

“A Passionate Horn”

Andrew M. McAfee, Horn
Nancy Whelan, Piano

Track 1	Reinhold Glière – Concerto for Horn and Orchestra in B-flat major, op. 91 II. Andante	7:06
Track 2	Franz Strauss – Nocturno for Horn and Piano, op. 7 Andante quasi Adagio	7:11
Track 3	Felix Bartholdy Mendelssohn – Symphony No. 5, op. 107 III. Andante	3:52
Track 4	Robert Schumann – Adagio and Allegro, op. 70 Adagio – Langsam, mit innigem Audsdruck	4:41
Track 5	Allegro con brio – Rasch und feurig	4:49
Track 6	Henri Büsser – Morceau de Concert, op. 39 Moderato – Andante poco Lento – A Tempo (Fanfare)	5:42
Track 7	James Winter – Sonata for Horn and Piano I. Andante con licenza – Allegro non Troppo	6:47
Track 8	II. Un poco lento	5:12
Track 9	III. Vivo	4:45
Track 10	Franz Strauss – Fantasie for Horn and Piano, op. 2, edited by Thomas Bacon* Adagio – Thema – Variation 1, Con brio – Variation 2, Con fuoco – Andante con moto – Rondo Russien, Moderato – Più mosso	13:01

Total Time: 63:05

Recorded on May 28-June 1, 2011 in Kenan Music Building, rehearsal room 1201, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Many thanks to **Paul Cole** and **Terry Rhodes** for use of the facility.

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*Fantasie available at <http://www.mccoyshornlibrary.com/>

Photos of Andrew by K2Production, Nancy by www.christineprisk.com

For more about **Andrew M. McAfee**, horn technique and videos, please visit www.hornlessons.org.

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Program Notes

May this music naturally bring you pleasure and inspire you to act with passion in all that you do. For a deeper appreciation of the works, I have added these personal comments that are my un-authoritative interpretations and should not limit your discovery.

(Track 1) The Russian composer **Reinhold Glière** (1875-1956) completed his **Concerto for Horn and Orchestra in B-flat major, op. 91** in 1951. I have selected the second movement, the **Andante**, as it is my favorite in all solo horn music. It starts with the piano setting a tranquil mood with a simple melody. The horn enters, tentatively at first, with a rising and pulsing melody that arches, soars and then sets the listener down for a brief rest before working the line again downwards (1:13) to emphasize more poignant chords that stress and release tension. This play continues until the next section (2:21) in G minor overtly presents a new area of tension and forebodes turmoil. The musical line yearns and stretches upward (2:57) to be freed from this condition and takes us into the development section where the descending melody explores various keys. The melody stretches ever upwards and, where a strong piano chord is struck (3:38), the horn is released to take flight. This quasi cadenza, that eventually unravels the harmonic tension, falls back down to the original key of Eb. The horn hands the lead off to the piano (3:52) which now fully states the original melody on its own territory. The piano and horn then join together (4:37) at the loudest point of the movement as the exultant melodic lines are woven together. In the afterglow (4:56), a reposeful horn line floats, meanders and reluctantly settles down for the piano to recap the opening melody (5:29). In the closing section, I have added singing (6:31) to create a chord that reinforces the arrival home to the key of Eb before the final ascending notes that, by using the hand to entirely close the bell, wisp away at the top of the horn register. Underneath, the piano reminisces with an earlier rhythmic fragment.

(Track 2) The **Nocturno, op. 7** by **Franz Strauss** (1822-1905), composed in 1864 by a noted horn player and father of the famous composer Richard Strauss, is a popular selection for many musical occasions. Like the Glière, this work allows the performer ample rubato (faster and slower with the tempo) to accentuate the sweet notes and reinforce the rewarding chordal progressions. The piano sets the stage with easy flowing Db arpeggios like a bed of flowers in which lies a pleasant memory. The horn starts simply and ventures to more poignant notes to tempt the listener to linger further. Repeating the melody again (1:18), the line is now more adventurous and climbs higher, touching the peak gently (1:44) before meandering down like a feather to rest momentarily on a pillow. The piano then takes the lead (1:56) for a while in a pleasant variation and brings the music strongly into the development section (2:27), keyed in Bb minor. This louder, more dramatic yet noble proclamation by the horn is supported by the piano. The horn rethinks the assertion (3:00) and briefly calms the mood only to reenergize (3:18) and push the harmony upwards to concert Cb major, expressed as a descending arpeggio that requires some space and time to unwind and contemplate through a recitative (an area of vocal dialog) and a sweet piano interlude. The recap (4:27) of the first material leads us to one last triumphant declaration with the horn arriving on its high Ab (5:29) and then heroically descending and daringly finishing off the phrase before ascending to a heavenly Coda (last section). This sweet ending (5:46) gently caresses the moments of tension and release to enjoy and reaffirm the key of concert Db all the way through to the last low Ab on the horn and the high, shimmering, right hand arpeggio on the piano.

(Track 3) The third movement **Andante** from the **Symphony No. 5 in D, op. 107** by **Felix Bartholdy Mendelssohn** (1809-1847) was composed in 1830 and reveals some the deepest emotions on the CD in its four short minutes. Starting from a neutral place that descends into darkness, the melody surges upwards to pull itself out of its mourning. Ever higher it searches for the light as the sigh motifs sob for relief. A moment of optimism by the piano (1:08) leads to a motivated section as if retelling the story of how one got into this situation. The music pauses (1:35) in a momentary smile, but then in pursuing an idea becomes more impassioned, following the inspiration until finally the line reaches its peak of exasperation on the horn's top line written F. This sustained note of anger deflates into regret (2:01) or a soft apology. The restatement of the first melody now more timid,

is echoed by other falling lines (2:17) imitating the gesture. From the depths arise a new hope, and yearning upwards once more optimistically stretching up to a G only to fall again (2:35), in descending gestures, down, down again, then immediately resurge (2:43) in an ascending scale only to pull back (2:47) as if not wanting to be hurt again. The horn barks out (2:51) the pain of being tortured back and forth. The line again resigns and the piano repeats (3:03) the ascending scale and fall to commemorate the ordeal. The last statement (3:13) is a moment when the clouds part and the sun shines through to help dry out the landscape as the movement ends in the more optimistic major key, although tired and exhausted from the ordeal.

(Track 4) To brighten the mood, next is the **Adagio and Allegro, op. 70** by **Robert Schumann** (1810-1856), a work he crafted in 1849. As a consummate composer of emotions in music, Schumann epitomizes the Romantic era of music. The slow **Adagio** movement, expressively marked *Langsam, mit innigem Audsdruck* (slow, with heartfelt expression), is a delicate play between horn and piano as equal characters of importance, each taking turns as leader. The music begins with a simple two bar melodic phrase in the horn encouraged by pulsations in the piano. The piano takes its turn leading with an ornate melody that is affectionately imitated by the horn. Back and forth, melodic fragments are introduced, imitated and supported throughout this lovely dialog between the two voices. It is a play of setting up and giving emphasis to notes that enjoy their resolution.

(Track 5) The **Allegro con brio**, with the expressive marking *Rasch und feurig* (quick and fiery), explodes onto the scene in a dexterous and rambunctious display by the horn. This sudden and overt expression of zesty youthfulness may be a little overwhelming after melting into a serene mood from the Adagio. Schumann was known for his characteristic bipolar extremes and often wrote from these two opposing viewpoints. The dialog continues, just at a faster, more impassioned, pace. The second area (1:41) within the fast section is a reprieve from the wildness. The horn starts in the middle register while the piano keeps the energy alive with a syncopated accompaniment. The line works its way upwards gradually then quickly falls to be handed off to the piano to lead the same melody. They join the lines together for a few bars of passion (2:14) then separate again for the return to the “quick and fiery” material. This recap (2:32) repeats the music from the first Allegro and then extends it into the ending area, which is recognized when the horn goes to its high Bb (3:58), then resurges again, and the final time arrives together with the piano on the G. The material melts away to make room for another wave. A short quasi cadenza, on a concert Eb arpeggio (4:22) in the horn, heralds the end of this area and the beginning of the Coda, which is even faster. This final display of daring feats, first by the piano, is capped by the horn going to the very top of the register. I think the ending can be done in a couple of different ways and, to give a most exhilarating work its just desserts, decided to take the end of the arpeggio up the octave.

(Track 6) The **Morceau de Concert (Concertpiece in D), op. 39** by **Henri Büsser** (1872-1973) is a charming work that blends together fanfares, love music, echos (hand stopping), and trills, all brought together in a nice happy and triumphant ending. The opening piano arpeggios in A minor introduce a bold and serious sounding fanfare in the horn. With repeated proclamations, the fanfare alters to include rolling triplet figures that harbinger easier times ahead. After a dramatic descending scale (:51) in the horn to its low E, the piano descends further to transcend the seriousness to a dreamy F major. The flowing triplets imitate a waterfall in misty air or rolling brook, a warm peaceful setting with soft green moss on which to walk barefooted. The horn floats in with a gentle melody and as the line ascends, suddenly drops in volume (1:27), like a sudden inhalation of the breath, pulling back from being too forward. As it becomes emboldened and sees an opportunity, the line rises and soars, arriving on its high Ab (2:14) to enjoy a short plateau before the line relaxes down again to the middle register. The horn takes a fragment from this melody and is featured using stopped horn (2:43) where the bell is closed off entirely with the right hand, causing a softer sound but with a slight sizzle or edge. The fragment evolves into a whole tone scale up to a top G and back down to the horn’s first line E, where the open horn resumes (2:53) to finish the scale. A piano interlude takes us to the next section (3:18), which is based upon a concert D major fanfare with the piano filling out the chords as if two natural horns were playing together. The rest of the work, even though migrating through different keys like trying on different clothes,

never loses its underlying dramatic personality. Trills (quick movement between two neighboring notes) enhance the suspense (4:18) as the dramatic closing is anticipated. Triplet figures again build the excitement and propel the horn upwards to achieve a satisfying final high A to reaffirm the final key of concert D major.

(Track 7) I am happy to finally reveal this world debut recording of the **Sonata for Horn and Piano**, a magnificent work composed in 1955 by **Dr. James H. Winter** (1919-2006), my horn instructor, wind quintet coach while at California State University, Fresno and mentor for years beyond. He was a distinguished gentleman that gently commanded respect and dignity. It was a great day for me when (in my 30's) he finally asked me to call him by his first name, James. The Sonata was never published and is far overdue its recognition as it belongs in every serious horn player's repertoire beside the works of Hindemith and other great 20th century composers. I worked on the Sonata with Dr. Winter as a college student then again years later when he neared his final days. After his wife Pearl died, he sent me a copy of a handwritten full score (and Contest Piece) and a letter written on an old typewriter saying, "The thing isn't copyrighted. Within limits, feel free to make copies." Prescott, Dr. Winter's son, and Michael (grandson and a professional horn player) are happy that the work will finally be recorded. Working with the Winter family, I hope to see the Sonata published soon.

The piano plays a major role throughout the work as it really is a sonata for horn AND piano. The first movement introduction, **Andante con licenza**, (a walking tempo with license to go slower/faster) features the solo horn for 5 bars on a melody that rises by a 1/2 step, falls by whole step and rises by 2 intervals of a fourth, concert B - C - A# - D# - G# (intervals which appear at the end of the entire work). The piano in turn affirms the melody and brings us to the **Allegro non Troppo** (rapid tempo, but not too much) main section (1:05). The descending melody of the Allegro, in the left hand of the piano, is confirmed by the horn later at important junctions in the form (1:48, 3:39 and 5:30). The use of hand stopping (2:33, 3:20) is incorporated in all three movements. The Bartok-like harmonies at 4:24 create a special moment that I always look forward to experiencing. After repeating material from the first and second areas, he saves energy (not developing anything in a Coda) for what comes next.

(Track 8) The second movement, **Un poco lento**, to me vividly depicts a bleak and cold landscape, a resigned emptiness where a deep longing eventually emerges. Satisfyingly, the frustration, buried underneath these layers, is given space to well up and vent like a volcano (1:38, 3:08). Subtle nuances, expressions of thought wrapped in emotion, well crafted within long melodic lines, coalesce and rise to huge arrival points and gradually dissolve back into the grey landscape. The second section (2:14), built over syncopated material from the beginning, adds a stinging triplet fragment that is imitated by the "stopped" horn (2:25). The fragment chromatically winds itself upward, like an irritating annoyance that finally must be addressed with a firm proclamation (3:21). As the fire burns out and energy is spent, the resignation returns with reflections from the opening material but now without the will to wrestle with them. Softer, more soothing lines caress the lingering raw emotions and embers that still smolder.

(Track 9) The third movement **Vivo** is a fun romp, dancing between marches and 3/4 and 6/8 time figures depicting playful, suspenseful, and boisterous episodes. The ear is tempted to recognize a fragment here and there of the famous BACH (Bb, A, C, B spelled in German) theme (:18). The scherzo-like second section (:58) plays with the opening material but now some fragments are turned upside down. The "stopped" horn (1:15) doesn't miss an opportunity to mock the tune. The opening melody of the first movement returns (1:38) now extended to B, C, Bb, B, similar to Bach's and Shostakovich's famous musical signature DSCH (D, Eb, C, B as used in his 10th Symphony and 8th String Quartet). I wonder how many more hidden messages are still buried in the work. The recap of the third movement opening march melody (2:31) migrates into a heavy stomping Shostakovich-style waltz (2:46) that pounds the B, C, Bb, B motif (2:54). This section repeats faster and higher and becomes exasperated with working through the musical material, and winds up screaming on a high Bb (3:21). The piano cadenza freely bats about various melodic and rhythmic fragments out toward the extreme ends of the keyboard before merging them back together for the horn to summarize, one last time (4:07) and proudly proclaim, that the first statement of the entire work has endured. This work is so well crafted, fun to

play and the harmonies are savory. I look forward to hearing about others discovering and performing the Winter Sonata.

(Track 10) To finish the disk, the **Fantasie for Horn and Piano, op. 2**, also by **Franz Strauss** (1822-1905), fits the bill as a melodramatic and entertaining showpiece. It might remind you of the music you would hear at an old comic opera or play. The stage is set with the opening movement in a minor key possibly depicting an overly serious and at times lonely (woe is me) damsel in distress. The next short section (3:24) is a theme based on a melody by Franz Schubert called the “Sehnsuchts-walzer” (yearning or longing waltz) which Strauss enjoys turning into two playful variations for the horn. These variations are on the fast side and aimed at showing a dramatic display of technical fireworks. Following them is a set of scenes featuring romantic arias (Andante con moto, 6:23), balanced with a movement of energetic Russian musical flavors (9:02) then another relaxing aria (10:22) and a return of the “Russien.” For the final section (12:20), I chose to start slowly then bolt off quickly in a lightning fast tempo to add a little drama of my own. I push the tempo over the edge to accumulate as much wild excitement as possible from the work, and hopefully, applause from the audience.

Acknowledgements:

I thank my amazing wife, **Pam**, whose constant love is the “arc of my mallet”¹ inspiration to continue making music. And, to my brother **Eric**, whose generous financial gifts have enabled this project. I recognize the great personal sacrifice that my family has made, especially from my grandparents **Meryle** and **Durk**, and my mother **Darlene**, who was my piano accompanist for many years and supported my educational and rare musical experiences that allowed me to succeed in this competitive field, and to my brothers **Mark** and **Adam** who still rank among my biggest cheering section. Thank you to my first horn teacher, **Roy Mattox** (who was a student of Dr. James H. Winter), for your stable, thorough and grounded guidance. I still use the same method books with my students. To my high school band director, **Michael Selleck**, who gave me experiences as a conductor and leader far beyond the usual high school drum major experience. To **Dr. James H. Winter**, whose rich tone, musical tradition, and personal dignity has forever shaped my teaching personality, concept of sound and love for Geyer horns. To **Dave Krehbiel**, who opened my eyes and spirit to a musical world far beyond the ordinary. To **Dale Clevenger**, whose personal care, brilliant musicianship and unsurpassed technical artistry inspired me to formulate a universal and teachable system of brass embouchure technique. Thank you all and may this CD honor your passion.

– Andrew M. McAfee, December 2011

¹ In The Arc Of Your Mallet – Rumi