Evolution of Natural Horn

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The Evolution of Natural Horn
Messiah Honors College Lecture Recital

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Overview
This lecture recital will lay music history alongside the development of the natural horn as an instrument, covering the evolution of composition techniques for this instrument as well as the actual hand horn technique.

Objectives
● Present a brief history of music from the introduction of hunting horns in orchestras to the 21st century.
● Connect the evolution of compositional techniques to the evolution of the natural horn and hand horn techniques.
● Exemplify composition and hand horn techniques through brief analysis of solo and orchestral excerpts for natural horn.
● Perform solo and orchestral excerpts on natural horn to demonstrate verbally presented information.

Eras and Excerpt List
Medieval (before 1300)
● Animal horn (brief demo for humor/show ancestry)

Renaissance (1300-1600)
● Hunting horn calls (Visual)

Baroque (1600-1750)
● Bach, Johann Sebastian. Brandenburg Concerto No.1 in F major, BWV 1046 (1721)
  ○ Mvt. I. mm. 12-25

Classical (1750-1820)
● Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus. Horn Concerto in E-flat major, K.417 (1783)
  ○ Mvt. 3, Rondo Piu Allegro. Mm 1-24
  ○ III. Trio: Allegro vivace mm .171-201
  ○ III. Adagio molto e cantabile mm. 83-121

Romantic (1800-1910)
  ○ Mvt 1, mm 1-46

Modern (20th/21st Century)
● Agrell, Jeffery. September Elegy (2001)
  ○ Performed by Jeffrey Agrell, horn, and Minjung Seo, Piano
Script

*Welcome! Be aware of space, move people up as they come in for better discussion at the end. Connect with attendees: If it’s a small group, ask how the end of the year is wrapping up. If it’s a larger group, wish them luck on finals and graduation. Thank them for making the time to attend*

On that note...when some of you first heard about a natural horn recital, you may have thought of animal horns. Others of you may have asked yourselves “is that kind of like those big long things with the flags in medieval movies?” Those of you with a music background may have made the connection to the french horn, which by the way, is not french. The more educated among you immediately anticipated the intonation with dread and a pair of ear plugs. This is all correct.

*pause*

In the brass family tree, natural horn is like the slightly crazy, daredevil uncle who performed show off tricks at parties, and had a policy of doing things the hard way.

If valved horn is like bowling blindfolded, natural horn is like bowling and you aren’t even sure if you are at the alley. Basic natural horn technique begins with the open tones on the harmonic series.

SLIDE
*play low C up to High C*

You may have noticed the notes, or partials, get closer together as they move higher. As you can see, most of the notes are higher in the harmonic series. This is due to...

SLIDE

Physics! The buzz *demonstrate* is converted to a different sound as it bounces around these tubes. The tubes resonate at fixed pitches due to the length and width. These charts are visual depictions of soundwaves. As the notes/partials get higher, the soundwaves get incrementally closer together.

*point out dots, note arc similarity in harmonic series*

SLIDE BACK

Composers then, were forced to put horn parts in the third and fourth octave of the harmonic series if they wanted conjunct lines. Also, due to the wide range of the instrument, hornists often specialized in the areas of low or high horn. Hand horn technique is a means of making horn a chromatic instrument through use of the hand. Invention of this technique is often credited to Anton Joseph Hampel, but historians dispute the accuracy of this claim. The story, according to one of Hampel's students, is that oboe players back in the day stuffed cotton in their
bells to soften their tone. A. J. Hampel, the second chair horn player in the orchestra of the Chapel Royal in Dresden from 1737-1751, decided to try the cotton technique on a horn. He found that the cotton raised the pitch, and upon further experimentation was able play scales. As he progressed, he realized that using his hand was more efficient than cotton. The instrument is thus made chromatic through the use of the hand, similar to the function of a trombone slide. There is, however, musical evidence that hand horn technique was known well before the supposed discovery by Hampel, as music for horn required notes outside of the open harmonic series. Although the true origins are shrouded in mystery, the technique remains essential to natural horn.

*Turn around, play C chromatic 1 Oct. or C M scale*

You may be thinking “this is all cool” (or rather I hope you are), “but what is the point of learning this? Valved horn players don’t have to deal with this.” While modern horn players can rely on valves for our pitches, proper hand technique is essential to good horn playing. If any of you are music education majors, a good takeaway from all this is hand technique and placement have a crucial influence over tone and intonation.

*Demonstrate changes in sound*

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Now for intonation, the wide harmonic range and number of slides means the all slide positions are serious compromises. Some other brass instruments might fine tune notes by regulating air direction or speed, but because horn partials are so close together we have to fine tune by using our hand.

Additionally, we regularly see parts with stopped notes *demonstrate*, or some extended technique like pitch bending *demonstrate*.

For serious horn players, natural horn can give the musician insight into solo or orchestral music interpretation. I know for me personally, I have learned a lot about orchestral excerpts I previously thought I knew like the back of my hand. I’ll elaborate on that as we go. For now, you have received a crash course in natural horn, and are ready to enter the medieval period!

SLIDE

**Medieval (before 1300)**

*pause if there is laughter*

*Play sounds on animal horn*

No music was written for natural horn at this time, but the predecessor to natural horn *hold up* was used to send signals.² Horns like this one announced holidays, feasts, warnings and

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battle signals. Limited by what the user could do with their face, and the somewhat obnoxious sound, they were not used musically.

Despite the obnoxious sound, for the purposes of this presentation it is worth noting that signal calls on animal horns were the ancestors to hunting calls, which eventually became part of natural horn repertoire.

The Medieval period is typically considered to have started in 467 with the fall of Rome, and ended with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. However, the next great Era, the Renaissance, began around 1350 (overlapping the Medieval period) in Italy.³ Because the start of the Renaissance was especially important to horn evolution, I have chosen to label the Medieval period as before 1300. Speaking of the Renaissance…

**SLIDE**

**Renaissance (1300-1600)**

Welcome to a time of rebirth, where old ideas in various disciplines were recycled for new ones and humans realized the arts were important. During the Renaissance, music composition, instrument construction and purposes for both went through a process of changes and refinement. More relevant to natural horn, hunting horns went through gradual changes. While in early human history hunting was primarily survival skill, as humans moved away from pure survival

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mode and into refining culture, hunting transitioned into a mark of nobility. With this transition, hunting horns also evolved.⁴

**Part 1**

The use of horns in hunting actually began as early at 500 AD, as evidenced by a passage from Heptateuchos, a Latin version of the first seven books of the Hebrew Bible, and all that survives of a large poem that contained all of the Hebrew Bible. The poem version, labeled G. 804-7, is roughly equivalent to Genesis 25:27

**SLIDE CONTAINING BELOW**

Lustrabat senior vacuos venatibus agros,

Bucina raucisono dum complet saxa tremore.

Ast alius, blandi conservans pectoris acta,

Gaudebat patriis inlaesus vivere tectis.

The elder of the two, having hunted down all the game wandered the empty fields and set the rocky waste a-tremble with the raucous tones of his horn. But his brother remained steadfast in the exploits of a gentle disposition and rejoiced to live unharmed in the dwellings of his fathers.

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A bucina is a type of animal hunting horn. Another example of a bucina, or “animal hunting horn”, is found in the poem De Reditu by Rutilius Namatianus. The line, “Tum responsuros persultant bucina colles” (De Reditu, 1.629), describes the bucina as being sounded in triumph, after a boar has been killed. What is important to note here, is that in both passages the horn is seen as an instrument of communication, not musical value.

As technology developed, hunters began to use horns made from wood and eventually metal. The descendant of animal horns, the bugle, had more pitches in the harmonic series and could communicate more specific signals. Here, roles began to divide. The long straight metal tubes became things like herald trumpets, used for things like announcing royalty/signaling, etc. But enough about that, we aren’t here to talk about trumpet.5

The other tubes became more curvy, and more involved with the hunt. Eventually, in 17th century France, the tubes grew large enough to be worn about the body. Huntsmen could then ride horses with two hands on the reins, with the horn readily available to play signals as needed.

I had every intention of analyzing the earliest signal calls and how they developed into hunting horn calls, but unfortunately they used a different system of notation. The only articles I

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could find on early horn calls discuss their uses from evidence found in historical documents, and show the notation system used. Due to a lack of recordings from the Medieval and Renaissance periods, no discovered historical documents explaining how these notations may be executed, historians and musicians do not know how these calls sounded. Despite not knowing how to translate or perform this notation system, we can still recognize that the function was similar to modern music notation and that these calls would have relied on the intervals in the harmonic series.\footnote{Heater, Eva Marie. "Early Hunting Horn Calls and Their Transmission: Some New Discoveries." \textit{Historic Brass Society Journal} 7 (1995): 123-141.}

What we do know for sure, is that signals and calls grew more specific. As hunting for sport became more popular among nobility, so did studying hunting horn. Signals and pedagogy were passed down generationally in a similar manner as ancient stories. Eventually manuscripts compiling some signals and their uses were written, contributing to the separate pedagogy and notation used for hunting horn. Although the purpose was primarily for hunter to hunter communication rather than musical intentions, the study of horn calls became the mark of a gentleman, and an icon of the sport.\footnote{Heater, Eva Marie. "Early Hunting Horn Calls and Their Transmission: Some New Discoveries." \textit{Historic Brass Society Journal} 7 (1995): p. 123.} Medieval court hunters in Wales actually used to take oaths on their hounds, leashes and horns.\footnote{John Cummins, The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting (New York, 1988), (New York, 1988), p. 160.} The first countries to refine horn as part of hunting were England and France, reaching popularity in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The practice spread to other European countries in the 17th and 18th centuries.
French and English nobility considered horn study an essential part of their sons education.

For example, take a look at this quote from an article in the Historic Brass Society Journal by Eva Marie Heater.

**SLIDE**

**EARLY HUNTING HORN CALLS AND THEIR TRANSMISSION: SOME NEW DISCOVERIES**

Eva Marie Heater

leashes, and horn.¹ In *De Fructu qui ex Doctrina Percipitur (The Benefit of a Liberal Education, 1517)*, Richard Pace described a nobleman with a horn: “Now there happened to be a person there, a nobleman, or so we call them, who always carry horns hanging down their backs as though they were going to hunt while they ate.” The importance of the horn to this particular nobleman became apparent when he offered his opinion on the benefit of education: “…I’d rather see my son hanged than be a student. Sons of the nobility ought to blow the horn properly, hunt like experts, and carry a hawk gracefully.”²


Because I know you are all very curious as to what this mysterious early hunting horn call notation looked like, and because it serves as a good transition to the next topic, here is an example of the notation system used as found in two surviving pages of written horn calls.

**SLIDE**
As an example of what we have to work with in terms of verbal descriptions of notated excerpts, consider another quote from Heater’s article.

“William Twiti, in his treatise The Art of Hunting (1327), uses syllables to describe a series of calls to communicate the various phases and activities of hunting. The section entitled “Of Blowing” describes the calls in detail; further references to the calls (“blowing motes,” “blowing the menee”) appear later in the text. In his descriptions of the calls he uses the term “moot” and syllables such as “trout” and “trourourout.” His description of the “parfit” call, for example, is:

“A moot and then trourourout, trout, trout, trourourout. trourourout, trout, trout, trourourourout … And to commence with a moot and finish by a moot.[19]”


By the early 1600’s, as horns grew larger and more easily able to use the harmonic series, signal calls started to be written with more standard musical notation and can thus be performed by modern players. Some sport hunting clubs, especially in Europe, rely on these calls for historical use of hunting horns. French hunting signals usually relied on triple meters, like 6/8, in similarity to the trot of a horse. Other countries, like Germany, used duple meters. During this time, music also began to be written for “hunting horn ensembles”, which called for horns of different lengths in order to harmonize with each other. At this time, the horns were still more in

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use as related to hunting than concert halls, but the more melodic signals in conjunction with multiple instrument “music” put them closer to other instruments than they had been previously.

**Part 2**

While elsewhere in Europe hunting horns were going through gradual transitions in development, a specific music genre was brewing in Italy that would eventually be partly responsible for the musical development of horn.

Caccias originated from hunting calls and sounds, bringing with them the hunting horn. As the caccia developed, relying less on noises and more on rhythmic and harmonic characteristics that came to define the style, the horn also developed as a musical instrument. The mutual growth between musical development, especially in the caccia, and instrumental development, brought the horn off the hunting grounds and into the orchestra.

Starting at the crossover point between unwritten and notated musical practices, we will first look to the Trecento treatise, which defines the earliest form of caccia. Most simply, caccia

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can be defined as a “poetic and musical genre in use during the 14th and 15th centuries. At first a mostly vocal genre, caccia characteristics included ostinatos, 6/8 meter, canon, and upbeat rhythms. Their place in Italian music? Through vocal dialogue, the creation of hunting scenes.

*Connection!*

**Baroque (1600-1750)**

The word baroque means misshapen pearl, and also can be defined as anything extravagantly ornate, especially if it is in bad taste. Needless to say, Baroque artists did not name this period, the classical artists after them did. You may be wondering why I have some buildings on these slides. The Baroque era was known for its intricate, gilded architecture. There was no such thing as too much gold or detail. Music was shaped in a similar fashion. Musical ornamentation took the form of lip trills, fancy quick runs for woodwinds, rhythmic ostinatos and rapid harmonic changes.

At this point, resources have differing conclusions regarding the exact dates or plays in which horns began to be used. I would argue that the conclusion depends on the definition of “horn”. Grove Music, a music encyclopedia, focuses on large hooped horns, similar to the one I currently

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have. During that time period, however, the large hooped horn was a fairly recent development, with most hunting horns in use being of the smaller variety.  

For example, some sources cite Michelangelo Rossi’s *Erminia sul Giordano* (1633) as being the first use of hunting horns (not modern natural horns) because it calls for a “chorus of hunters”. Other sources argue that because there was no notated music for “hunting horns” that there is no evidence of use. The counter argument is that horn signals based on older versions of hunting horns would not have modern music notation, or necessarily needed it as most older forms of hunting signals were passed down generationally.

The next date of contention is Cavalli’s *Le nozze di Teti e di Peleo* (1639), in which the term “chiamata alla caccia” is considered to be in reference to a group of hunting horns because it literally translates as “call to the hunt”. Some sources argue that larger hooped horns were probably not used given the date of composition, and that the composition probably used strings instead. However, those same sources say nothing about the probability of older versions of hunting horns.

In terms of the large hooped horns, Grove Music Online cites a Lully comedy ballet, *La Princesse d’Elide* (1664) given at Versailles as the first instance of horns in use musically.

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14 Meucci, “Horn: 2. History to c1800 (ii) Ensemble and Orchestral Use.”

Evidence for this is located in the music, which calls for both *cors* and *trompes de chasses*. From there out, horns became increasingly used in stage productions, primarily in representations of hunting scenes.\(^{16}\)

By the late 1600’s horn began to be written for as a solo instrument, initially in similar patterns as hunting calls and caccia, but gradually containing higher lyrical lines. For example, C.A. Badia’s *Diana rappacificata* (1700) for two horns in F contains both hunting fanfares in triple meter, and lyrical phrases.\(^{17}\) When Charles VI became king in 1712, he formally included horn as a part of the court orchestra.\(^{18}\) After that, horn was introduced to the Neapolitan school, the most famous operatic school at that time, leading to well known composers writing for the instrument. Composers like Scarlatti, Handel and Bach picked up writing for horn. Which brings me to the first real excerpt for natural horn! Perhaps some of the most well known works at the time, the Bach Brandenburg Concertos contain major orchestral excerpts for almost every instrument. Today, we will examine part of the first concerto.

**SLIDE**

Here you see two horn parts. Bach makes use of contrasting triple and duple rhythms (as in the French and German style of hunting calls), as well as writing the horn parts in similar intervals as previous “hunting horn ensemble” music. Due to the nature of the harmonic series, the lower of the two parts has wider intervals, while the upper part has a more conjunct line. In

\(^{16}\) Meucci, “Horn: 2. History to c1800 (ii) Ensemble and Orchestral Use.”
\(^{17}\) K. Haller: *Partituranordnung und musikalischer Satz* (Tutzing, 1970)
\(^{18}\) L.R. von Köchel: *Die Kaiserliche Hof-Musikkapelle in Wien von 1543 bis 1867* (Vienna, 1869/R)
addition to reinforcing already developed trends in horn composition, this piece also had influence over a standard pitch of “F” for horn.  

*Brandenburg concerto excerpt (1721)*  

By the early 1700’s, horn construction began to go through another series of evolutions. Hunting horns did not require the user to place their hand in the bell. Hunting horns were typically played with one hand, and often played with the bells in the air to sound louder. This is where modern “bells up” technique comes from, and was a practice regularly used for forte dynamics until as late as the 1800’s. The reason it went out of practice (except in modern valved horn compositions that want a visual effect) is that it lead to poor tone, bad intonation, and unreliability of attacks. For modern horn players, it also takes the horn off the blast shields (big plastic rectangles that bounce horn sound forwards), thus not doing horn any good in terms of sounding louder. Tangent aside, horn parts were being written with an increasing number of notes not in the harmonic series, requiring use of the hand. Hunting horns were very large, designed to fit around the body. In order to make orchestral playing more practical, horns became more compact.  

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Crooks were the next big step in horn evolution. The earliest known example of a horn with crooks was made by Michael Leichnamschneider in 1721, and was popular by the 1740’s. Crooks allowed hornists and composers to change keys without changing instruments. The differing lengths of tubing also gave composers more colors to work with. As the tubing length changes, the timbre of the horn also changes.\(^{21}\) For example…

*Demonstrate sound changes on different crooks*

**Classical (1750-1820)**

The transition between “eras” of music is in actuality gradual. In other words, composers didn’t wake up one day and suddenly decide to compose differently. However, Bach died. Handel did as well. With two major composers of the Baroque era gone, musicologists (music history nerds) decided that 1750 would be an appropriate place to mark the new era of music. Out with ornamentation and rhythmic ostinatos, and in with simple lyrical melodies that were very catchy. For example, how many of you know this?

*Mozart Horn Concerto No. 2 in E-flat major, K. 417 (1783)*

As music shifted to become more conjunct and less disjunct, horn also met some changes\(^{22}\).

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The next important invention was conceived by the same A.J. Hampel rumored to have created hand horn technique. Hampel, with help of an instrument maker, created a horn using crooks with a cylindrical bore. This same horn also had a mouthpiece which doubled as a crook to change the pitch from F upwards. This Inventionshorn originated in 1753, and the earliest surviving instrument is from 1776\textsuperscript{23}.

SLIDE (PHOTOS)

The most famous horn with crooks was the cor solo, invented in 1780’s Paris by Joseph Raoux, the “Stradivarius of Horn”. This horn only has crooks for the keys most commonly used in solo compositions, G, F, E, Eb and D\textsuperscript{24}.

As horns were more easily able to play in different keys, and hand horn technique became more common, composers increasingly used notes outside the harmonic series and experimented with horn color. Grove Music, a music encyclopedia, cites the first complete book on hand technique as the *Essai d’instruction à l’usage de ceux qui composent pour la clarinette et le cor* by Valentin Roeser (1764). (Instructional Text for the Use of Those Who Compose for Clarinet and Horn). Roeser describes the ability of hornists to increase the number of performable notes through hand horn technique, but cautions composers about the use of these notes due to


\textsuperscript{24} Morley-Pegge, 42.
intonation. At this time, even though use of notes outside the harmonic series increased, they were written sparingly. As hand horn technique became more well studied, composers used more notes outside the harmonic series.

“Falsetto”, a technique that originated in the early 1600’s was still in use during the hand horn era. In this technique, the embouchure is overly relaxed to reach “false” lowerings of the lowest partials.

* Demonstrate*

This technique was used in a standard orchestral audition excerpt: the fourth horn solo in Beethoven 9. Because of its popularity, multiple historians have written about the hand horn technique required for its performance.

One of the topics of discussion is the number of notes that are not open. Performance practice of “stopped” notes on natural horn is a topic of some controversy. Some modern natural horn performers aim to keep the sound as close to valved horn as possible. However, this ignores the evidence of composers like Brahms, who preferred natural horn, and wrote in specific keys to achieve certain colors and better communicate character. For example, as in the Beethoven 9 fourth horn solo, the composer wished to have a more veiled horn color, thus putting horn in a

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key that requires mostly stopped notes. It is important to remember, though, that generally hornists aimed for similar tone quality within passages, embracing the color of the crook and required technique in a way that sound uniform. In other words, notes that are fully stopped should not sound suddenly metallic and razzy compared to half stopped notes within the same passage. This requires not only advance notice and understanding of composers intent, but the ability to finely regulate air stream and embouchure to adjust color. 26

As for the Beethoven 9 solo, which I will demonstrate here shortly, another part of horn technique to keep in mind is that in order to maintain similar tone quality, the dynamic range of the instrument was less flexible than other instruments, but often paired with the desired color. For example, loud passages usually had a majority of open notes. Softer passages were typically stopped, for the muted color of the instrument. In Beethoven 9, the scale portion was written unaccompanied, as it cannot be played louder than piano without distorting the sound.

For comparison, I will play two excerpts, both utilizing different hand horn technique, different crooks, and communicating different characters. Both are standard orchestral horn audition excerpts, and both are by Beethoven.

The excerpt from Beethoven’s 3rd Symphony, “Eroica”, was dedicated to Napoleon until Napoleon decided to start taking over Europe. Regardless, the “heroic” theme is communicated

through the open tones and triple meter that come from the early days of horn. Also take note of the disjunct lower voices, and the more conjunct upper voice, necessitated by the use of more open tones.\textsuperscript{27} I will perform the standard audition requirement: Horn 2

*Beethoven 3 (1803)*

As you listen to the fourth horn solo in Beethoven 9, listen for the falsetto technique, and the tone color of the stopped notes as compared to the open tones heard in Beethoven 3.

*Beethoven 9, 4th Horn Solo (1824)*

**Romantic (1800-1910)**

Romanticism was a time of heightened symbolism and emotional communication. The aim across disciplines, like art, music and literature, was to evoke stronger emotional responses and explore new ways of approaching their discipline, with a increased disregard for rules. For example, in art, painters slowly stopped focusing on realism and shifted into styles like impressionism. They also used increasing color contrast, with brighter colors, and rather than bored looking people with fruit or biblical scenes, they started to capture raw moments in human existence. *Point to slide*. Romanticisms social counterpart was political liberalism, starting a

trend of always searching for new ideas and improvements rather than sticking with tradition. Because of that trait, Romanticism encompasses a variety of subgenres, sometimes contradictory to each other. Also, due to the human dislike of things like change, most of the revolutionaries during this time were unpopular while they were alive; lead tragic, miserable lives, died broke; and did not become famous until after they died. For example, Vincent Van Gogh, Tchaikovsky, and Edgar Allen Poe come to mind. What Romantics traits did to music was bring in new harmonies and composition techniques, build larger orchestras, and increased focus on portrayal of emotional content rather than just writing based on old music theory rules.

Due to the invention of valved horns in the early 19th Century, natural horn use decreased. Some composers, like Brahms, preferred the colors of natural horn and continued to intentionally write for the instrument.

At the edge of the transition between natural horn and valved horn, we find Richard Strauss’ First Horn Concerto (1882-3). This concerto is a standard in horn repertoire, and along with the Mozart Concertos, is found as a requirement for district band, college auditions, and juries. Richard’s father, hornist and composer Franz Strauss, who also wrote a popular work for horn “Theme and Variations”, preferred natural horn to valved horn. Richard Strauss labelled the

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original score to be performed on natural horn. Some speculate that this was a joke, and that it
would have been impossible to perform on natural horn.

Yet, Strauss's sister Johanna wrote to the British horn player Dennis Brain (who by the way,
music educators, your horn students should know) that she "vividly remembered her father
struggling with the solo part, which he found very tiring, even using the high B-flat crook. In
particular, he seems to have found the high B-flats too daring and dangerous for performance in
the concert hall"\(^{30}\). The honor of the premier was passed off to one of Franz Strauss’ students,
and although a few musicians have attempted a natural horn performance, the piece was and still
is commonly performed on a valved horn.

*Strauss First Horn Concerto (1882-3)*

**Modern: 20th and 21st Century**

In order to bring this presentation to a close, I wanted to talk about the relevance of what
we learned about natural horn to modern horn playing. In terms of modern natural horn use, it is
not common. However, there are many remnants of natural horn in valved horn performance. As
discussed earlier, there are performance techniques that have carried over, like hand placement,
stopped horn and pitch adjustment. Compositional techniques like splitting parts between low
and high horn, and specific rhythms and intervals hearken to ancestral horn writing. For

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\(^{30}\) Del Mar, Norman. “Richard Strauss: A critical commentary on his life and works”. Volume
example, Aaron Copland’s use of horn fifths, or open notes on the harmonic series, to portray the American outdoors is a descendant of horn hunting calls, and is an example of “borrowing”.\textsuperscript{31}

Especially as 21st Century music progresses, odd or period instruments like natural horn are getting more attention. The last horn piece up for discussion I will not be performing. I had every intention of learning this, but could not find the music for sale. Not to worry, I will be playing a recording.

September Elegy (2001) by Jeffrey Agrell (University of Iowa Horn Professor) is for natural horn in Eb and piano. This work was written in response to 9/11. Of the four movements, only the chorale is fully written. The other portions are improvised, a technique stemming from early music history and cadenzas, giving musicians a chance to express themselves. While hundreds of years ago, improvisation was rarer, and followed more rules, 21st century music tends to leave more up to the performer. However, in this case the performer is limited by their instrument. As we listen, see if you can notice techniques, like use of open and stopped notes for color and communication of emotion, as well as meters and rhythms characteristic of natural horn writing.


The educator in me can’t resist some audience participation. I want to talk about what you heard. Now I know you aren’t all musicians. That’s okay. If you are feeling fancy and want to use the specific names of techniques and rhythms, go ahead. If you aren’t sure of the name of what you heard, describe it. In other words, don’t be afraid to contribute.

*Pause in between movements*

*Ask what techniques they heard, ask to describe sounds, ask where those techniques originated*

*Ask how those contribute to the mood*

*Wrap up the discussion after Mvt. 4 by summarizing the contributors thoughts.*

Thank you all for attending! I hope you all have something you can take away from this, whether it be factual musical knowledge, teaching knowledge, or even just a better understanding of how to listen to and break down music.
References

This list includes sources not included in the paper for the purposes of providing a more comprehensive compilation of related articles for any scholars interested in researching more information on the topic.

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Richard Strauss, history, compositions (horn concertos, Ein Heldenleben, Til…)


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Summary of romantic “style”, explanation of term, relates to previous eras, includes composer specifics


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