

WHAT instrument in the symphony orchestra has the most beautiful sound? Concertgoers would give quite a number of answers to that question. A small and stubborn minority would insist that it is the horn. By horn I do not mean just any brass instrument, such as the trumpet or the trombone. I mean the *horn*: that noble, circularly coiled, gleaming affair that is known in English-speaking countries, and nowhere else, as the "French horn"—a name that is totally illogical, since there is nothing specifically French about it. True, the word "horn" has been applied indiscriminately to nearly all brass instruments at one time or another in America and Britain. But that usage, no, is incorrect. Trombones and trumpets have tubular bores, which is to say that they are uniformly round except for their mouthpieces and flaring bells. The horn, on the other hand, has a conical bore, which means that its tube begins to flare outward at the point where its mouthpiece is inserted, and grows larger in diameter through its length, until it culminates in a very large bell. (The modern orchestral horn, it must be admitted, has been considerably modified, and about half its twenty feet of length is now cylindrical.) The instrument's name derives from the horn of an animal, which has a similar conical shape, and which in ancient times was made into a musical instrument to be used for military calls or calling cattle.

The horn is quite special among brass instruments. Its enormous length gives it a range that begins two octaves below middle C and stretches upward nearly two octaves above it. Its sound, ordinarily, is mellow—so much so that horn players are seated in the orchestra between the woodwinds and the other, under brass. When played as softly as possible, a horn can resemble the cooing of a distant mourning dove. When played at a medium degree of loudness, it has a bell-like sound, as pure as that of the flute or clarinet, with a magical



Barry Tuckwell

nostalgic or atavistic quality that suggests ancient forest scenes or the necromancy of medieval sorcerers. Played at full force, it has a blaring, brassy quality, suggesting military aggression or triumph. It can also be muted, in which case its voice ranges from the softest sound known in music to a muffled blast as of distant battle. No other brass instrument is capable of its great range or of a fraction of its variety of tone.

The horn is also probably the most difficult instrument in the orchestra to play. Missing or splattering of high notes by horn players is notorious. The horn has been called "the wild beast of the orchestra" and "the treacherous monster of the brass." Naturally, great horn players are rare. There are very few horn players who do not occasionally, and none who do not ever, miss a note. Some are remarkable for their agility, others for their rich tone, and seldom do the two faculties appear in the same player. The horn is a very intimate instrument, as all the brasses are, since, like the singing voice, its vibrating medium is a part of the player's own body—the lips.

THE finest horn player of the present generation, and one of the finest horn players who have ever lived,

is a forty-six-year-old Australian named Barry Tuckwell, once the first horn of the London Symphony Orchestra and now a travelling soloist who gives recitals all over the world and appears as a soloist with various symphony orchestras. This estimate of his powers is not a matter of personal whim; it is supported by most of the world's horn players. His career is unique in that although many of his colleagues appear as soloists, they are all, as far as he knows, either members of orchestras or hold teaching positions. The character of Tuckwell's playing is astounding to most of his colleagues as well as impressive to musical audiences. He almost never misses a note. His agility might be compared to

that of a coloratura soprano. His tone is rich, and variously colored and shaded. His legato exhibits a singing line and a faultless feeling for accent and phrasing. His staccato attacks, made with the help of the tongue, are firm, and where desired remarkably rapid, and his articulation has enormous variety. All these qualities have caused him to be called, with some justice, the Jascha Heifetz of the horn. As a student, he took to the horn so naturally that he was playing in the Sydney Symphony six months after he had first come in contact with the instrument.

At recitals, he stands at attention like a soldier, with his instrument pressed to his lips, his left hand manipulating the keys that control the valves, his right hand working within the bell, modulating the tone. He is not a big man, and shows no hint of the barrel shape that many horn players develop. He stands about five feet ten—a thin, muscular figure—and he looks slightly Mephistophelean, because of a mustache, which has been compared to Groucho Marx's, and a small goatee. He always wears spectacles, on and off the stage. He does not pause to turn his horn around and empty the water out of it, as most horn players do, and the reason for this has been a con-



"He's a liberal but not an outspoken liberal."

siderable mystery to many of his listeners. "It's no secret," he has explained to interviewers. "I have several water keys on the instrument, and I empty it all the time during pauses in my playing." Water keys—small, spring-activated keys covering holes in the instrument—have been used on trumpets and trombones for a long time, but Tuckwell is one of the first people to use them on the horn. He has a way of masking the difficulties of the instrument when he is playing before an audience, never permitting his facial muscles to show any strain, even at the most taxing points. His reputation precedes him wherever he plays. Critics have worn out adjectives describing his playing. "Dazzling," "sublime," "breathtaking," "unbelievable," "exquisite," "superb," "flawless," "awesome," "dauntless," and "fantastic" are some of the words that turn up regularly, and in Italy he has been nicknamed *Il Corno d'Oro* (the Golden Horn). In Germany, a critic once wrote, "If the hunter had ever been able to play like this, the deer would have died from ecstasy."

Tuckwell follows a tremendous travelling schedule, which takes in some two hundred thousand miles a year, to

play about two hundred concerts in North America, in his native Australia, in Asia, and in Europe. "My passport is almost worn out with visas," he said the other day. Though he has a wife and a very small child in London, he is away on the road for nine months of the year. Almost all his concert dates are in answer to requests for his services. He travels light, with a suitcase in one hand and his horn in the other. "It's necessary to carry one's own things nowadays," he continued. "There are no porters anymore. I have become a great expert on drip-dry underwear and shirts. I assess the laundry situation as soon as I check in. I keep a book with all my dates written in it. My wife handles the correspondence, which is voluminous, and once a week a secretary comes in to help her. I carry a small plastic knife and spoon with me to keep germs away, and I am very careful of my diet. I like to eat native foods—I find that I enjoy most of them—but I avoid citrus fruits, apples, and anything with vinegar, because they dry my mouth and make playing difficult. I have never enjoyed milk products, except for yogurt, which I eat occasionally. I avoid fatty foods and foods with pre-

servatives in them. Of course, I burn up a lot of calories playing. In India, I take a supply of pills. I like to swim, but I have to be careful of chlorinated water, because of its effect on my lips.

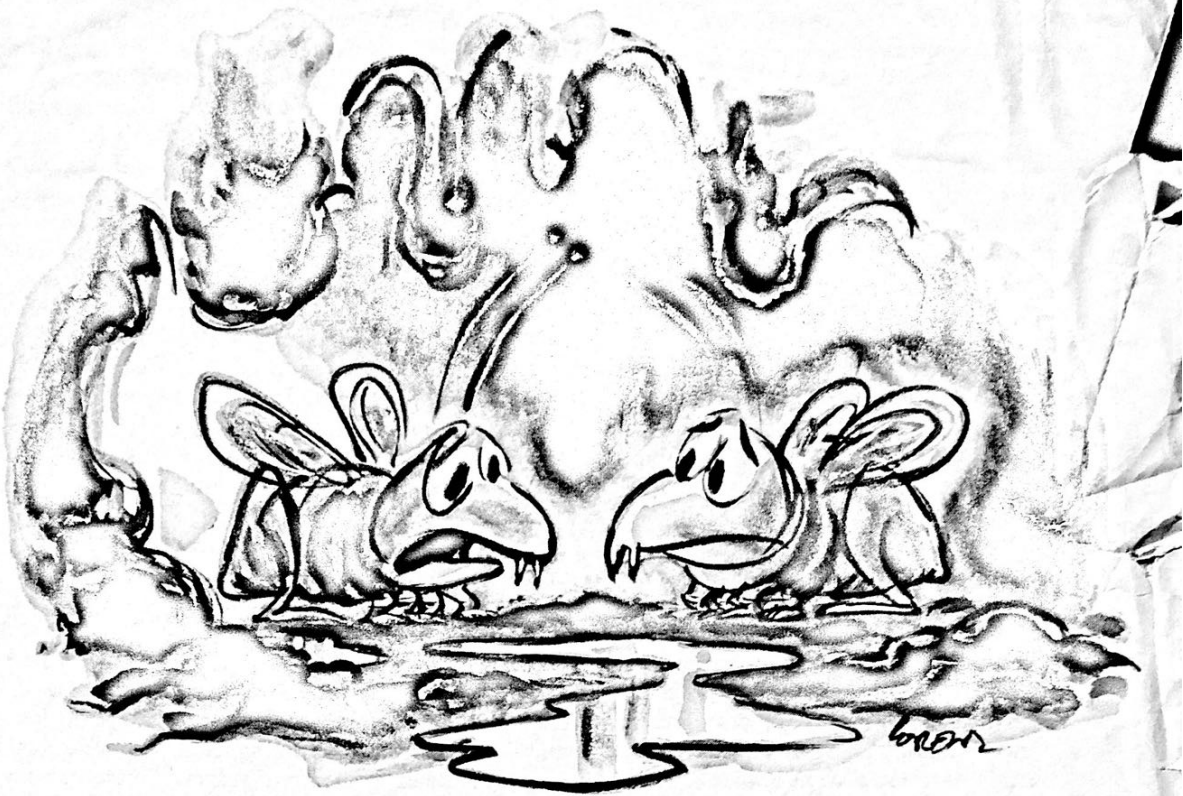
"I've developed a method of practicing in hotels. I turn the television on full blast and then practice with a mute. People are not annoyed by television—they expect it—but they are, for some reason, annoyed by horn playing. I'm very lazy. If I remember, I do exercises when I get up in the morning, but I don't remember usually. Of course, playing the horn is a form of exercise, and I always have an excellent appetite. Funny things happen on the road. Once when I was to play a recital at La Scala, in Milan, I found that I had left my cummerbund a tie behind, though

had my tails. I thought, It doesn't matter—the costume department of a place like La Scala must have hundreds of cummerbunds and white ties. But when I got there I found that the costume department was locked up. So I had to improvise. At the hotel, I made a cummerbund out of a towel, and I managed to make a white tie out of a paper napkin I had brought with me from the plane. It had the monogram of British Airways on it, but I concealed that in the back. Travelling can be tiring. The most tiring thing, I think, is waiting in airports. I know the inside of airports all over the world."

Tuckwell is extremely sensitive to the comments of critics. "Reservations on the part of critics worry me," he admitted. "What did I do wrong? Something that is not wholly complimentary from a critic upsets me. Maybe the man was asleep, but I shouldn't have let him go to sleep." However, adverse criticism is something that Tuckwell seldom encounters. Not only are the critics almost unanimous in their praise but his faithful public will not hear of any carping where his playing is concerned. It takes the position that if a critic does not wholeheartedly approve of everything Tuckwell does,

that proves not that Tuckwell is at fault but that the critic is incompetent. His following is deeply immersed in the mystique that somehow attaches to the horn. A dentist in Jacksonville, Florida, named Milton McKnight frequently rearranges his schedule when Tuckwell plays in the United States and takes a plane to hear him. As one might expect, Dr. McKnight is an amateur horn player. Tuckwell has found that many academic and professional people—doctors, lawyers, and so on—are amateur horn players. Physicists, in particular, are attracted to the horn. The first horn player of the Boston Symphony, Charles Kavalovski, is a former physicist. One physicist, the late Malcolm C. Henderson, of Catholic University, not only played the horn but wrote poetry to it. On his deathbed, Henderson asked that his horn be placed on his chest so that he could blow a few last breaths through it.

Tuckwell has had some troubles with his health. He catches cold easily, and the cold always develops into sinus trouble, which is exceedingly painful for a horn player. He has, during his career, cancelled only one concert because of flu. Recently, he had another attack of flu, but he refused to cancel that time, and played a full concert in Alice Tully Hall in spite of it. "I slipped a disc a couple of years ago," he recalled. "I couldn't sit and I couldn't stand. I had treatment for curvature of the spine, and at the next performance I wore a corset and sort of reclined on a double-bass player's stool. I had to carry a cane. I was very upset from a pride point of view. They said I looked twenty years older. That made me realize that I couldn't go on playing the horn forever." Next day, however, he was off for Munich. "Teeth are very important," he continued. "I try to keep out of fistfights. But from twenty-five on one begins to decompose. Gums recede and get soft, and teeth become loose. That is very serious. And, of course, a cold sore on the lip and you are out for a long time. I am allergic to the nickel that is used to



"I suppose the truth is that wherever we live it's going to be a pestilential hole."

plate the mouthpiece, so I have to use a mouthpiece with a plastic rim. Respiratory troubles, too, develop as you grow older. Knowledge helps. I must know what I am doing physically. Pacing is very important—pacing sometimes for a full week. How can one save up for a difficult moment? Sometimes I rest for a whole day before a concert. In any case, I do not practice much that day. Some players overpractice. The problem is how much breath to use, how much to save for the climaxes. Only one side of horn playing is musical. It's a form of athletics as well as an art."

The difficulties of the instrument itself are enough to keep a horn player on his toes even if he is in the best of health. "You have to take risks," Tuckwell said. "Good music-making always involves risks, but the risks are greater on the horn. You may be able to get by playing for total safety, but it won't be worth tuppence musically. When something goes wrong, one always hopes that some part of the instrument has fallen off. But one looks and it is invariably intact. I am always scared before a concert, but I control myself. I see performances as opportunities for the public to hear masterpieces through me, and I feel a corresponding responsibility. The opening measures of Bruckner's Fourth Sym-

phony, for example, are marvellously effective but very difficult. It starts with a few notes from the horn over a very soft tremolo in the strings. There should really be no beginning to the first note that the first horn plays, it should just appear. But this is difficult to achieve, and risky to try. Those notes can transform the whole symphony."

The repertoire that Tuckwell plays as a soloist is larger than many people imagine. "The four Mozart concertos and the two by Richard Strauss are my bread and butter," he said. "The first Strauss concerto is the more popular of the two. But there are other works besides. There is a beautiful concerto by Glière, written in 1940 in the style of Glazunov. Richard Strauss's father, Franz Strauss, wrote a concerto. He was a horn player himself. The work is rather Italianate in quality. Then, there are the Leopold Mozart concerto and the Christoph Foerster concerto. Foerster's was the earliest of the horn concertos, written in 1745. It would have been played with the bell of the horn in the air, as was the custom in Handel's time. And there are a lot of smaller works—a Scriabin romance for horn and piano, a Beethoven sonata for horn and piano, two sonatas by Cherubini, a Telemann concerto, a Weber concertino, Schumann's Adagio

and Allegro, and others. We horn players are luckier than oboe and bassoon players. A great deal of solo material has been written for us. The only trouble is that most horn concertos are short. Glière's is short. It takes one of Mozart's or one of Strauss's to fill up half a program. I have recorded most of these works. I do not have an exclusive contract with any recording company. My recordings are brought out either on Angel or on London records. I am a member of the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, and we often play ensemble works in Alice Tully Hall. A number of contemporary composers write works for me. Gunther Schuller is writing a concerto. The Scottish composer Thea Musgrave has written a horn concerto—an odd work in which the horns leave the stage and distribute themselves throughout the auditorium during the performance. Iain Hamilton, who lives in New York, has written a piece called "Voyage" for horn and chamber orchestra. Don Banks, of Australia, has written a concerto. Alun Hoddinott, a Welsh composer, has written a concerto and a sonata. György Ligeti has told me he will write a concerto, and Richard Rodney Bennett has written one. I will perform its première this summer for one of the BBC Promenade concerts at the Albert Hall."

FACE to face, Tuckwell is a handsome man, with a slightly aquiline nose, a tanned face, and greenish eyes behind his spectacles. "I didn't grow this mustache and beard for appearance," he explained. "I grew them for playing. My lips became irritated from shaving." His hair is thick, graying, and wavy. He retains only the slightest trace of an Australian accent, perhaps because he has been a resident of England for many years. His manner is cheerful and communicative, with an occasional shaft of dry wit.

He admits to being a perfectionist. "I have a love-hate relationship with my horn," he said. "I'm better only because I work at it. Ability can be a great drawback. I know people who play better than I do, but I think of myself as a musician rather than as just a horn player. The other day, I played into a tape recorder and listened to the tape. I was disgusted. I had done all the sorts of things I disapprove of. From time to time, I rethink every work I play. The second Mozart concerto, for example, might be getting stale, and I have to correct this. When I was with the London Symphony Orchestra, Rostropovich came to play the Schumann cello concerto, with Brit-

ten conducting. The cello part starts off with one long note. Rostropovich made that note interesting. I immediately tried to analyze that—how he did it, and so on—and hoped that someday I would be able to make one note interesting, too.

"I am often asked about playing on instruments that the compositions were originally written for—the old natural, or valveless, horn that Mozart wrote for, say. It depends. I don't usually believe in it. Beethoven's sonata is a good example—it certainly benefits from the use of valves. Mozart, on the other hand, wrote very well for the valveless horn, but, again, it is possible to get his sort of cantabile better on a valved horn. A good natural horn is easier to play. All this plumbing results in acoustical problems, a lot of deadweight, and a certain amount of leakage. Our modern horns don't play so easily. People don't realize that in effect we are still playing on a natural horn, with the option of changing from one key to another by means of valves. A lot of people think that the horn has been simplified, but this is not so."

Changing the subject slightly, he went on, "We horn players tend to stick together. Nobody else really understands our problems. With a violinist or cellist, you can see the bow go up and down and the fingers hit the strings. But everything the horn player uses is invisible—the lips, the tongue, the diaphragm. If I miss a note, three thousand people know it, but if I play everything correctly nobody notices. So we have a sort of freemasonry." The main focus of this freemasonry is the International Horn Society, an organization of more than a thousand members, which holds annual horn workshops, each time in a different place. Last year, the members gathered in Montreux; this summer they will favor Hartford. Tuckwell is the society's current president. Hundreds of players

attend each workshop, and the din is terrific. "Some like to play all night," Tuckwell said. "Sometimes it's a bit frightening. But we've made a rule that anyone who plays between midnight and 5 A.M. must use a mute." These meetings draw horn players from all over the world, and there are always famous virtuosos among them. They discuss embouchures (the fitting of the mouth to the mouthpiece), how to hold the horn for maximum effect, how to breathe, and a thousand other technical matters. They also discuss mouthpiece. "If we used a cup-shaped mouthpiece instead of the standard cone-shaped one, we would gain a lot in accuracy," Tuckwell explained, "but the tone would be lost, and the tone is the magic of the horn." The International Horn Society twice a year publishes a magazine named *The Horn Call*, and its members keep in touch, communicating the latest theories about or improvements in horn technique or the instrument itself. "The other players of brass instruments are imitating our society," Tuckwell said. One of the International Horn Society's most insistent crusades is to get the absurd adjective "French" removed from the instrument's name.

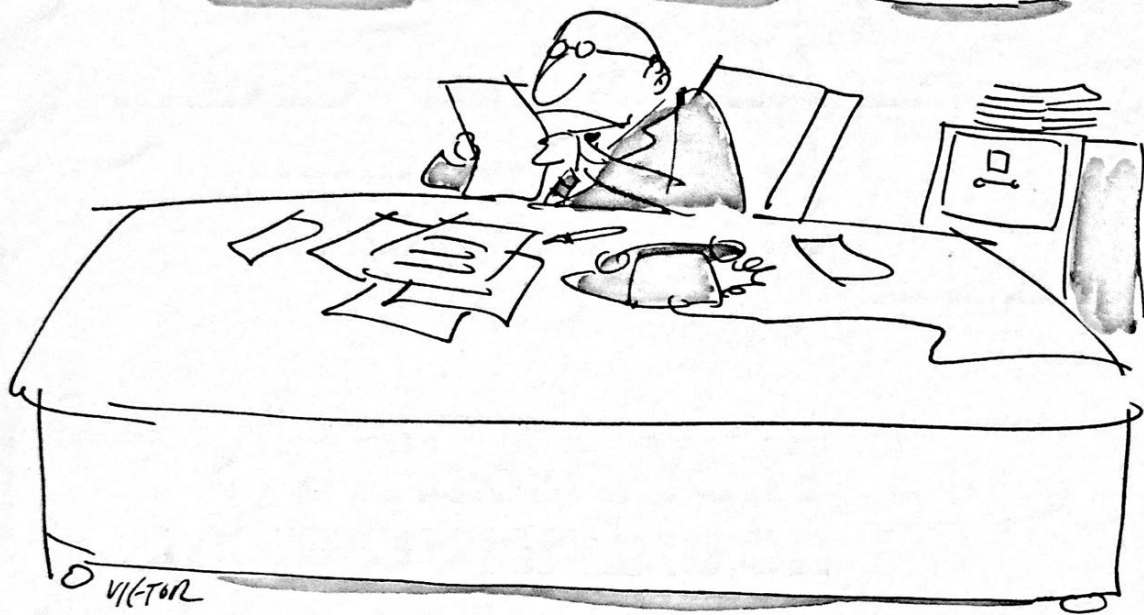
The International Horn Society's workshops consist of five days of events. There are lectures, master classes, concerts by eminent players, and talks by dietitians, dentists, acousticians, manufacturers, and others. There are also events for massed horns (it is a peculiarity of the horn that several, or many, horns playing together always blend perfectly), and chamber-music performances for anything from two to sixteen horns. Graham Hovey, a diplomatic correspondent in the Washington bureau of the *Times* and a horn player in his spare time, wrote a long report on a recent workshop held at Indiana University, in Bloomington, which was published in a magazine called *The Instrumentalist*. According to Hovey, a high point of the workshop was the performance by four hundred and twenty-eight horn players of a motet by Johann Nepomuk Hummel. The effect, evidently, was tremendous. "Even hardened horn professionals said that the sound of the Hummel had been 'music of the angels,'" Hovey wrote, "and admitted that the sight of four hundred and twenty-eight horn bells in the air [for the official photograph] had left lumps in their throats." Philip Farkas, a professor of music at the university, who has written a treatise on the art of horn playing and was at one time or another the first horn player of the Chicago Symphony,



THANK YOU FOR
NOT SMOKING

THANK YOU FOR NOT
BOTHERING ME
WITH TRIFLES

THANK YOU FOR
NOT ASKING
FOR A RAISE



stopped tones sounded somewhat muffled, but composers soon became interested. All the horn parts of Mozart, and other composers of his period, were played on a stopped horn of this type, and many of Beethoven's were, too. Then, in the early days of the nineteenth century, valves were invented for the instrument. By means of pistons or keys, the valves could be articulated, and a full scale in any key without hand-stopping was made possible. Most single-key horns nowadays are built in the key of F, which is the most congenial one for the range of the instrument, or in B-flat alto, on which it is easier to play the upper register than it is on the

the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony, remarked, "I've often heard that horn players are a peculiar breed, and I think this proves it. If dedication to a noble and beautiful instrument is peculiar, then long live peculiarity!" Lectures and performances were given by such premier players as England's Alan Civil, West Germany's Michael Hoeltzel, Tuckwell, Dale Clevenger, of the Chicago Symphony, and Ib Lanzky-Otto, of the Stockholm Philharmonic. There was much discussion of the mystique of the horn, and homage was paid to the great horn player Dennis Brain, who died in an automobile accident in 1957, and to other eminent players of the past, including, of course, Aubrey Brain, Dennis's renowned father. In attendance at the workshop were students as well as highly skilled professionals. It was the first time in history, probably, that so many horn players had got together in one place. Hovey quoted Farkas as having once written, "A horn player is a member of the extremely small and exclusive fraternity of experts who carry on an ancient and beautiful art, its very difficulties creating a bond of understanding and friendship (I might almost say sympathy) between all its members."

In a piece last year in the *Times*, Hovey also reported the fact that during that particular workshop Tuckwell made one of the most dramatic errors of his career. In performing Paul Dukas's extremely taxing "Villanelle" for

horn and piano, he had gone triumphantly through a succession of lip trills (made with the lips, without the use of valves), hand stops, and spectacular runs, and then, three notes before the end, attacked a high F. The note cracked, and a hush fell. Tuckwell pointed to the sky, where that note presumably was, and then there was tremendous applause. It was a historic moment. Younger members of the audience treasured it for showing that even the great Barry Tuckwell could miss a high note, and the older and more experienced players applauded because they realized that few of them could have played the piece as well.

THE modern orchestral horn is a descendant of the closely coiled hunting horn of the late sixteenth century. In the mid-seventeenth century, the French *trompe de chasse* appeared. This was a hoop-shaped instrument, which had a greater range, because of its increased length. It was quickly introduced into Germany, where its range was increased further and where it became known as the *Waldhorn*. Crooks—removable sections of tubing—were a later modification, which enabled the player to change the key of his horn, but a full scale, including half tones, could not be played until the mid-eighteenth century, when a Bohemian horn player named Anton Joseph Hampel developed the technique of producing the missing tones by stopping the bell with his right hand. The

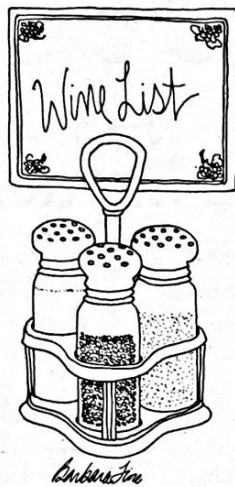
F horn. But earlier in the nineteenth century horns in various keys were used. The modern horn player must be able to transpose parts written for these instruments into other keys, and it sometimes happens that, through a process too technical to be described here, the note written on the staff, the note played by the player, and the note that comes out of his instrument are all different. In the late nineteenth century, the double horn was developed. It was the same old horn in F, but it had an extra number of slides—the modern equivalent of crooks—which could be activated by a rotary valve, pressed by the thumb, to transform it into a horn in B-flat alto. Thus, by mere thumb pressure the player could assure greater accuracy in high notes. It was some time before this double horn was accepted by the majority of horn players. Many conservative players, like Bruno Jaenicke and Aubrey Brain, insisted on continuing to play the old F horn in spite of the improvements, and, indeed, the F horn did have a richer tone than the B-flat attachment. But today most horn players use both the F and the B-flat alternative, and Tuckwell is one of them. During the eighteenth century, composers wrote a fairly large repertoire for the solo horn, valveless though it was. In the nineteenth century, fewer such works were written, and composers began using the horn mainly as a component of the symphony orchestra, ordinarily in pairs or in fours—the first and third horn specializing in the higher

registers and the second and fourth in the lower. The quartet of horns became one of the standard features of symphonic and operatic orchestras from the time of Mozart. "The first horn occupies the hot seat," Tuckwell has observed. It is the first horn that has the most difficult duties in orchestral works, including the production of all those high notes. In fact, in Beethoven's time the solo sonatas and concertos for the horn were written for the second horn, since the first was usually occupied with stratospheric notes and filigree work and did not have the second horn's fullness of tone.

Tuckwell has a large number of horns at home in London. (Once when he was asked how he takes care of them, he replied, "I don't drop them.") He said recently that he has always preferred either a Kruspe (unfortunately, no longer being manufactured) or a Holton. The Holton company manufactures all kinds of brass instruments in the small town of Elkhorn, Wisconsin, where Frank Holton, originally a trombone player with the Chicago Symphony, set up a plant many years ago. Holton horns are now played all over the world, and are favorites in Germany as well as in America. Elkhorn is also the center for the manufacture of Getzen trumpets. Though it is popular everywhere, the Holton horn has its rivals. Some of the better-known makes are the Conn horn, which is manufactured in this country, the Alexander horn, made in Germany, and the Paxman horn, which is made in England. The ubiquitous Yamaha company, of Japan, also makes horns, which Tuckwell says are quite good.

WHY, exactly, is the horn such a difficult instrument to play? The answer to that question demands a brief dip into the science of acoustics. When a column of air such as that inside the horn is put into vibration by the lips, it will be found to have a fundamental (or lowest) tone, involving the vibration of the entire length of the column. This lowest tone is a bit feeble on the horn, and is almost never used. In the case of any brass instrument, greater pressure of the lips and lungs will produce a note an octave above the fundamental, and this note causes the column to vibrate in two

halves. Still greater pressure will produce a note a fifth above the last-described note—G if the fundamental is C—and the column will vibrate in thirds. Still more pressure and it will vibrate in four parts, giving a note two octaves above the fundamental. The next two partials (any of the notes above the fundamental) form a perfect triad with the C, giving E and G, with the G causing the column to vibrate in six parts. Then comes a low



B-flat, and then another C, which causes a vibration in eight parts. This is the point where a simple, short instrument like the bugle leaves off. The bugle has six notes—those that result from the vibration of three, four, five, six, seven, and eight parts. The trumpet and the trombone are more flexible, with much depending upon the virtuosity of the player. But the horn, because of its great length, goes on upward to the sixteenth. These upper partials are so close together

that the lips have difficulty in discriminating between them. This is the cause of the inaccuracies that sometimes beset even the greatest horn players. You could even try out the series on your garden hose. It is long enough to provide quite a large selection of upper partials, but since it is a plain tube, rather than a continuously expanding channel, like the horn, most of these partials would be out of tune. In addition to continuity of expansion, however, the horn needs its bell for correct intonation. "The bell is all-important," Tuckwell explains. "It regulates the intonation of the upper partials. In the manufacture of horns, the bell is rolled from flat metal, then spun on a lathe, buffed, softened by heat, bent, and polished. Only later is it attached to the rest of the horn. It controls not just the intonation but, to some extent, the tone as well. One must maintain the sound of the instrument even at the expense of accuracy. I am not interested in accuracy for its own sake."

In Baltimore, there is a highly respected repairer and restorer of horns named Walter Lawson. He was once the second horn of the Baltimore Symphony, but eventually he gave up his post to concentrate on his present profession. "I wouldn't entrust my horn to anybody else," Tuckwell has said. "Originally, Lawson worked in his garage; nowadays he has two laboratories.

He has the same air as a great violin-maker. He knows exactly what should be done. I sent him my old Kruspe, which was just about worn out, and he fixed it. He has done a lot of work on my present Holton, which has been extensively modified and rebuilt. For instance, he has annealed the flare of the bell, which is its last five and a half inches. The annealing has improved the instrument's carrying quality."

Lawson has worked with Tuckwell on several experiments with horns. In one of these, described by Helen Henry in the *Baltimore Sun Magazine* of October 19, 1975, Tuckwell was presented with twelve horns lying on a picnic table on an eighteen-acre plot of woodland that Lawson owns in Washington County, Maryland. At a distance of about three hundred and fifty yards from the table stood a jury of four horn players, along with Lawson. Tuckwell took up the horns in succession and played a soft note, a loud note, and a medium-loud note on each. The idea was to determine the carrying power of horns of different makes, and with different types of bell, and to discover the secret of the tone quality of the old valveless instruments. "That secret," the article quoted Lawson as saying, "is comparable to the secrets, still unknown, of the superb tone qualities produced by the violinmakers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."

What did they do to make their violins the best in the world? Tuckwell and I are curious, and because we are both horn players we can feel these things." One thing that was discovered at this experimental session, in which horns of various alloys were used—yellow brass (the standard alloy), red brass (containing more copper), and silver-colored nickel alloy—was that the process of annealing the bell's flare seemed to improve the carrying power and the dynamic, or soft-to-loud, range of the instrument. Lawson's fame has spread, and he currently has several hundred horn players as clients. He is occupied with the characteristics not only of the bell but also of the mouthpiece and the mouthpipe (the first three feet of the horn from the mouthpiece), and he is constantly trying to achieve ideal conditions for the player. He has begun to manufacture and anneal a whole selection of bell flares that can be threaded and screwed onto any standard horn.

Tuckwell also has an antiquarian interest in his instrument. A reporter recently accompanied him and Laurence Libin, the head of the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Musical Instruments, through the bowels

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SLIGHTLY HIGHER IN THE WEST

of the museum, where the reserve collection is stored. The purpose of the tour was to choose ancient instruments of the horn type to use on the CBS program "Camera 3," during which Tuckwell would perform on some of them. He found playable ancestors of the modern horn, including an ancient Roman buccina and an almost equally ancient Scandinavian lure, probably dating from the sixth century B.C., both of which were huge instruments with bells high in the air over the player's head, and both of which produced terrifying sounds. Then, there were horns made from conch shells of a type used in ancient India for military purposes. They had a loud, piercing sound. There were horns made from the horns of antelope and ibex, horns made from the horns of domestic cattle, horns made from elephant tusks, straight Tibetan horns made of brass and sounding only one note, early European horns made of brass on which a fairly satisfactory scale could be played when the hand was used in various positions inside the bell. (This led Tuckwell to explain something about the use of mutes, as contrasted with the hand. "When the bell is stopped by the hand, the pitch changes," he said. "The modern horn can be muted mechanically by the use of a standard cardboard mute, in which case the pitch is not altered. But another type of mute, which is known as a transposing mute and looks something like an oilcan, alters the pitch as the hand does.") There were also early valve horns, a curious hunting horn bent so that it could be wrapped around the left side of the chest under the arm, and a tightly coiled horn made of glass. All these exotic instruments had the conical, flaring shape that made them true ancestors of the modern horn, and Tuckwell tried each of them in turn.

BARRY TUCKWELL has said that he is tired of touring. It is a lonely occupation. "The novelty has worn off, and I would like to see my family more often," he said recently. "The income from touring as a solo virtuoso is much higher than any salary I could make playing in a symphony orchestra, but the expenses are high, too. The mails are no good anymore. One has to use the telephone, and that is expensive. I would say that my chief expenses are for telephone calls and air fares—and, of course, taxes, which are very high in Britain, although, thank God, foreign taxes are deducted." Tuckwell telephones his wife in London every day, if possible. He has been married twice.

His present wife is the former Hilary Warburton, an attractive blond woman, born in Invercargill, New Zealand, whom he met a few years ago while he was on a two-month tour of Australia. She is a pianist, and she also handles many of the details of her husband's complicated career. By his first marriage he has two children—a boy of sixteen and a girl of fifteen—and by his second marriage a boy of three. They all live in London, so he has comparatively little difficulty in seeing them. But the cost of supporting them is one of the things that keep him on the road. Hilary Tuckwell has suggested a series of seminars for the wives of horn players. She worries about her husband's continual air travel, and she points out that Maureen Rittich, the wife of the Canadian horn player Eugene Rittich, died of a heart attack at the age of forty-five. The Tuckwells live in Kentish Town, London, in a house with a garden in back that has a tree in it. He has put double glazing on the windows, so as to avoid disturbing the neighbors with his practicing. His wife does the gardening. "I like gardens in that I like looking at them and sitting in them, but I lack this passion for raising things," he explained recently. "I also have a complete lack of interest in sports. My eyes are so bad that, as a child, I could never catch a ball. I simply couldn't see it. I sometimes watch the tennis matches at Wimbledon, and I saw an exciting game of ice hockey in Phoenix. But I was never able to participate in that sort of thing. After this strenuous touring life, the idea of just sitting in a rocking chair on the porch is very attractive to me."

Tuckwell has always been interested in looking at paintings, and in an amateur way in photography, which he pursues with a Nikon he bought in Japan. He has photographed Buddhist ruins in Borobudur, Java, the ancient Persian tombs of Persepolis, Mayan ruins in Mexico, and many more sights that his travels have taken him to. His home contains thousands of photographic slides, as well as hundreds of old 78 records and tapes of performances by famous conductors and horn players of the past. "When I do get home," he observed of these collections, "there are so many things to keep up with that I doubt whether I'll ever get through them all."

A THIRD-GENERATION descendant of Welsh immigrants to Australia, who settled at first in Adelaide, Tuckwell was born in Melbourne on

March 5, 1931, into a family of musicians, all of whom had perfect pitch. One of his grandmothers played the violin. His father was a professional pianist and organist, and his father's sister and two brothers were all musicians—pianists except for the eldest brother, who was a violinist. Barry's older sister, Patricia, nicknamed Bambi, was a violinist, and is now married to Lord Harewood, a cousin of Queen Elizabeth. Among Tuckwell's earliest memories is listening intently to the sound of the lower notes of the piano.

He could read music before he could read sentences, and as a child he was taught the piano and the violin. "I was interested in the organ, too," he recalled recently, "but my legs were not long enough to reach the pedals." Nevertheless, he did study the organ briefly, and when he was a choirboy at St. Andrew's Cathedral, in Sydney, where the family had moved when he was four years old, he would sometimes take the organist's place. "I seem to have been interested in what I *couldn't* do," he continued. "I was not by any means a fine organist. But that may have been because the organ at St. Andrew's was slightly out of tune, and as a result I suffered some confusion playing on it, because of my perfect pitch. I was not particularly attracted to the horn. I had heard orchestras, but had not thought seriously of playing in one. Then, when I was thirteen, a friend lent me a horn and said, 'Try this.' He gave me a few lessons on it. I found that this was something I could do. It seemed to come very naturally. It has become more difficult since. A couple of months afterward I went to study with a man named Alan Mann, at the conservatory in Sydney. At that time, we in Australia did not attract as many great players as did America. There was no great school of horn playing. Alan Mann taught me by making me aware of the horn's possibilities. I progressed very rapidly. I could read horn music easily, because there was only one note at a time and the pace was usually slow. I found that the instrument was the most natural thing in the world for me. I can't imagine how anybody who hasn't got perfect pitch can play the horn. I had perfect pitch and the physical makeup for horn playing, and everything went smoothly.

"I'm afraid my academic record will not bear scrutiny. I left school at fifteen. At that age, I auditioned and got the job of third horn and assistant

first in the Melbourne Symphony. Then, six months later, I joined the Sydney Symphony, with which I had already played, on a sort of temporary basis, shortly after I began studying the horn. The Sydney Symphony was a fairly large orchestra, with eighty-three players, conducted at that time by Eugene Goossens. Goossens was an innovative conductor. We played Mahler and Bruckner as well as the standard classics, and many contemporary works, too. Otto Klemperer visited as a guest conductor and conducted

Mahler's Second Symphony. It was such a success that the audience applauded and applauded. Klemperer finally had to come out onstage with his hat and overcoat on. He waved a white handkerchief and shouted 'Go home! Go home!' Later on, when I

went to London, I found the programs very pedestrian in comparison with what we had been playing in Australia."

Tuckwell went to England in 1950. "I wanted to go somewhere in Europe or America to see what was happening, and since I was a British subject, London was the easiest place to get to," he said. "I didn't have any idea of staying. I kept my fare home in my pocket, so that I wouldn't be stranded. I went to concerts, heard Wilhelm Furtwängler, Erich Kleiber, Bruno Walter, and several other famous conductors. I also heard Dennis Brain, who was then the greatest of British horn players. I went to visit him. He didn't seem to resent this colonial asking questions. I didn't study with him. I didn't study anymore with anybody. I learned by example. I was certainly influenced by Dennis Brain, and I listened to records of Aubrey Brain, who was the finest player of *his* period. Dennis was a boyish-looking man, with pink cheeks. I think the most important influences on me were Dennis Brain, Gottfried von Freiburg, who was the first horn of the Vienna Philharmonic and whom I heard in Edinburgh, and Tommy Dorsey. Dorsey played an easier instrument, but he played it better than anybody else. I heard him play only on records, but his singing tone and refined phrasing impressed me as being very much out of the ordinary. Freiburg had a glorious sound, and played an old-fashioned F horn without the B-flat attachment and with the special valves that are used by the Vienna Philharmonic. He sometimes took risks, and occasionally he broke a note. His sound was full-bodied—not loud but rich. I would say



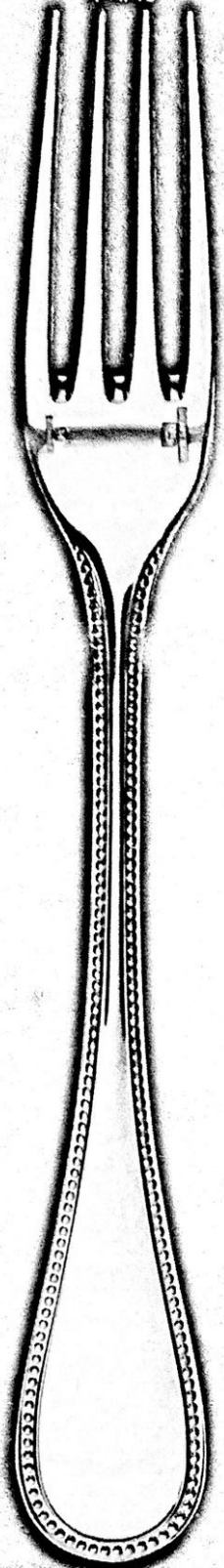
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that I learned virtuosity from Dennis Brain, and also facility and security; sound from Freiburg; and beauty of melody—that singing sound—from Dorsey.”

Tuckwell went on, “I got a job at Buxton Spa for one summer. We had an orchestra of twenty-five to thirty-two people, and we played symphonic music of a lighter sort, frequently without rehearsals. I wrote letters to a lot of orchestras, and finally found an opening in the Hallé Orchestra, under Sir John Barbirolli. He excelled in disciplining the strings, but he left the brass and woodwinds pretty much alone. I was with the Hallé, in Manchester, for two years. I was assistant first horn. I saw a lot of country. We toured a great deal, playing about two hundred and fifty concerts a year. We even got as far as Rhodesia, for a festival of one month. Then I joined the Scottish National Orchestra as third horn for a year. Karl Rankl was the conductor. He was very sensitive. I liked him. He was a pupil of Schoenberg, and he played some of his own compositions. The earlier ones were somewhat in the style of Mahler, and the later ones more like Schoenberg. He was an Austrian Romantic of the Vienna school. I enjoyed that. Then, in 1954, I was offered the post of first horn at Bournemouth. I was twenty-three years old, and this was my first job as first horn. It was a fine orchestra, but I had found the British climate terrible compared to that of Australia. I had arrived in England in midwinter, and it had been very depressing. Australia has a wonderful climate—plenty of climate. The sun shines every day. It is a little like California. I thought to myself, If I am going to stay in this British climate I would rather play in London. It happened that there was an opening in the London Symphony Orchestra, for which I auditioned. I

was accepted. It was after that that I had to knuckle down and sort out my playing. There were too many aspects of it that I thought defective. I was playing by instinct, with the abandon of a kid. For the first time, I was forced to analyze how to play. Many wind players crack up by thirty or forty if they don't know exactly how to play. I played first horn with the London Symphony Orchestra for thirteen years. The L.S.O. was founded in 1904. Originally, it was a breakaway from Sir Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra. It is an interesting orchestra—actually a cooperative. All the players are

shareholders. They decide what conductors they want, and hire them. I was chairman of the board of directors of the orchestra for several years. This sort of thing works in London. Whether it would work anywhere else is a question. But we hired distinguished conductors—André Previn, Pierre Monteux, Zubin Mehta, Seiji Ozawa, Lorin Maazel, Istvan Kertesz, Eugene Ormandy, Leonard Bernstein, and many others. We spent the summers of 1966 and 1967 at Daytona Beach.

“I had appeared as a soloist even in the old days in Australia,” Tuckwell continued. “In England, I played with the English Opera Group at the Aldeburgh Festival, under Benjamin Britten. Later, Britten asked me if I would like to take part in the lunchtime recitals at the Royal Court Theatre. It was an institution that aimed at bringing young musicians before the public. We played works for horn and piano—things like the Beethoven sonata and the Schumann Adagio and Allegro. Next, I played with the London Mozart Players, a chamber group under the direction of Harry Blech. This was in the mid-fifties. I was soloist in all their concerts, and we toured East Germany. Dennis Brain was still alive, and there was still some resistance to a new, young horn soloist who aspired to rival him. I thought of it as ‘getting past the Dennis barrier.’ I still play with the London Mozart Players. Things began to build up at about this time. There was a great demand for wind soloists, particularly in Britain. Aubrey Brain had started it all. He played with great purity of tone. Dennis played with more panache. In



1968, I left the L.S.O. and decided to risk a career as a solo-horn player. It was not so much that I wanted to leave orchestral playing as that I wanted to be a freelance player. Georg Solti, who was then conducting at

Covent Garden, had asked me a couple of years earlier to play first horn in a Wagner ‘Ring.’ I couldn't manage it, because of other engagements. But now Solti was doing another ‘Ring,’ and I asked him if he was still interested. He said yes, and over a two-week period I played two entire ‘Ring’ cycles. I was exhausted at the end of it. My first wife and I separated at about this time, and I started my endless touring.”

SINCE 1968, Tuckwell has played as soloist with practically every symphony orchestra in America, and he

has covered Canada with equal thoroughness. In Europe, he has played with all the leading British orchestras; with the Concertgebouw, in Amsterdam; with the Vienna Symphony; with the Leningrad Philharmonic; with the U.S.S.R. State Symphony, in Moscow; with the Israel Philharmonic; and with practically every other important symphonic organization on the Continent. He has played with every outstanding conductor active today, and with countless ensembles. In the meantime, he has recorded more works for solo horn than any other horn player. And his tours have taken him to many odd corners of the world, including little towns in North Borneo (his tour there was arranged by the British consul), Bangkok, Singapore, Hong Kong, and several cities in India. He has just finished writing a horn method for the Oxford University Press ("When there was no escape, I worked on it"), and is working, when the rigors of his tour allow, on a popular book on the horn. He is also editing the entire horn literature for Schirmer's, in New York. He has his own quintet, the Tuckwell Wind Quintet, with which he plans to visit Russia this April. In the course of his researches, he has discovered that the British school of horn playing, now the finest in the world, is really German. "I belong to the third generation of British horn players," he said. "The standard of horn playing in England in the nineteenth century was not high. About 1870, two Germans brought fine horn playing to Britain. They were Adolph Borsdorf, who had studied with Henri Kling in Dresden, where he was a fellow-student of Hans Richter, and Franz Paersch, who had studied with Friedrich Gumpert in Leipzig. Paersch played for a number of years with the Hallé. These Germans played the horn in use in England at the time, which was a rather small F horn with pistons. Nowadays, there is a distinctive English school of horn playing, founded on the German tradition."

Asked recently what contemporary horn players he admires, Tuckwell immediately mentioned Dale Clevenger, of the Chicago Symphony; Mason Jones, of the Philadelphia Orchestra; Alan Civil, of London's BBC Symphony Orchestra; Ib Lanzky-Otto, of the Stockholm Philharmonic; Charles Kavalovski, of the Boston Symphony; and all three first horns of the Vienna Philharmonic. He expressed admiration for the quality of horn players in America today, and mentioned a recording of Brahms' A-Major Serenade made by the National Orchestral As-

sociation, a student-training orchestra. Tuckwell is an eminently sane and cheerful man, with virtually no eccentricities. One opinion he holds might perhaps be considered an eccentricity: he hates the bel-canto school of opera, as exemplified in Bellini and Donizetti. This is because he doesn't like music that is written just to show off the abilities of either a singer or an instrumentalist.

Nowadays, Tuckwell is thinking seriously of becoming a conductor. "You can't play the horn after a certain age, and I have been studying conductors most of my life," he said. "I'm very aware of the pitfalls of conducting. I test conductors. Do they hear? Do they expect me to play this way or that? I used to call conducting 'the right-arm disease,' but now I've developed more respect for the profession. Conducting has become much tougher in recent years. There are no more tyrants. A conductor has to prove himself. There is a point, psychologically, at which the shutters come down between a poor conductor and an orchestra. Once those shutters come down, he cannot affect the orchestra any longer. He is then faced with cynicism and boredom—common complaints among orchestra players. I hesitated about conducting. I've done a bit of it. At one concert of the South Bank Festival in London, André Previn said he didn't want to conduct, so I took his place. It was not a happy holiday by any means. But conducting is an extension of horn playing. I'd be foolish if I thought I could go on playing the horn forever. I enjoy working with musicians, and I know the repertoire. So I see no reason I shouldn't branch out."

As for that treacherous monster the horn, Tuckwell will probably not be sorry to leave it behind. "The horn is not an agile instrument," he said, "and it's bloody hard work to make it sound as if it were. I have always thought horn playing is like driving a fast car on an oily road."

—WINTHROP SARGEANT

Bell served the massa his favorite breakfast — canned peaches in heavy cream, hickory-smoked fried ham, scrambled eggs, grits, heated apple butter, and 144 144 buttermilk biscuits — and waited for him to ask for his second cup of coffee before speaking.

—Boston Globe.

It's a wonder he finished the first cup.



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