

Building A Better Horn Section

Dr. David E. Hoover



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EDUCATION SERVICES

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David Hoover has been an active performer, teacher, conductor, and writer in Southern California for more than 25 years. His credits include innumerable concerts, radio broadcasts, soundtracks, and lecture/demonstrations with dozens of West Coast performing groups. His students' names appear on orchestra rosters around the world, and they are regular winners of distinguished competitions and scholarships. He is an active adjudicator and clinician with a special interest in the development of young musicians.

Dr. Hoover's articles have appeared in *The Instrumentalist* magazine and other periodicals. His study of pre-college horn pedagogy, *An Investigation of Student Horn Player Preparation* (1994), is being used by horn teachers across the country, and he has contributed to and co-authored various publications.

Aside from his duties as Professor of Horn at California State University, Northridge, Dr. Hoover has served on the faculties of Glendale College and the University of Southern California. He has also taught for the Los Angeles City Unified School District, and each year he joins the Idyllwild Arts Festival Summer Session as teacher and faculty artist.

Dr. Hoover holds the degrees of Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts- both in performance- from California State University, Northridge. He also earned the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music Education from the University of Southern California.

Dr. Hoover is an educational clinician for Jupiter Band Instruments.

Statement of the Challenge

- All quality bands and orchestras require a strong horn section; however, the average public school program is lacking strong or even adequately trained players.
- It is a rare public school band or orchestra program that has an adequate balance of horns to flutes, saxophones, or trumpets. Many programs are without horns altogether.
- Horn players in school music programs are often switched there from other instruments; too often they were switched because they were the weakest players in their previous section, and they carry their weaknesses into the horn section.
- Because of these factors, the vast majority of horn players leaving high school are unprepared to meet even basic expectations for college performance and study (Hoover, 1995).

Reasons for the Dilemma

- The horn is not a high profile instrument in pop culture. Also, because the average middle school has no one who plays it well, either teacher or student, there is no model of the sound.
- Even the best-written class method books are not focused on the horn and its special needs. From the first lesson, horn parts aren't made nearly as gratifying as trumpet or clarinet parts, and the parts in many school band arrangements are dull and dreary. Young players soon realize that the glamour is not in the horn section.
- Horns are relatively expensive. When parents see the price of a trumpet as compared to a horn, they make the decision on the spot about which one their child will play. The relatively high cost of horns has also made renting quality horns cost prohibitive. Therefore beginning horn players inevitably play older school-owned instruments.
- The kids in the brass section with the newest, shiniest instruments are usually the trumpet and trombone players. New horn players come in and see that trumpets look "cool," and horns look "rusty." This starts a vicious cycle as the horns are thought of negatively and recruitment moves in a downward spiral, while the trumpets move upward.

Recruitment Techniques and Other Solutions

Kids love pretty instruments. The horn appears on the cover of more music books than any other instrument – even books that have nothing to do with horn playing! Just pull up a shiny NEW horn in front of a class and everyone wants to know what it is.

- Provide horns that are in excellent condition.
- Encourage students to play horn
- Start students on the proper instrument - single horn
- The best players on instruments are started on those instruments
- Level the “playing field” by making the “playing field” unlevel. Give extra enthusiasm to the horn in the initial presentation of instruments.

Students actually recognize the horn aurally better than almost any other instrument because of television and movies. Capitalize on this and play them well-known horn passages from Star Wars and other “cool” TV and movie themes. Help the ears of horn players as they are gaining experience and proficiency. Players new to the horn get lost in the overwhelming number of harmonics at their disposal. In the upper-middle register, any fingering can produce several tones in a row one whole step apart. A concert F4, for example, can be played with at least half a dozen fingerings! This means that only the player’s ear dictates the notes that come out, and sometimes the fingerings only seem to get in the way. In band classes place horns near alto (particularly 2nd) and tenor saxophones since these parts tend to be scored in the same range and often with the same notes.

- Expose students to professional horn performances
- Encourage students to recognize horn parts in pop culture (T.V., movies, etc.)
- Try to secure funding for quest soloists/clinicians
- Create a “horn-friendly” environment

Develop “section pride” by playing horn ensemble chamber music and by choosing large ensemble music that features the horn section. Ensembles of like instruments are not only a great way to build camaraderie but a great place to develop instrument-specific skills.

- Form horn ensembles
- Organize and perform at local civic clubs, nursing homes and schools
- Establish a library of horn recordings for students to model a good horn sound
- Utilize solo and ensemble to enhance repertoire building

Don’t Forget the Physical Basics

The mouthpiece placement of $\frac{2}{3}$ upper lip to $\frac{1}{3}$ lower lip is crucial to success on the horn so insist on it! Also, it is counter-productive to start students on the horn until they can hold it with proper posture.

Horn teachers should overwhelmingly recommend that the single F horn be used for beginning and intermediate horn students. The single F horn is lighter than the double horn. It gives beginners a sense of the harmonic series and logical fingerings that the single Bb horn can’t supply. Also, the F horn produces a characteristic and traditional horn tone more readily than the B-flat horn. This is why single B-flat horns are rarely seen even among professionals; however, the great Vienna Philharmonic horn section still uses single F horns!

Students are ready to move to a double horn only after they have become proficient with all F fingerings. Since the standard method for stopped horn (hand muting) doesn’t work on the B-flat side of a double horn, those students who haven’t learned all their F fingerings first are at a disadvantage when coping with the hand muted passages encountered regularly in Grade 4 through 6 literature. When the time comes to move more advanced students to the double horn, encourage them to use the F fingerings to start and then add the B-flat fingerings gradually for the notes in the high range only.

Selected Repertoire

Horn & Piano

Level 1

Canadian Brass *Beginning Solos* Hurrell *Meadowland*

Level 2

Canadian Brass *Easy Solos* Jones *First Solos for the Horn Player*

Level 3

Bakaleinikoff *Canzona* Ployhar *The Hunt*
 Bozza *En Irlande* Saint-Saëns *Romance, Op. 36*
 Lamb *Classic Festival Solos*

Level 4

Beethoven *Sonata, Op. 17* Glière *Valse triste*
 Canadian Brass *Intermediate Solos* Jones *Solos for the Horn Player*
 Françaix *Canon in Octave* Mozart/
 Glazunov *Reverie* Tuckwell *Concertos for Horn*
 Glière *Intermezzo*
 Glière *Nocturne* Saint-Saëns *Morceau de concert*
 Glière *Romance* Strauss, F. *Concerto, Op. 8*

Level 5

Dukas *Villanelle* Strauss, F. *Nocturno, Op. 7*
 Haydn *Concerto No. 1* Strauss, R. *Concerto No. 1*
 Neuling *Bagatelle*

Level 6

Bozza *En Foret* Weber, C. M. v. *Concertino*
 Strauss, R. *Concerto No. 2*

Horn Ensembles

Keep in mind that the parts can be doubled on most horn ensemble pieces. A duet, for instance, can be played by four or even twenty players.

Two Horns (two parts)

Levels 1 & 2

Voxman *Selected Duets Vol. I*

Level 3

Franz *100 Duets, Book 1* Schubert *Five Duos in E-flat*
 Rimsky-Korsakov *Two Duets*

Level 4

Kling *Thirty Duets* Rossini *Five Duos*

Level 5

Nicolai *Six Duets* Mozart *Twelve Pieces*
 Franz *100 Duets, Book 2*

Three Horns (Three Parts)

Level 3

Kalmus *Thirty Selected Works*

Level 4

Reicha *Six Trios, Op. 82* Schneider *Eighteen Trios*

Level 5

Shaw *Tripperies*

Four Horns (Four Parts)

Levels 1 & 2

di Lasso/Howe *Exaudi Deus* Rubank *Horn Symphony*

Level 3

Pottag *Quartet Album* Janetzky *Little Hunting Pieces*
 Lotzenhiser *The Call and the Hunt* Stout *Folk Song Suite*
 Rossini *Le Rendez-vous de chasse*

Horn Ensembles - Four Horns (cont.)

Level 4

Rimsky-Korsakov	Notturmo	Mitushin	Concertino
Bacon	Eighty-Eight German Quartets	Suessmuth	Suite, Op. 32
		Tcherepnine	Six Pieces

Level 5

Hindemith	Sonata	Handel	Music for Royal
Shaw	Fripperies	/Martinet	Fireworks

Five Horns (Five Parts)

Level 5

Shaw	Quipperies	Stiegler	The Wild Hunt
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Six Horns (Six Parts)

Level 5

Kerkorian	Sextet
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Eight Horns (Eight Parts)

Level 5

Bach/Shaw	Prelude and Fugue in A minor
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Level 6

Wagner/Payne	Siegfried's Rhine Journey
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Recommended Methods & Studies

Gabler	140 Natural Horn Etudes for Beginners	Maxime- Alphonse	200 Studies, Vols. I, II, & III
Getchell	Practical Studies, Vols. I & II	Neuling	Thirty Etudes for Low Horn
Goldstein	First Book of Solos	Schantl	Great Theoretical and Practical School for the Horn
Kling	Method		
Kopprasch	Sixty Selected Studies, Vols. I & II		

Supplemental Materials

- Baines, Anthony *Brass Instruments – Their History and Development.* New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978
- Bloom, B. S. *Developing Talent in Young People.* New York: Balentine, 1985
- Bushouse, D. *Practical Hints for Playing the Horn.* Miami: Belwin, 1983
- Carse, Adam *Musical Wind Instruments.* New York: Da Capo Press, 1965 (Orig. published 1939)
- Eccles (Parsons), J. "Children's Motivation to Study Music". *Motivation and Creativity.* Reston, Virginia: Music Educator's National Conference, 1983
- Farkas, Phillip *The Art of Brass Playing.* Rochester, NY: Wind Music, Inc., 1962
- Fox, F. *Essentials of Brass Playing.* Miami: Belwin, 1976
- Gregory, Robin *The Horn – The Instrument and Its Music.* New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973
- Hoover, David *An Investigation of Student Horn Player Preparation for Repertoire-Based Performance and Study.* UMI No. 9600988. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1995
- Hoover, David "Selected Horn Ensemble Music." *The Instrumentalist.* Northfield, IL: June, 1996
- Hoover, David "Programming Horn Concertos with Bands and Orchestras." *The Instrumentalist.* Northfield, IL: December, 1996
- Hoover, David "Suggested Repertoire for College Auditions." *The Instrumentalist.* Northfield, IL: October, 1998
- Hoover, David "Switching Students to Horn." *The Instrumentalist.* Northfield, IL: September, 2000
- Janetzky, K. and Brüchle, B. *The Horn.* Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1988
- King, Robert *Brass Players Guide.* North Easton, MA: Robert King Music Sales, Inc.
- Maehr, M. L. "The Development of Continuing Interests Music." *Motivation and Creativity.* Reston, Virginia: Music Educator's National Conference, 1983
- Pherigo, Johnny *A Critical Survey of Materials and Practices Related to Teaching the Horn, 1965-1985.* UMI No. 47, 3235A. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1986
- Reynolds, V. *The Horn Handbook.* Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1997
- Schuller, G. *Horn Technique.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992
- Snedeker, Jeffrey, Ellensburg, (Ed.) *The Horn Call, the journal of the International Horn Society.* WA: Record Printing and Design

On the Web: www.hornplayer.net has many resources for teaching the horn including articles on teaching, recommended books and methods, and teacher references.

Jupiter has a wide range of high quality
Single and Double Horn models to help
build your horn section



752L F Single Horn

- .472" Bore
- Rose Brass mouthpipe
- Tapered valve rotors with mechanical linkage
- Nickel sleeved outer tuning slides
- Lacquered brass body
- 11.9" bell
- Molded hardshell case



754L Bb Single Horn

- .472" Bore
- Rose Brass mouthpipe
- Tapered valve rotors with mechanical linkage
- Nickel sleeved outer tuning slides
- Lacquered brass body
- 11.9" bell
- Molded hardshell case



852L F/Bb

Double Horn

- .472" Bore
- Rose Brass mouthpipe
- Tapered valve rotors with mechanical linkage
- Nickel sleeved outer tuning slides
- Lacquered brass body
- 11.9" bell
- Molded hardshell case



854L F/Bb

Double Horn

*Above with screw-on bell
and woodframe case.*



952L F/Bb Artist

Double Horn

- .472" Bore
- Rose Brass mouthpipe
- Hand hammered Rose Brass 11.9" bell
- Tapered valve rotors with mechanical linkage and engraved valve caps
- Nickel sleeved outer tuning slides
- Lacquered brass body
- Complete with hardshell case



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