

THE HORN PLAYER'S
SONGBOOK

Rose French

The Horn Player's Songbook
Rose French
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Table of Contents

Foreword.....	i
Introduction	ii
1. Down in the Valley.....	1
2. Paper of Pins.....	1
3. Froggie Went A-Courtin'	1
4. Chester.....	1
5. We Shall Overcome.....	2
6. Scarborough Fair	2
7. America the Beautiful.....	2
8. Wildwood Flower.....	3
9. Lullaby.....	3
10. The Rosebush	3
11. Simple Gifts.....	4
12. Barbara Allen.....	4
13. Old Rosin the Beau.....	4
14. I Gave My Love a Cherry.....	5
15. Dona Nobis Pacem	5
16. Li'l Liza Jane.....	5
17. Amazing Grace.....	6
18. Greensleeves.....	6
19. Hush Little Baby.....	6
20. America	7
21. Yankee Doodle	7
22. Over the Hills and Far Away.....	7
23. O Music	8
24. Peter Gray.....	8
25. Home on the Range	8
26. Poor Wayfaring Stranger.....	9
27. Theme from <i>Symphony #1</i> , mvt. IV	9
28. Waltz from <i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	9
29. For He's a Jolly Good Fellow (The Bear Went Over the Mountain).....	10
30. Long Long Ago	10
31. Long Tail Blue.....	10
32. The Girls All Tell Me.....	11
33. Auld Lang Syne.....	11
34. Shenandoah.....	11
35. The Ash Grove.....	12
36. The Marine's Hymn.....	12
37. The Girl of Richmond Hill	13
38. The Girl I Left Behind Me.....	13
39. The Caissons Go Rolling Along.....	13

40. The Bonnie Blue Flag.....	14
41. Star Spangled Banner	14
42. I Dream of Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair	15
43. The Battle Hymn of the Republic.....	15
44. Sweet is the Budding Spring of Life	15
45. Turkey in the Straw	16
46. Old Folks at Home.....	16
47. Hungarian Rhapsody #2	17
48. When You and I Were Young, Maggie.....	17
49. Danny Boy.....	18
50. German Love Song.....	18
51. Finlandia	19
52. Largo from <i>Symphony #9</i>	19
53. Toreador Song from <i>Carmen</i>	19
54. William Tell Overture	20
55. The Man on the Flying Trapeze	20
56. Polovetsian Dance	21
57. Beautiful Dreamer	21
58. The Band Played On.....	22
59. Turkish March	23
60. The Swan	23
61. Bourree	24
62. Infernal Gallop from <i>Orpheus in the Underworld</i>	24

Foreword

From the earliest method books, horn players have been encouraged to emulate great singers when they play, whether for practical or artistic reasons. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, musicians were trained more broadly and encouraged to actually sing in addition to playing an instrument, which contributed to their lyrical playing. Some of our finest horn soloists have training and experience as singers. At the end of the last century and into our current one, music education and performance training has leaned more and more toward specialization. There are certainly things to be gained but others to be lost, most noticeably a natural, internalized sense of song, and the ability to connect notes to each other in a meaningful way.

That's where this book comes in! To have a collection of famous songs, many with their texts included, in one place creates a real opportunity. Learning songs like these strengthens our common heritage as part of our cultural foundation. Being able to sing them heightens this opportunity, giving us the chance to internalize them and to know what they are about. Then, finally, to be able to play them provides the hornist with the opportunity to use all those internal resources for meaningful performance.

Grounded not only in practical experience but also in principles of education theory, the songs in this volume offer useful opportunities to sing through the horn. As we know from symphonies, movie soundtracks, concertos, operas, and solos, the horn is at its best when given a beautiful lyrical solo. Playing and singing songs like these are the first step toward playing those solos ourselves.

Sing and enjoy!

Jeffrey Snedeker
Professor of Music, Central Washington University
Past President, International Horn Society

Introduction

This book has two main purposes: to teach students how to play in a lyrical manner, and to expose students to music that has great historical, cultural, and melodic value.

How to Use This Book

- 1. Complete the sentence.** Musical phrases are like sentences; in this book, these phrases are designated by long slur lines (or phrase marks) over several measures. The goal is to play the phrase in one breath so it sounds like a complete sentence if it were spoken. This is why some of the pieces have the lyrics with them.
- 2. Follow the contour.** Many of these songs only have a starting dynamic, or very little dynamic information, so you can add dynamics to follow the contour of the melody.
- 3. Follow the lyrics.** Allow the text to influence how you practice and perform the piece. “Hush Little Baby” should sound very different compared to the “Star Spangled Banner!”
- 4. Sing.** Sing the pieces as you become familiar with them. Compare how you sing to how you play them on your instrument. What do you hear? How can you make your horn playing sound more like your singing?

Historical Background

The melodies in this book are familiar to most everyone, but students rarely have the opportunity to play them on their instrument. By playing familiar tunes, students can develop important subtleties of phrasing and musical inflection. This technique utilizes “music of the mother tongue” as developed by Hungarian composer and pedagogue Zoltan Kodaly.

Another reason to use the melodies in this book is to connect the horn student’s singing voice to their horn playing through a process called audiation, or the ability to hear sound that is not present. Students must be able to audiate to play the horn, and singing traditional melodies in conjunction with playing them on the horn helps students learn this skill. *The Horn Player’s Songbook* exposes students to great music while developing audiation and musicianship skills.

1. Down in the Valley

Folk Song

In One

Down in the val - ley, val - ley so low, _____
mf
 Hang your head o - ver, hear the wind blow. _____

2. Paper of Pins

Folk Song

3. Froggie Went A-Courtin'

Folk Song

Allegro

Oh, Frog-gie went a court-in and he did ride, uh - huh, uh - huh. Frog-gie went a-court-in and
f
 he did ride, A sword and pis - tol by his side, uh huh, uh huh.

4. Chester

William Billings

With Fervor

Let ty - rants shake their i - ron rod, And slav - 'ry
f
 clank her gall - ing chains. We fear them not, We trust in
 God, New Eng - land's God for - ev - er reigns.