinished* (1822), he sketched a symphony in E major. "The Great" Symphony in C major – so nicknamed to distinguish it from number six – was originally published as his Seventh Symphony, although it actually postdated the eighth. "There continues to be some controversy over the numbering of this symphony, with German-speaking scholars sometimes numbering it as symphony No. 7, some versions of the Deutsch catalog (the standard catalogue of Schubert's works, compiled by Otto Erich Deutsch) listing it as No. 8, and English-speaking scholars generally listing it as No. 9" (<http://en.wikipedia.org>). This is of particular importance to horn players because "The Great" Symphony in C major, whether it is listed in the concert programme as number seven, number eight or number nine, begins with an opening call with the two horn players playing in unison.

4.3.3 Other languages

There are some works in the previously mentioned Italian excerpt book entitled *Passi difficili e "a solo" per corno* that are possible for an English speaking person to recognise at first glance, even though they are written in the Italian language. The widely-known overture to Rossini's opera *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* is a case in point, being quite easy to recognise.

But one that may take a while to figure out would be something like *Il Sogno d'una notte d'estate*. Once a player realises that after this title in the table of contents, the word *notturmo* appears in parentheses and the passage is attributed to Mendelssohn, it stands

to reason that this is the Nocturne from the Midsummer Night's Dream. Another of these passages in this particular book appears thus: "**Nuovo Mondo**. Sinfonia". Since it is the only one listed for Dvořák, and the themes are so well known, a quick glance at page 117 will tell the player that this is the symphony *From the New World*. In this case, the debate about the numbering of the symphony does not apply, but the language issue is another one that must be dealt with.

There are twelve listings in *Passi difficili e "a solo" per corno* of opera music by Richard Wagner. In fact eighty-eight of the one-hundred fifty-eight pages are dedicated to his music. Some of the titles in the table of contents are immediately recognisable – *Tannhäuser*, *Parsifal* and *Lohengrin* to name but a few – but others take some research in order to figure them out. Upon looking in the *New Grove book of operas*, edited by Stanley Sadie, I refreshed my memory as to the four parts of the cycle of works commonly known in English as "The Ring". Eventually, with the help of an English-German dictionary, I could confirm that *I Maestri Cantori degli Dei* was the Italian translation of the German *Götterdämmerung*.

If a group of horn players are getting together for a social afternoon of playing quartets, horn choir pieces like an arrangement that Phillip Farkas did of Beethoven's Egmont Overture, or to play some orchestral excerpts out of the books which include multiple parts for the abovementioned Wagner operas or other pieces such as Robert Schumann's *Konzertstück* for four horns and orchestra, these texts are quite sufficient. However, it is vital for audition candidates or members of an orchestral horn section to supplement the information contained therein with the results of careful study of the passages that are required of them.

CHAPTER 5

HORN EXCERPT LISTS

The following are lists of the horn excerpts most commonly asked for at auditions for positions in orchestras. These lists have been compiled by comparing other similar studies and taking into consideration how many times each passage is included and in what order they appear on these other studies. Sources which were consulted include 1) the list of excerpts found in Douglas Hill's *Collected thoughts on teaching and learning, creativity, and horn performance* (2001), 2) the list that was the result of a study done by Brian Thomas and Seth Orgel available on the International Horn Society's web page, originally published in the IHS journal *Horn Call* volume XIII no. 2, along with 3) the lists mentioned in John Dressler's article in *The instrumentalist* magazine that appears in the Brass Anthology.

Another very helpful source was the *Orchestral Excerpt Checklist* published by Dr. John Ericson, professor of horn at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. This checklist forms part of a web page (<http://www.public.asu.edu/~jgerics/resources.htm>) entitled *Horn Resources* including various articles discussing French and German musical terms, selected horn history and pedagogy resources, as well as a list of frequently heard solo and chamber works for horn.

I also took into consideration audition lists that I have had to prepare in my own orchestral experience. These begin with audition requirements for summer music festivals in the United States, auditions for graduate school at Ithaca College and Florida State University, continuing with the audio tape that I sent to the Natal Philharmonic Orchestra for the second horn position and subsequent lists I had to prepare for various horn auditions once I moved to South Africa. These include auditioning for the principal horn position of the NPO, the co-principal position of the National Symphony Orchestra and the principal position of the New Arts Philharmonic Orchestra in Pretoria.

5.1 Most common horn excerpts

Most of the sources that were consulted in order to draw up the following lists combine the excerpts for auditions for all four horn positions. However, an interesting feature of Dressler's article is that he has separated the low horn list from the high horn list and provided readers with a percentage for each excerpt of how many times each of these passages was requested on the audition lists of various professional orchestras across the United States. Ericson combines his list, but notes the passages for each horn part, e.g. under the heading "Brahms, Symphony No. 1" he indicates three sections: Mvt. II, horn 1 solo; Mvt. III, horns 3 and 4 in H; Mvt. IV, call at fig. B, horn 1. This is very helpful due to the fact that, as previously mentioned, many excerpt books leave out certain passages. The first thirty-six excerpts listed below are the result of my compilation from all the sources consulted, and are in the approximate order of the frequency of their appearance on auditions for both high and low horn positions.

Strauss, <i>Till Eulenspiegel</i>	Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 4
Shostakovich, Symphony No. 5	Beethoven, Symphony No. 6
Beethoven, Symphony No. 7	Brahms, Piano Concerto No. 2
Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 5	Berlioz, Scherzo from <i>Queen Mab</i>
Beethoven, Symphony No. 3	Beethoven, Symphony No. 8
Beethoven, Symphony No. 9	Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 1
Brahms, Symphony No. 1	Beethoven, Symphony No. 2
Strauss, <i>Don Juan</i>	Mahler, Symphony No. 5
Strauss, <i>Ein Heldenleben</i>	Wagner, <i>Das Rheingold</i>
Wagner, Short Call from <i>Siegfried's Rhine Journey</i>	Strauss, <i>Don Quixote</i>
Mendelssohn, Nocturne from <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Brahms, Piano Concert No. 1
Brahms, Symphony No. 2	Haydn, Symphony No. 31
Brahms, Symphony No. 4	Bach, Mass in B minor
Brahms, Symphony No. 3	Mendelssohn, Symphony No. 3
Mahler, Symphony No. 1	Mozart, Symphony No. 40
Dvořák, Symphony No. 9	Brahms, <i>Academic Festival Overture</i>
Beethoven, Overture to <i>Fidelio</i>	Saint-Saëns, Symphony No. 3
	Ravel, Piano Concerto in G
	Weber, Overture to <i>Der Freischütz</i>

5.2 Excerpts often required

The next section comprises the passages that were less popular but also asked for regularly, also in the estimated order of their importance. The presence of the larger

symphonic works at the top of the first list indicates that these are the works that the audition committee will likely request to hear in order to judge the candidate's ability on his or her instrument. The works in this next category range from symphonic works to ballet suites, from concerti to opera overtures and, more specifically, from the Chamber Symphony of Schoenberg to a huge work such as Mahler's Third Symphony. These are the works that will fill out the audition list. Depending on the length of the list, the number of people attending the audition and the time period that the auditions will cover, the player may be required to present six or seven of the following passages.

Bruckner, Symphony No. 4	Mussorgsky, <i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i>
Mahler, Symphony No. 4	Prokofiev, Suites 1 & 2 from <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Brahms, Haydn Variations	Liszt, <i>Les Préludes</i>
Schubert, Symphony No. 9	Stravinsky, Suite from <i>The Fairy's Kiss</i>
Schumann, Symphony No. 3	Strauss, <i>Death and Transfiguration</i>
Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 5	Rossini, Overture to <i>La Gazza Ladra</i>
Debussy, <i>La Mer</i>	Ravel, <i>Daphnis and Chloë</i>
Dvořák, Cello Concerto	Schoenberg, Chamber Symphony No. 1
Franck, Symphony in D minor	Wagner, Overture to <i>Die Meistersinger</i>
Rossini, Overture to <i>Semiramide</i>	Haydn, Symphony No. 45
Mahler, Symphony No. 3	Rimsky-Korsakov, <i>Scheherazade</i>
Stravinsky, Suite from <i>The Firebird</i>	Beethoven, Symphony No. 4
Wagner, Long Call from <i>Siegfried's Rhine Journey</i>	Strauss, Suite from <i>Der Rosenkavalier</i>

5.3 Other excerpts requested

This last section consists of other excerpts that have been found on audition lists, but with much less frequency than those on the first two lists. There can, in fact, be others that are played so rarely that they are not even on this list. For instance, when I auditioned for the New Arts Philharmonic Orchestra of Pretoria, I had to prepare sections from two arias (numbers twenty-five and twenty-six) from Mozart's opera *Così fan Tutte*. These passages are very tricky and I spent quite a lot of time on them, to the detriment of others like the opening solo of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony. If a player has prior knowledge of at least a good portion of these excerpts, preparation for an audition can be made less difficult in the respect that he or she will not have to learn passages that are totally unfamiliar. Unlike the previous groups of excerpts, I have listed these alphabetically for greater ease of comparing them with the tables of contents of the player's chosen excerpt book.



Barkók, Concerto for Orchestra	Prokofiev, <i>Lieutenant Kije</i>
Beethoven, Symphonies Nos. 1 & 5	Prokofiev, Symphonies Nos. 5 & 6
Beethoven, Violin Concerto	Rachmaninov, Symphonic Dances
Berlioz, <i>Roman Carnival Overture</i>	Ravel, <i>Bolero</i>
Berlioz, <i>Symphonie Fantastique</i>	Ravel, <i>Pavanne for a Dead Princess</i>
Borodin, <i>Polovetsian Dances</i>	Respighi, <i>Pines of Rome</i>
Brahms, <i>Tragic Overture</i>	Rimsky-Korsakov, <i>Capriccio Espagnole</i>
Bruckner, Symphonies Nos. 7 & 9	Rossini, Overture to <i>Barber of Seville</i>
Debussy, <i>Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun</i>	Shostakovich, Cello Concerto
Dukas, <i>La Peri</i>	Shostakovich, Symphony No. 1
Dvořák, Symphonies Nos. 7 & 8	Strauss, <i>Also Sprach Zarathustra</i>
Handel, <i>Judas Maccabaeus</i>	Strauss, <i>Sinfonia Domestica</i>
Hindemith, Concert Music for Strings and Brass	Stravinsky, <i>Rite of Spring</i>
Hindemith, <i>Mathis der Mahler</i>	Stravinsky, Suite from <i>Pulcinella</i>
Humperdinck, <i>Hänsel and Gretel</i>	Tchaikovsky, <i>Capriccio Italien</i>
Mahler, Symphonies Nos. 7 & 9	Tchaikovsky, Symphonies Nos. 2, 3 & 6
Mendelssohn, Symphony No. 4	Thomas, Overture to <i>Mignon</i>
Mozart, Piano Concerto No. 27	Wagner, <i>Die Walküre</i>
Mozart, Symphonies Nos. 29 & 39	Wagner, Overture to <i>Flying Dutchman</i>
Mozart, Violin Concerto No. 5	Wagner, Prelude to Act III of <i>Lohengrin</i>
	Wagner, <i>Siegfried Idyll</i>
	Weber, Overture to <i>Oberon</i>

5.4 Popularity of works

Although a work such as *Till Eulenspiegel* by Richard Strauss may appear on the majority of audition lists for a position in an orchestra, be it full-time or part-time, the work itself may not be performed very often. The positions of the excerpts on the previous lists were, as mentioned, taken from the frequency of their appearance on audition lists. However, it was a different picture altogether that was painted as I compiled a list of the works that were performed by the SABC Orchestra, The National Symphony Orchestra of the SABC, the National Symphony Orchestra (which were essentially the same organisation) and the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, which was formed in 2000.

Of the one thousand entries, coming from a selection of concert programmes from these orchestras that span a thirty-year period, one third of the works (including symphonic works as well as overtures, concertos and ballet suites) were composed by Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky and Brahms. Beethoven was the clear favourite among these composers, with his works accounting for one hundred and fifteen items. This is quite amazing when one considers that this number is spread relatively evenly amongst his nine symphonies, five piano concertos, violin concerto and the *Leonore Overture* no. 3.

Mozart, who was a much more prolific composer, rated next at ninety-one entries. Seventeen of these are overtures from his operas and seventy-four are various piano, violin and wind concertos and symphonies.

There are three pieces that were not on any of the three lists of most requested excerpts that stand out as far as popularity is concerned. Mozart's Symphony No. 41, the Symphony No. 2 of Sibelius and Schubert's *Unfinished* Symphony No. 8 were all played eight times. This is in comparison with the three entries for the Symphony No. 5 of Shostakovich and only two entries for *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Ein Heldenleben* by Richard Strauss, all of which appeared on the various audition lists that were consulted in order to draw up the lists which appear in Chapters 5.1 to 5.3.

Although there are many excerpts that could have been included in this study, there has been no attempt made at comprehensiveness. For instance, if I were to have discussed each of the excerpts on the first list, those that are required on most auditions, this study would have turned into one of mammoth proportions. In the book entitled *The nine symphonies of Beethoven*, Antony Hopkins (1981:270) states that the infamous fourth horn solo from the third movement Beethoven's Ninth Symphony "strikes both the eye and ear as outlandish" and goes on further to ask why "the fourth horn-player [should] be asked to play passages whose difficulty far exceeds anything else that Beethoven ever wrote?". Another reason for the exclusion of this passage is that, although it was traditionally played by the first horn player, the fourth horn players in the sections of which I have been a member have always played this solo. I have, therefore, never played this solo personally, and felt that any information provided within this text would have come from the experience of others rather than myself.

Another excerpt that could have been included is the first horn solo from the opening of the Fourth Symphony by Anton Bruckner in which "the first horn has the responsibility for the success or otherwise of the entire work" according to Barry Tuckwell in his book *Horn* (1983:98). The player must decide whether he or she wants to take the risk involved in making the first entry come out of nowhere, which could result in a fluffed note, or playing it safe and lessening this effect. Having twice played the first horn part and the third horn part once (thus hearing a colleague play the same passage in a different manner from that in which I myself played it), I would have been better able to

comment on this passage. However, even though this solo is difficult and can be very nerve-wracking for the solo horn player, it only appears at the top of the second list of excerpts that was discussed in Chapter 5.2, those that are “often required”.

One very important point is that even though an excerpt may be played time and time again at orchestral auditions, it may be part of a piece that is not performed very often at all. Conversely, there may be a piece in which there is a tricky solo for the first horn player that does not feature on auditions, but is played often. These situations could be caused by various reasons. Firstly, in specific regions of the world there may be a higher occurrence of certain works being performed. For example, the works of Jean Sibelius are considered by many to be quite nationalistic in nature and are performed more often in his native country of Finland than in anywhere else in the world.

Secondly, here in South Africa as well as in many other countries, orchestras were once supported by government and were given massive budgets with which to work. Huge operas were produced, as well as performances of symphonies with tremendously large orchestrations such as two harps, four horns as well as four Wagner Tubas, quadruple winds (a term meaning four flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons including doublings on instruments such as alto flute, piccolo, cor anglais, bass and E-flat clarinets and contra bassoon – all of which cost the orchestra extra money) and large percussion sections. These productions would nearly always run at a loss but, due to the fact that they were part of such a large budget, the costs would be absorbed without difficulty.

5.5 Performance Practice

Due to the fact that some works with less difficult excerpts for the horn player appear more regularly on symphony programmes, I will not be simply discussing performance practices for the first five or six excerpts that top the list of those most commonly asked for on auditions. It is for this reason that, in deciding which passages to discuss, I have taken into consideration both the difficulty of the passages and their prominence on concert programmes. It should be noted that throughout the following discussions, any mention of fingerings assumes the use of double-horn fingerings as is standard practice in the American school of horn playing.

5.5.1 Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5, Op. 64

In the case of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, it is both one of the most difficult solos for the first horn player and one of the most popular works in the orchestral repertoire. Endurance is a big factor in the player's ability to perform this excerpt which comes from the beginning of the second movement of the symphony (see Figure 2 below). It is not as high in the register of the horn as some solos in the repertoire (e.g. the Piano Concerto in G minor by Maurice Ravel which goes to a C above the treble staff), however, as it is with the Nocturne from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, it is the sheer length of this excerpt, among other things, that makes it very difficult.

Figure 2:

II. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza
mm. 9 – 28 (8 before fig. A – 13 after fig. A)
Horn 1 in F



Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza.

SOLO.
dolce con molto espress.

animando riten. A Sostenuto
mf p

animando Sostenuto
mf > p

Con moto dolce anim.
p

Sostenuto
mp 4

During the course of rehearsals for this work, the player should make certain that he or she requests that the conductor allows plenty of time in the performance between the first and second movements of the symphony in order to empty the horn of condensation. This allows for complete concentration, during the first seven bars, on what is to follow, as opposed to enduring the added stress of wondering “Will I get these

valve slides back in the horn in time to play the solo?”, whence it becomes very easy to lose track of counting measures, creating the possibility of a wrong entrance.

In order to perform this excerpt as well as possible, it is imperative that each one of the performance indications which are supplied by the composer be followed exactly. These indications let the player know to play in a vocal style with some license (*Cantabile, con alcuna licenza*), and softly and sweetly with very much expression (*dolce con molto espress.*). There is also an *animando* marking that happens three times within the passage, each followed by a *sostenuto*, with the one in measure twenty-five, the tenth measure of letter A, the most pronounced due to the fact that it happens within a section marked *con moto* – with motion.

Wendell Hoss, former principal horn of the Los Angeles, Chicago, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras among others, and teacher of the horn at some of the most prestigious music colleges in the United States, sheds some light on the phrasing of the beginning of this solo in an article entitled *Stresses in playing the French horn* that he wrote for the *Instrumentalist* magazine in 1965. He states that this is an example of “an extremely effective employment of the appoggiatura” and that though “the stress called for will be largely one of length...a suggestion of delay can also be added by sustaining almost imperceptibly the last of the eighth notes just before the appoggiatura” (Hoss 1965:262).

There is an implied crescendo on the fourth beat of measure eight, in other words on the first three notes of the horn solo line, through to the first beat of measure nine. If the player also follows the tenuto marking on the last of the three eighth notes and the accent on the downbeat of measure nine, as Mr. Hoss suggests, this should happen quite naturally. The player must also ensure that the dynamic returns to *piano* on the dotted half-note which follows, making this phrasing even more effective and setting the tone for the rest of the passage.

Generally speaking, where articulation is concerned, care must be taken to differentiate between the various markings that are presented in the passage. For example, on the second and third beats in measure twenty there are staccato markings underneath a slur. On the fourth beat this changes to tenuto lines under the slur marking in order that

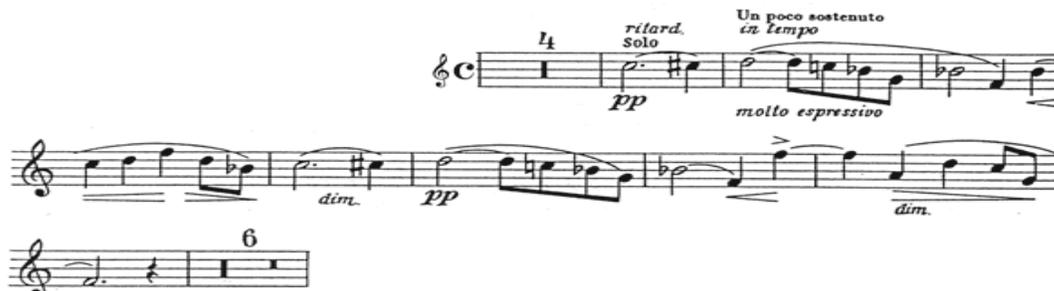
this last beat of measure twenty is the same as the fourth of measure 16. Although, in measure 20 the *piano* marking is positioned under the second beat, it is implied that the dynamic level remains the same until the crescendo begins on the fourth beat.

In the *Anthology of French horn music*, published by Mel Bay and edited by Richard C. Moore and Eugene Ettore, special attention is drawn to the final two measures, twenty-seven and twenty-eight, of the solo. In fact it is written exactly like this in capital letters, “DON’T RUSH THESE LAST TWO BARS” (1986:156). Therefore, even though a player may think “but it is a horn solo, they must follow me” in this instance, the horn player must be aware of the triplets that are being played by the string sections and fit the duple figure in accordingly.

5.5.2 Dvořák Cello Concerto, Op. 104

This work is unique in that, after an orchestral introduction to the first movement of the Cello Concerto by Antonin Dvořák, it is the horn which plays one of the main themes that appears later in the movement for the solo cello (See Figure 3 below). Unfortunately, the horn player must breathe and cannot match the long, flowing line that the cellist is able to create. Most players breathe twice within the phrase, in the third measure after the printed F on the third beat and again in the seventh measure after the F, between the third and fourth beats.

Figure 3:
 I. Allegro
 mm. 51 – 64 (7 after fig. 2 – 11 before fig. 3)
 Horn 1 in E



Depending on the speed of the movement, and of course a player’s breath control, if a big enough breath is taken in the measure of rest before the passage and if the tempo is

not too slow, if might be possible to last until the seventh measure without a breath. I myself have done this on one or two occasions in a rehearsal setting, but have always found it to be too much of a risk in an actual performance. Indeed, if the idea is to make as fluid a melodic line as possible, going seven measures without a break is wonderful; however, the huge gap in the sound necessary for an extremely deep breath that is the result of this long phrase does not make musical sense.

I was once asked to play this solo passage differently than I have ever played it before. I had played this piece previously with the same conductor but, for some reason, for this performance he wanted me to phrase it in a different way. I was asked to break the slur in the fifth measure and to take a breath before the C-sharp on the fourth beat. Going back to the issue of preparedness, I knew this excerpt very well due to having done much practice because of the difficult nature of the phrasing and transposing into E horn, down a semi-tone. For the conductor to ask me to change where I took a breath was actually not such a big adjustment as this made the rest of the phrase more fluid, and I was not as worried about making it through so many measures before I took a breath. I would not, however, play it this way unless specifically asked to do so by a conductor because of the fact that it actually breaks the restatement of the first measure of the passage.

Although the beginning of the solo is marked *pianissimo*, it is a good idea to start at a slightly more comfortable dynamic. Since it is also marked *molto espressivo*, the starting dynamic must be soft enough that it is still possible to make a large crescendo at the top of the phrase in the fourth measure. On the other hand, there is also no use in starting so softly that no one besides the player's colleagues in the horn section can hear the beginning of the passage.

Moore and Ettore suggest that from measure five, the restatement should be louder (1986:93). However, in my opinion, this negates the printed *dim.* that is marked in the very same bar. I find it very effective to actually play the restatement even softer than the first phrase, with a diminuendo from eighth-notes at the end of the fourth measure through the fifth measure. I then begin a slow crescendo from the first half of the sixth measure through the printed F which is tied over the barline between the seventh and

eighth measures, with the final diminuendo starting as printed at the second beat of the eighth measure.

This work is a very popular one and, though it doesn't rate so highly on the list of excerpts required for audition purposes, it is advisable for a player to become as familiar as possible with this solo. In fact, it is not only first horn players that play this solo; a third horn player or someone who is an assistant principal or an auxiliary horn player may have to play first horn in this concerto so that the first player can rest during the concerto in order to be fresh for a difficult symphony later in the program. In fact, in my experience as a third horn player I have played first horn in this piece nearly as many times as when I have been the principal of a section.

5.5.3 Brahms Symphony No. 2, Op. 73

The Symphony No. 2 by Johannes Brahms presents many difficult passages for the horn section. In fact, after the very first measure of the first movement is played by the lower strings, there is a short, but very exposed four-measure duet between the first and second horns in D, repeated four bars later by the third and fourth horns in E. This second passage must be an exact echo of the first, even though it is not being played by the same players.

There are two solo passages for the first horn that bear discussing in more detail. The first of these also comes from the first movement of the symphony, beginning at the eighth measure after figure M, and encompassing measures 454 to 477 (see Figure 4 below). This solo is a beautiful example of the long, legato lines that Brahms writes so wonderfully, and must be played as smoothly as possible from start to finish.

There is a *crescendo* that must be executed from *piano* in measure 461 to *forte* in measure 469. After maintaining this dynamic for two bars, the player must make a diminuendo that is effectively over the next six measures, although there is a swelling of the sound in measure 474. While this is occurring, there is also an extended *stringendo* from measure 462 for seven measures that is followed by an eight-measure *ritard*. These must both be carefully balanced, otherwise the player will find that he/she is

playing already very loudly and is not yet at the top of the crescendo or, alternatively, has gone too fast and must still complete the *stringendo*.

Figure 4:
 I. Allegro non troppo
 mm. 439 – 477
 Horn 1 in D



Breathing is of fundamental concern in this passage. It is vital that a player begin the phrase with a big breath, as the next one should be taken only at the beginning of the *crescendo* in measure 461. The following breath – at measure 465 – is obvious; however, the rests on the downbeats of the next two measures should not be used to “tank up” as this breaks up the phrase and causes it to become very choppy. Green and Gallwey (1987:70) note that Claude Debussy is quoted as saying that “music is the space between the notes”. In this instance, there must be a definite space between the notes, but the phrase carries on in spite of these breaks. These measures are at the height of the *stringendo* thus, if the phrase is approached in this manner, this helps with the forward motion of the line.

The last place where it is clearly evident that a breath is to be taken is measure 468, after which the rest of the phrase will need to be broken at some point as it is a further nine measures long. There are two places in which it is possible for the player to take a breath; before the third beats of measures 472 and 474. I prefer to breathe only in measure 472, making a further diminuendo followed by a significant crescendo in measure 474 that does not have a breath in the middle of it. If, however, a player

senses that he/she will not make it to the end of the phrase, it is still feasible to take a quick breath in measure 474, finishing the crescendo on beat three of this measure and gently tapering off the phrase.

The second movement of this same symphony brings us one of the most challenging horn solos in the orchestral repertoire (see Figure 5 below). This is, as previously mentioned, made so by the fact that it is in the transposition of H basso. It is for this reason that Moore and Ettore (1986:68) suggest, and most players and teachers would probably agree, that this excerpt should be memorised. If necessary, a fingering or two may be pencilled in lightly over a problem note, but transpositions should certainly not be written under the printed notes on the page, even in this most difficult of passages.

Figure 5:
 II. Adagio non troppo
 mm. 17 – 32 (fig. A – fig. B)
 Horn 1 in H



The musical score for Horn 1 in H, measures 17-32, is presented in three staves. The first staff shows measures 17-19, starting with a 'Solo' marking and a dynamic of *p*. The second staff shows measures 19-24, with dynamic markings of *dim.*, *p*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *dim.*. The third staff shows measures 24-32, with dynamic markings of *p* and *Ob.* (Oboe) marking. The score concludes with a double bar line and a key signature change to D major.

As in the previous example, breathing is an area of concern when playing this passage. The player is again faced with a long, *legato* phrase with few obvious places in which to breathe. The conventional breaths are as follows: at the end of measure 19, before the last eighth-note of measure 21, in measure 23 either following the printed C quarter-note or after the printed B-natural eighth-note and in measure 24 after the G that is tied over to the third beat. The reason for the ambiguity in measure 23 is that it is purely a matter of personal preference where this breath is taken. This is where the climax of the passage takes place; to my mind, it is better to take a breath earlier (after the C) still extending the crescendo for one more eighth-note, creating even more tension in this

measure. The individual player must choose where to breathe, but also be open to the fact that a conductor may ask that the alternate place be used.

In general, whenever a breath is taken in this passage, it must be as quick and inconspicuous as possible; thus permitting the orchestral texture to cover the fact that the player has taken a breath. If the player follows tradition and breathes in the abovementioned places, they are for the most part at a softer dynamic level i.e. either before a crescendo or after a diminuendo. It is for this reason that these markings must also be followed very closely. Struggling with notes due to the transposition is therefore unthinkable, as it takes the concentration away from other areas and can be detrimental to the musicality of the phrase.

5.5.4 Shostakovich Symphony No. 5, Op. 47

The Symphony No. 5 by Dimitri Shostakovich is not played as often as the symphonies of the same number by Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, but there is one excerpt from the symphony that will be found on virtually every audition. In the first movement of the piece, there is a low passage that occurs in all four horn parts (see Figure 6 below). This is a difficult passage for all of the players, but especially for the first and third players who are used to playing the two high parts of the horn section.

Figure 6:
 I. Moderato
 Fig. 17 – 21
 Horn 1 in F



This passage is written in what is known as “old notation”. In other words, the section of this excerpt that is in bass clef, from the third measure of figure 17 to four measures before figure 19, is written an octave lower than it sounds. This should be clearly evident to the player upon the first reading of the passage, as the B-flat in the seventh measure of figure 17 is a whole tone below the fundamental C, the lowest note on the harmonic series of the instrument. Therefore the C tied over from the end of the fourth to the third measure before 19 is only a whole tone lower than the following note and not an octave and a whole tone as it looks.

In this excerpt, the player must strive for a uniform sound throughout the change from the very low register, through the middle and up into the high register. This is a difficult task, as the notes in the lower register can be quite unstable at the required dynamic of *forte*. The note that is especially problematic is the C-flat whole note in the fourth measure before figure 18. Under normal circumstances, there is no trouble with this note. In fact (as B-natural), this is one of the first notes learned on the F horn after the open C, E and G. The difficulty lies in the fact that the previous note is an F below this note – thus the interval of a diminished fifth.

In addition, somewhere among the notes in this register, there is a change from the low-horn embouchure to the normal setting of the lips. For me personally, it is on the G below middle C, but for someone else it may be the A or B-flat. Whatever the note may be, the player must shift the embouchure instantaneously and still manage to play the C-flat with the same tone quality as the previous notes in the phrase. This shift also causes a problem in the following six measures, from two before figure 18 until four measures after 18, in that these notes are on or around this embouchure change.

From the *poco animando* marking, breaths must be worked out among the players in the section in order that the phrase can be played as one long line. There should be no breaks in the sound due to players breathing in the same place. It is for this reason that these markings should be carefully thought out beforehand, thus preventing confusion caused by the player waiting for the player on one or other side to breathe, perhaps resulting in players breathing in the same place even though they are intending not to do this.

Figure 7 below shows the extended orchestral tutti passage from later in the first movement of this symphony (mentioned in Chapter 4), as well as the treacherous first horn solo that follows. When seeing these two passages together as they appear in the part, it becomes obvious why it is not prudent for the solo horn player to play the section from figure 36 to figure 39. Tuckwell (1983:103) relates that this passage can be “musically rewarding to play.” But, he continues: “The first horn must, however, resist the temptation to take part as he must shortly play one of the most difficult solos in the repertory” (Tuckwell 1983:103). The solo player can help out for a short period of time, e.g. from the pick-up notes into two measures before figure 38 for two beats and later in the second half of the measure at figure 38 itself, in order for the bumper or the second player to take a breath. Attempting more than this, though, is not a good idea as it can lead to the lips getting too tired.

Figure 7:
I. Moderato
Fig. 33 – 41
Horn 1 in F



3 33 (♩=138) *fff* *espress.* 34 *ritenuto* *dim. pp* 6 35 *ff* *Largamente* (♩=66)
cresc. 36 *fff*
 37 *sf*
 38 *molto ritenuto*
 a tempo con tutta forza 2 2 39 2 (♩=84) *Solo*
 40 41 *Moderato*
 6

This solo, beginning at the third measure of figure 39, is in actual fact a duet between the solo flute and solo horn, and is extremely exposed. It must be smooth and graceful, with clean slurs and no accents on the top notes. The B half-note in the second measure of figure 40 and the following G-sharp tied through the first half of the fourth measure of 40 are traditionally played up the octave; in other words, the notes enclosed in the parenthesis are the ones which are performed. Personally, I do not like to breathe before the two highest notes, the A in the measure before figure 40, and the B two measures later. Rather, I take a breath before the E octave leap in the third measure before 40, and then again after the G-sharp tied over between the three and four measures after 40. As in the passage from the second movement of the Symphony No. 2 by Brahms, the breaths should be subtle and, although they must be taken quickly, as full as possible. Some players may like to breathe before the top notes, for instance before the A in the second half of the measure before 40 and again before the B in the second half of the second measure of 40. As far as experience has shown, this is completely acceptable as long as the notes are played with a clean attack and a clear sound.

5.5.5 Beethoven Symphony No. 3, Op. 55

In the third movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, after the Scherzo, comes a wonderful passage for the horns in the Trio, "a term that is a good deal more apt than usual since it is initially scored for three horns" (Hopkins 1981:89). This is the only one of Beethoven's symphonies that calls for this number of horns. All of his other symphonies have two horns, except for the Symphony No. 9, which has four horn parts. Although it is the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Symphonies that are played more often than the Third "Eroica" Symphony, the first and second horn parts from this passage are, however, widely present on high and low audition lists respectively.

All three of these parts are individually difficult. They must be played cleanly by each of the players, the dynamics must be evenly balanced, and the rhythm must be extremely steady so that the passage is played precisely together. Whether a conductor wants this passage to be played quickly or a bit slower, it can be complicated from the start due to the fact that there is traditionally a *luftpause* between the first two notes. A *sforzando* follows on the first beat of the first full measure of the Trio, and must be "felt" together.

All three players must then come off the tied note together, in order that the chord inversions sound as if one player is playing them on a keyboard.

The three players must therefore rehearse this passage together; if possible, before the first orchestral rehearsal. If this is not feasible, then time should certainly be spent during a break, either before or as soon as possible after running through the movement for the first time. In order for the horn section to be prepared for whatever speed at which the conductor takes the movement and the dynamic level requested of them, this practice should be done at different tempos, as well as at different dynamic levels.

The first horn part (see Figure 8 below) is indeed an exercise in accuracy. In his book entitled *The nine symphonies of Beethoven*, Antony Hopkins (1981:90) states that “even today, first horn-players can grow pale at the thought of the dizzy ascent” they must make to the written C at the end of each phrase. As the passage is in horn in E-flat, this note becomes the B-flat a whole tone lower; however, this note is still in a very high register for the horn player. In fact, at this point on the harmonic series, the notes are so close together that a player can put down the correct valve and a note other than the one expected could sound.

Figure 8:
III. Trio: Allegro vivace
mm. 171 – 201
Horn 1 in E-flat



Apart from the notes that have a *sforzando* indication, the Trio should be light in attack, with separation between the half notes and quarter notes. This is especially true in the last three measures of each printed line of music (measures 183 – 185 and measures 199 – 201) in order that the top notes are made to sound effortless. If each note is

considered individually it is easy to get bogged down, resulting in the player losing time and falling behind the beat. Listening down through the texture to the second horn will help the first player to keep up with the tempo. This is because in measures 181 – 185 and measures 197 – 201 are actually the end of a longer phrase that begins two measures before with the second horn entrance. The third horn then enters in the measure before the first horn. Thus, it is essential that the first horn entry is in time, as it occurs in the middle of the phrase.

Found on most low horn auditions, 67% of the audition lists that were included in the study done by John Dressler (Dressler 1982:642), this is also a most thorny passage for the second horn player (see Figure 9 below). Although it is the lowest voice, it must be just as present as the other two parts. The first and third players must make certain that they are not playing too loudly and covering up this part, as it provides the bass of the harmony. It is therefore up to the second player to ensure that his or her intonation is as accurate as possible; quite a task when one considers the low tessitura and the short duration of these notes.

Figure 9:
 III. Trio: Allegro vivace
 mm. 171 – 201
 Horn 2 in E-flat



The musical score for Horn 2 in E-flat, measures 171-201, is presented in four staves. The top staff shows the first ending (1.) and second ending (2.) with dynamics *f* and *sf*. The second staff, labeled 'TRIO', begins at measure 171 with a *sf* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The third staff starts at measure 182 with a *sf* dynamic. The fourth staff starts at measure 194 with a *cresc.* marking and ends at measure 201 with a *f* dynamic. The score includes first and second endings for the first horn part.

The second horn player has by far the liveliest of the three parts. There is a tendency, especially if the tempo that the conductor chooses is a rather fast one, for the eighth notes in measures 176 and 183, and in the parallel passage in measures 192 and 197,

to be played too fast. The result of this is that the phrase begins to rush, becoming even faster and out of control.

The second horn player is also responsible for the level of the two crescendos in the Trio, as this part is the one that begins the phrase with the pick-up note into measure 179 and again into measure 195. As mentioned, it is imperative that this, the most interesting part of the three, be heard. Thus, the second player must crescendo as much as possible through these measures in order that the other players need not hold back in dynamic at the ends of these phrases.

The third horn part of this trio is in a more comfortable range for the player than the first or second parts, lying in the middle of the two others. The notes are not as high or as low, therefore making individual playing of this passage quite straightforward. It is in combining the three parts that the third player will experience the most difficulties. Care must be taken by all three players to match articulations and lengths of the notes.

5.5.6 Strauss *Till Eulenspiegel*, Op. 28

The opening call of the tone poem *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* by Richard Strauss is rhythmically very challenging to play correctly. If a player knows this work from an audio recording only, there is a strong possibility that the first time it is seen in print it will be extremely confusing. A similar situation happened to me the first time I played the Trio by Johannes Brahms for violin, horn and piano. I had always thought that the first movement, which has a time signature of 2/4, started on a downbeat. Unfortunately for me this was not the case, as the first thing one sees is a quarter rest and the movement begins on the second beat of the first measure.

In the case of the Brahms Trio it was a shock to realise that everything was one beat removed from what I had assumed to be the correct rhythm. However, if this same situation happens with this excerpt from *Till Eulenspiegel* (see Figure 10 below), it can be a potentially disastrous situation as the passage looks nothing like it sounds. While still at university, I was fortunate enough to be able to study excerpts for a semester and spent a good deal of time in my horn teacher's studio with him standing in front of me conducting as I played through this excerpt time after time. His method of teaching was

to ensure that the student understood the rhythm of the figure and could play it in a very straight and steady tempo before allowing him or her to add the *accelerando* indicated by the words *allmählich lebhafter* (gradually livelier).

Figure 10:
Beginning – Fig. 1
Horn 1 in F



The opening five measures are traditionally played in a relatively free tempo. Looking up for the initial measure and then proceeding to look away, concentrating on the passage to come, is likely to cause the horn player to lose the beat and then not be sure of when to enter. Therefore, as with the first horn solo from the second movement of Brahms’s Second Symphony, it is a good idea to memorise this passage. This allows the player to watch the conductor for the entire introduction before beginning the solo so aptly described by Phillip Huscher in the programme notes from a CD recording of this work that was made in 1991 by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Daniel Barenboim. Huscher, the CSO’s programme annotator, says that Strauss “begins by beckoning us to gather round, setting a warm ‘Once-upon-a-time’ mood into which jumps the horn with one of the most famous themes in all music – the daring, teasing, cart-wheeling tune that characterises this roguish hero better than any well-chosen words” (Huscher 1991:7).

Upon close examination of this excerpt, it comes to light that the motif (G, C, D, D-sharp, and E) is seven eighth-note beats long. The problem comes when it is put in a time signature of 6/8, thus displacing the G at the beginning of the figure by one eighth note each of the three times it is played. In the first measure, the G comes on the second eighth-note beat; in the second measure it is on the third eighth-note and in the third

measure it must be placed exactly on the fourth eighth-note beat. The passage is conducted in a two-beat pattern, with the dotted quarter note as the pulse, which equals the eighth-note beat from the previous section.

The *accelerando*, *allmählich lebhafter*, is a substantial one and takes place over only two and one-half measures, starting from the second half of the third measure of the passage (measure 8) of the piece. By the time the player reaches the dotted quarter notes in measure 11, the tempo of the following section should already be established. He or she then counts one and one-half measures and then must play the entire passage again, this time at a faster tempo but without having to worry about getting faster. There is a *crescendo* in both instances. The first one, although it is only marked in the fifth measure of the passage from the high A, is traditionally begun at the same time as the *allmählich lebhafter*. This gives the player a better chance at reaching this top note, and the dynamics then follow the line of the music more closely.

There are many other variations on this figure throughout the rest of the piece, as this motif actually represents the character of *Till Eulenspiegel*. Careful study of the entire part before the first rehearsal is essential, be it the first, second, third, or fourth horn chair that the player will be sitting in. There is, however, one more segment from the third horn part that does require special attention.

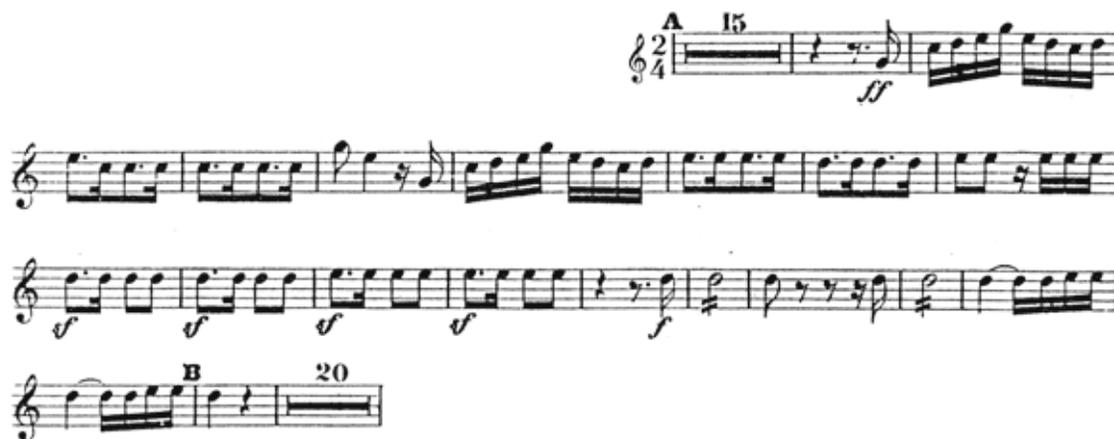
Eleven measures after rehearsal Figure 28, which is in the middle of a calm, quiet section with the indication *etwas gemächlicher*, the first horn plays the same passage as the one at the very beginning of the piece. There is only a slight difference in that, in this instance, *allmählich lebhafter* is marked above the first measure of the passage. Immediately following this, this time there being a measure of rest in between the two calls, the third horn player plays the second call. The first horn player's notes are cued into the third horn part, making it just a matter of counting correctly. However, the third player must now play the passage in Horn in D, which can be very confusing. This is because, although it looks exactly the same as what the first player has just played, it must be played a minor third lower. Thus, instead of playing the previously mentioned notes as written (G, C, D, D-sharp and E), the third player must play them as follows: E, A, B, C and C-sharp.

Although transposing is something a horn player grows accustomed to in the early stages of playing, there is much more chromaticism in late Romantic and 20th-century works than in a Beethoven symphony. If the player has not individually worked through this very exposed passage, there is certainly not enough time when sight-reading it to stop and figure out that “a d-sharp down a minor third is a b-sharp, which is the same as a c-natural”. The third horn part is the most important part of the music at that point.

5.5.7 Mendelssohn Symphony No. 3, Op. 56

Another work in which the third horn part is perhaps more complex than the first is the Third Symphony by Felix Mendelssohn, nicknamed the “Scottish”. In the beginning of the second movement is a passage in which the first horn, apart from one beat at the cadence point, has repeated sixteenth notes on a third-space C for eight measures in 2/4 time. Melodically, the third horn part (see Figure 11 below) is the one that follows the line of the upper strings much more closely. The sixteenth notes in this part therefore are in unison with the melody in measures 17 and 21 after letter A, and must be precisely in time with the beat.

Figure 11:
 II. Vivace non troppo
 mm. 33 – 67 (fig. A – fig. B)
 Horn 3 in F



The musical score for Horn 3 in F, Mendelssohn Symphony No. 3, Op. 56, II. Vivace non troppo, measures 33-67. The score is in 2/4 time and features a fortissimo dynamic. It shows a passage of repeated sixteenth notes on a third-space C, with a cadence point marked 'A' at measure 15 and another marked 'B' at measure 20.

This passage is at a *fortissimo* dynamic and is in a very quick tempo at which a quarter note equals 126 beats per minute; a tempo too fast for most horn players to use single-tonguing, the vast majority of players opting to use the technique of double-tonguing.

The player must make certain that he or she is mentally subdividing in the preceding measures, as this passage begins with a sixteenth-note anacrusis. This will help to ensure an entrance that is in time with the rest of the orchestra. In addition to this mental subdivision, another practice that is widely used is that of beginning the anacrusis on the second of the two syllables that are used in double-tonguing. In other words, whether the player is thinking of the syllables “ta – ka” or “ti – ki”, the G in measures 16 and 20 after figure A will be produced by using the second of the pair in order that the first syllable can be used on the downbeat of the next measure.

A figure within this passage that is even more difficult to keep in time with the rest of the orchestra is the three sixteenth-note upbeat to 11 measures before figure B. After the two eighth notes on the first beat of the measure, care must be taken that not too much time is taken for the sixteenth-note rest. A variation of this same figure happens in the last two measures before figure B, in which there are quarter notes on the first beat of the measure tied to four sixteenth notes. The player must come off the tie soon enough, again so that the three remaining sixteenth notes are in time and not behind the beat.

In the third movement of this symphony is a lovely solo for the third horn (see Figure 12 below). It is not as exposed as many of the first horn solo parts and other third horn solos such as the previously discussed call in D from *Till Eulenspiegel*, but important nonetheless.

Figure 12:
 III. Adagio
 mm. 73 – 95 (5 after D – 4 before E)
 Horn 3 in D



The musical score for Horn 3 in D, measures 73-95, is presented in three staves. The first staff shows a first ending bracket and a fermata. The second staff contains the main melodic line, marked *cantabile*, with dynamics including *dim.*, *p*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *dim.*. The third staff shows a first ending bracket and a fermata, with a dynamic of *p*.

In the *Anthology of French horn music*, Moore and Ettore (1986:125) remark that this passage must “sing throughout, matching with [the] cello section”. Therefore, it is essential that the horn player tries to make as rich a sound as possible in order to blend with the cellos. Moore and Ettore also suggest breathing every two measures, but I personally like to make phrases which are a bit longer i.e. four measures in length. Thus, if the first breath is taken at the *cantabile* marking, which is the beginning of the actual melodic line, the next is taken four measures later at the beginning of the crescendo marking. It is then possible to make this crescendo and diminuendo over the next four measures without breaking the top of the phrase to breathe. The following breath would be taken four measures later at 13 measures before Figure E, the next before the printed B-flat quarter note at 9 before E, the last breath breaking the rule and coming after the first eighth-note of 7 measures before E in order to finish off this six-measure phrase. At a speed of eighth note equals 76 beats per minute, the tempo is such that it should be possible for this to be done quite comfortably. However, if the player feels that the orchestral texture is too heavy and it is necessary to play at a stronger dynamic, it may be necessary to take a small breath in between these suggested places.

As this is a section solo, the dynamic markings need to be followed especially closely. For example, if the third horn player were to be executing what he thought was a beautiful crescendo in a measure in which the cello section was making the printed *diminuendo* on the page, the horn would then be upsetting the balance of the passage. The distance within the orchestra that traditionally separates the horn section from the cellos can also be problematic, but if the horn player endeavours to play with the beat of the conductor and not with what is being heard, this should solve any discrepancy in the timing of the passage and help to keep the ensemble together.

5.5.8 Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 15

The first of Brahms’ two concertos for piano, his Concerto in D, Op. 15, includes a very difficult solo for the third horn. In contrast to the opening of *Till Eulenspiegel*, which is initially played by the first horn player in horn in F and later repeated by the third horn in horn in D, this passage is just the opposite. It is first played by the third horn in F (see Figure 13 below), reaching a G at the top of the treble staff. This is not, by any means,

too high for the third player as the first and third horns are traditionally the two high horn parts. It is, however, a particularly exposed passage for both players and the accuracy of the notes is of extreme importance. To help with this, and in order to boost the players' confidence levels, the *piano* markings should be brought to a higher level and the passages played at a dynamic of at least *mezzo-piano*, if not *mezzo-forte*.

Figure 13:
I. Maestoso
mm. 199 – 216 (16 after C2 – 10 before C3)
Horn 3 in F



The articulations in this passage are of particular importance. Differentiation must be made between the staccato markings and what Moore and Ettore refer to as “mezzo-staccato” markings (1986:80). These are notes that have dots on them, but which also appear under a slur indication i.e. the last three eighth-notes of measures 199, 200 and 203 and again in measures 210 and 211. Traditionally, these notes are played quite long, with a legato tonguing technique used on each note. The length of these notes must be consistent throughout the passage, as should the lengths of the notes that have staccato markings.

The strength of the accents which are used must also be consistent. Due to the crescendo in measure 203, the dotted whole-note G in measure 204 will be distinctly louder than the other accented notes, but should not have a stronger accent. Conversely, although the low C in measure 214 is within a softer dynamic and has a

decrescendo marking underneath it, it should still be given an accent. Notes that should not be accented, although there is the tendency for them to be so, are the third-space C's immediately following the staccato notes in measures 212 – 213. This inclination is caused by the changing staccato notes in these two measures i.e. the G, the F and the middle C.

As previously mentioned, the parallel passage that appears later in the first horn part (measures 423 – 443) looks the same as the one from the third horn part, shown in Figure 13. There is the same number of measures rest half-way through, but there are different cues that appear and the rests are grouped differently. The notes and rhythms, however, do look the same in both parts; the first horn part simply sounds a minor third lower as it is played in Horn in D, rather than in Horn in F as by the third horn.

Both passages begin with the words *marcato ma dolce*. Therefore, although each note should have a distinct attack to it, the accents should not be too heavy. It is the responsibility of the first horn player to imitate exactly the style of the third horn, since the third player is the one that plays the passage the first time it occurs. These elements which have just been discussed can and should be worked out between the two individuals concerned to make this as comfortable as possible for both players.

5.5.9 Beethoven Overture to *Fidelio*, Op. 72

In an orchestral horn section, if only two players are required for a given work, the others must sit out and only play when they are needed. It is mainly in opera overtures, concertos and symphonies from the Classical period that this is the case. These pieces are usually split up evenly among the players in order that one player does not have to play everything and the others play in only a portion of the symphony season. In the overture to the opera *Fidelio*, Op. 72 by Ludwig van Beethoven, there is a short solo for the second horn that makes even some of the most seasoned of horn players try to take this piece off “on rotation” so as not to have to play this passage (see Figure 14 below).

Figure 14:
 mm. 45 – 55
 Horn 2 in E



As this solo is in Horn in E, everything is transposed down a minor second. This makes the fingerings more complicated now that the key signature becomes that of B-natural, which has five sharps. Therefore, as a colleague of mine remarked when asked for his views on how to play this excerpt, “it’s all fingering patterns and they must be ingrained in the memory.” The player must not be worrying about what fingerings to use, e.g. whether to play the last five notes on the F side of the instrument (using only the second finger for the entire measure plus a downbeat) or to use B-flat fingerings. Which fingering system a player tends to use is a matter of individual preference; in other words, playing on the B-flat side of the instrument except for a few notes that must be played on the F side, or playing on the F side exclusively until the second-space A. For this passage there are not any “trick” or alternate fingerings, so it is simply a matter of the player deciding on the fingerings to be used.

The final two measures of the Adagio are still played with the first horn, reflecting back on the opening of the piece. It is a good idea for the soloist to use the first two measures of the Allegro to prepare for the seven measures to come. The tempo change is an immediate one and these measures consisting of only two whole notes provide the player with a perfect opportunity to look up at the conductor. This is of great importance in order for the player to see exactly what the tempo of the passage will be. Richard Moore has compiled another collection of excerpts entitled *Operatic French horn passages*. In this text, he has provided the player with original metronome markings and tempos at which passages are traditionally played that may differ from the original. In the case of the *Fidelio* Overture, the markings that appear in conjunction with this passage indicate that it could vary from half-note equals 100 beats per minute up to 132 beats per minute (Moore 1971:4). This is a huge variance in tempo and, if the player is not ready for this, the results could be disastrous.

It is also important for both the first and second horns to crescendo through these same first two measures of the Allegro. This allows for the second player to move from a *tutti piano* dynamic to a solo *piano*, which is in actual fact closer to a *mezzo-forte*, by the beginning of the solo passage. Measures 49 and 50, the first two of the solo, should both be played with a bit of separation between the dotted quarter-note and the eighth note, as if the dot was taken away and replaced by an eighth-note rest. A further crescendo happens in measures 51 and 52, with the dynamic staying the same for the rest of the passage. In other words, there should be no diminuendo in the last two measures but also no further crescendo as this could counteract the *dolce* marking which appears at the beginning of the solo, in measure 49.

In the same text by Richard Moore (1971:4), he mentions that this passage is “almost always played by Horn I”. I personally do not think that, nearly thirty-five years after this book was first published, this would be the case today. A second horn player certainly cannot count on the first player to play this solo; in any case, if a player is holding down a position in a symphony orchestra or an opera orchestra, he or she would routinely be expected to play this and other similar passages which are just as difficult.

5.5.10 Dvořák Symphony No. 9, Op. 95

The third and fourth horn players, with their opening figures in the beginning of the Ninth Symphony by Antonin Dvořák, help to set the mood for this work. Not to be confused with the Fifth Symphony by the same composer, this is the modern No. 9, or the symphony “From the New World”.

Together with the lower strings, the horns present a theme in the introduction that is repeated in various guises throughout the entire symphony (see Figure 15 below). It does not feature in its final harmonic and rhythmic form until the Allegro molto, but these first two figures certainly allude to what is to come. As is typical of Dvořák’s music, the accents in this passage are not always where the player would expect them to be and must be observed carefully for maximum effect. The music still sounds lovely without these accents due to the wonderful harmonies and rhythmical drive of the phrases; however, when the accents are played in the strategic places he has indicated, the result is much more exciting.

Figure 15:
 I. Adagio – Allegro molto
 mm. 16 – 27
 Horn 3 + 4 in C



In both of the two opening passages of Figure 15, the accents fall on the four dotted notes rather than on each of the four beats. It may seem strange to the players to place accents on two notes in a row; the printed B-flat and C-flat in the first entry and on the C-sharp and D in the second. In my opinion, although the notes are ascending and there is a crescendo to *forte* on the first four notes, the accent on the fourth note (the B-flat/C-sharp) helps to propel the phrase forward even more towards the top of the crescendo on the third beat.

At the Allegro molto, the third and fourth horn players have the theme by themselves. In this case, the only accent appears on the fourth note of the figure, this time a dotted quarter-note. I believe that the same concept of using this note to reach the top note of the phrase by creating tension applies here. This time the phrase starts at a *mezzo forte* dynamic instead of *piano*, due to the fact that the two horns are playing this figure alone now instead of together with numerous other players. Therefore, this accent, the dynamic level and the rate of crescendo must match exactly between the two players.

The passages are made more difficult because they must be transposed down a fourth, as they are written in Horn in C. As previously mentioned, horn players become used to transposing into these keys. However, here again, it is the presence of so many accidentals (including C-flat and E-sharp) that make it trickier than usual. This is a very well-known symphony, and the horn players have many exposed lines such as the ones

illustrated above. Thus, these notes must be carefully worked out beforehand to ensure there are no mistakes in the performance due to transposition errors.

There is a passage in the fourth movement of the “New World” Symphony where a short solo for the first horn (see Figure 16 below) is followed by a four-measure duet between the first and second horns. In addition to being part of a very popular symphony as a whole, it is also quite prominent on auditions for high horn positions. I have both played this excerpt on auditions and have asked others to play it when I have been the one running an audition, as the principal player of the section usually does.

Figure 16:
 IV. Allegro con fuoco
 mm. 257 – 265
 Horn 1 in E



This solo can make a first horn player nervous throughout the entire symphony, due to the top note and the exposed nature of the passage. Although it is reminiscent of the solo for third and fourth horn at the Allegro molto in the first movement, in this case it is played within a section which is slightly slower and more relaxed (*un poco sostenuto*), thus there is only one accent in the four measures of the solo. The player should begin at a dynamic of *piano* to allow for the crescendo to the top C; in this instance the orchestral texture is such that a level which is slightly above a normal *piano* should be sufficient. The staccato markings must also be carefully observed so as to give the feeling of lightness.

When teaching this excerpt, I ask the student to first ignore the rest before the written C in the second measure and try to connect it to the G that has come before. Following this, I then instruct him or her to take just slightly longer than usual to set the

embouchure for the high note. This obviously stops the previous note a fraction sooner, which effectively puts the rest back in. The focus has thus shifted to the physical aspect of playing the notes instead of the running mental commentary, which I have previously discussed in Chapter 2.3.3, that Green and Gallwey warn against in their book entitled *The inner game of music*.

Following the first horn solo, after only three beats in which to regain composure if necessary, the second horn joins in for the next four measures leading back into the Tempo I (see Figure 17 below). This passage begins slowly and softly, getting much louder and faster in a very short amount of time.

Figure 17:
 IV. Allegro con fuoco
 mm. 261 – 265
 Horn 2 in E



Both players must make certain that they start *piano* and do not crescendo until the third measure where it is indicated. This is only a small swelling of the sound, with an effective *molto crescendo* in the measure before 11. In addition to this, there is a *stringendo* that has to be navigated. It is also of supreme importance that this does not take place too soon, beginning only in the second measure of the duet. As with the crescendo, this is traditionally quite gradual until the triplets begin one measure before Tempo 1.

Like the second horn solo in Beethoven's *Fidelio* Overture, these excerpts are played in Horn in E. However, unlike *Fidelio*, the fingering pattern changes at a crucial moment, just when the player is focusing all thought and energy on the *stringendo* and *crescendo*. This pattern of three notes is already tricky enough as it occurs over four eighth notes. Thus, as in the excerpt from *Till Eulenspiegel*, the first note of the three is shifted one eighth-note earlier each time. For the first horn, these notes are fingered 2nd valve, 1st

valve, and 2nd and 3rd valves together on the B-flat horn. The second horn, as is many times the case, has the more difficult part owing to the large intervals between the notes. This player also has the added burden of choosing what fingerings to use. For instance, it is possible to play the entire four measures using only the second valve on the F horn. Alternatively, the player could choose to use a different fingering for each note, using any combination of B-flat and F horn fingerings.

To complicate matters further, in the third bar are two sets of sixteenth notes for both players, followed closely by triplets in the last measure. The players must each take a very large breath before these four measures to sufficiently execute the end of the phrase. At this point in the music, the orchestral texture is becoming thicker and also louder in the build-up to the Tempo I. This passage is often lost within this texture; however, if the bulk of the *stringendo* and the *molto crescendo* are genuinely saved for the last measure, it is possible for the two horns to rise above the rest of the orchestra at this glorious moment.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I have addressed what I feel are the factors that detract from the effectiveness of orchestral excerpt books. These include the practice of taking short passages out of context and compiling them into one text; the omission of smaller solos and solos from the second, third and fourth horn parts and the fact that not all of these books tell the player exactly from where in the given work these passages come. I have also included general advice about orchestral horn playing, ranging from auditions and coping with a freelance situation, to how to practice a passage in order to play it under the added stress of a performance situation.

Barry Tuckwell comments that “horn playing is both a craft and an art, and although Bruno Jaenicke described the horn as ‘the wild beast of the orchestra’ it must also be remembered that Schumann called it ‘the soul’ of the orchestra” (1983:197). Due to the timbre of the horn, in other words because it can change tone colours better than most of the orchestral instruments, the horn section plays as much with the woodwinds as with the rest of the brass section. A colleague of mine, the timpanist of the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, once commented after a symphony concert that at one point after a particularly loud passage played by the brass section, he looked over at the horns and we were still playing. In this particular symphony, Sergei Rachmaninov’s Second Symphony, there are very few places for the horn section to have a break. There are, as mentioned, loud passages with the rest of the brass, quiet sustained passages with the woodwinds and tutti sections with the entire orchestra playing together. The horn player must therefore be familiar enough with the piece that is being played to listen to what else is happening in the orchestral texture and be able to adjust accordingly.

It is for this reason that I believe it to be helpful to practice excerpts from a complete part; whether it be from a source such as David Thompson’s *The orchestral audition repertoire for horn: Comprehensive and unabridged*, parts that are photocopied from an orchestra library or complete parts ordered directly from a publisher such as Breitkopf & Härtel. As I have mentioned, however, it is not enough to simply practice these

passages from a book and assume that this is sufficient, as these texts seldom include hints on performance practices. In order for an excerpt to be properly understood, it is essential for the player to become aware of exactly what is happening while he or she is playing the passage in question.

The ten excerpts that have been dealt with in detail in Chapter 5 are those which, in my own experience, have required extra time and effort to become familiar with things such as articulation and dynamic markings, places in which to breathe and the relationship of the solo to the texture of the music. The information that I have provided in this study concerning the actual performance of the excerpts has come mainly from my own familiarity with the passages that I have presented. Other detailed advice was gleaned from articles and texts such as *The nine symphonies of Beethoven* by Antony Hopkins.

The three lists of orchestral excerpts that were presented in Chapters 5.1 to 5.3 were compiled from various lists of the most common excerpts for all four horn parts. John Ericson, in his on-line article *Horn resources*, which can be found at <http://www.public.asu.edu/~jgerics/resources>, provides his own three lists of excerpts. He suggests that after developing an in-depth knowledge of the passages on his first list, a player should then work through the second and third lists in order to expand the repertoire with which he or she is familiar.

The aim of this study has been to give young players, or those players who may be preparing for an orchestral audition, the tools with which to gather the performance practice information that is necessary to perform these excerpts with confidence. If the reader applies the concepts as laid out in this study, it will help him or her to complete the groundwork necessary for starting his or her own career. However, even a very fine player must not think that being well-prepared, and perhaps being the person whose performance goes the best under the pressure of the audition situation, means that he or she will be able to immediately fit into the horn section. It is for this reason that I believe that it is imperative to learn as many of the horn passages in the orchestral repertoire – though perhaps not all to the same degree of familiarity – in order to be able to more fully concentrate on fitting in with the rest of the orchestra both musically and personally.

The ten years of orchestral experience that I have gained, and the auditions that I had to play in order to acquire the positions that I have been fortunate enough to hold, have taught me many things. Importantly, I have learned that it must not be taken for granted that, if I can play a difficult excerpt in the privacy of my own practice room, I can immediately play it just as well in the presence of the rest of the orchestra and a conductor that I may either know very well – or not at all. In fact, as illustrated, even a conductor with whom a player is familiar may require that player to execute a passage differently than he or she has ever played it in the past.

As mentioned in the introduction to Chapter 4, part of the beauty of music is that it is never static as there is always room for various interpretations by different conductors and/or players. Norman Del Mar, a well-known English conductor and composer, who was incidentally also a horn player, had this to say in his book entitled *Anatomy of the orchestra*: “The flexibility and hidden variations of meaning implicit in different points of view would largely be destroyed if music were a science capable of being set down with absolute precision. Interpretation would cease to exist, and the tape recorder [and] synthesizer milieu would finally triumph” (1983:24).

Thus, a combination of being fully prepared – as outlined in this dissertation – and creativity will put a player in a position to contribute more fully to any performance. And I strongly believe that the space to be creative is dependent on being fully prepared.

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