



Thursday 15 July, 2pm

Richard Bissill Horn Competition Final

Jonathan Musgrave piano

Richard Bissill and Richard Kennedy adjudicators

Jack Reilly horn

with **Alice Warburton** horn

Richard Bissill *Time & Space*

Alexander Scriabin *Romance*

Jean Francaix *Canon in Octave*

Volker David Kirchner *Lamento d'Orfeo*

“I had my first horn lessons when I was about 8 years old; however, I’ll be the first to admit that I may as well have not touched the thing until I was 13 – that was when I began to put some actual effort into it. This newfound passion was kick-started by two things: playing in the pit in a school production of *Les Mis*, and playing an arrangement (simplified, of course) of the finale of Mahler’s third symphony. I wasn’t particularly good in either of those projects, but it was certainly the spark I needed.

It’s difficult to say who my greatest inspiration is – it’s such a multi-faceted question! But in horn playing, I’d have to say the player I admire most of all is Hermann Baumann. He truly sings through his horn, serving the music above all else. I find his performances the most emotive of all horn players I know! I’m not sure if I would wish to emulate his sound exactly, but his ethos and approach to music is something I admire with all my heart.

My ‘Desert Island’ horn piece is without a doubt Robert Schumann’s *Adagio & Allegro*, Op. 70. It’s got everything for me, from lyrical sections of such beauty to moments of great fire and excitement. I think Schumann’s wife, Clara, sums up my feelings on the piece rather succinctly: “The piece is splendid, fresh, and passionate – just the way I like it!” Although I will admit, there was a time in my life, a few years ago, when I would listen to Scriabin’s *Romance* every night as a way to wind down before going to sleep – another piece filled to the brim with melancholy beauty!

If I wanted someone to fall in love with the horn, I would point them in the direction of Gustav Mahler. His symphonies are an encyclopaedia on the aspects of the horn, from the glory and majesty of the coda of the first, to the harsh sonorities of the sixth, to the absolutely heart-wrenching melodies to be found in the finale of the ninth. As I've said above, he made me fall in love with the horn, so I say this in the hope that others will follow suit.

I'm so early in my horn journey that I'm not sure what I would spend the money on if I were lucky enough to win. Perhaps I could put the money towards a natural horn, or simply just increasing the size of my horn music library?

Joshua Pizzofferro horn

Henri Busser *Cantecor*

Richard Bissill *By Jupiter!*

Robert Schumann *Fantasiestücke, Op. 73 (iii) Rasch und mit Feuer*

I started playing the horn when I was 12 or 13 years old and there weren't any trumpets left in the school music cupboard. I was then given the choice between trombone and horn and the horn case seemed more in proportion with my then 5'2 height than the long trombone case! I can remember playing 4th Horn in Dvořák 8 at CYM and at that moment I fell in love with playing the horn! George Woodcock was my first patient and supportive first teacher. His patience and kindness motivated me throughout the first 5 years of my horn-playing career.

My 'Desert Island' piece for great horn playing is the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble recording of *Czardas* featuring Ifor James. It's so cheesy, funny and full of energy!

If I wanted someone to fall in love with the horn, I would play Schumann's *Konzertstück* for Four Horns and Orchestra.

If I were to win the Richard Bissill Horn Competition, I would put the money towards my future horn education in my mission to earn my living doing something that I love.

Zachary Hayward horn

with **Millie Lihoreau, Niamh Rodgers and Fran Gordon** horns

Olivier Messiaen *Des Canyons Aux Étoiles: Appel Interstellaire*

Richard Bissill *Valse Noir*

Robert Schumann *Konzertstück in F major: III Sehr Lebhaft*

I started musical life as a Tenor Horn player, and was quite happy chugging along until, age 11, I heard a recording of David Pyatt playing a little piece called *Hunter's Moon* by Gilbert Vinter. It was at this point that I discovered that on the French Horn, you could make

funny buzzing sounds by hand stopping and bending notes! To any youth, that ability is quite an exciting prospect, and more than enough motivation to take up the horn! I've enjoyed a passion for the array of funny noises that come out of my horn ever since!

As a younger lad, my greatest horn idols were brought to me from the cinema – the likes of David Cripps on *Star Wars*, and Vince De Rosa and James Thatcher on just about every Hollywood soundtrack out there! When I came to enjoy orchestral music, I discovered another pool of wonderful players – I'm always moved by the playing of Nick Busch, and endlessly excited by the sound of the LSO in the late 1980s and early 1990s. All these fine players are great inspirations to me.

My 'Desert Island' horn piece is Schumann's *Konzertstück for Four Horns and Orchestra*, the last movement of which I'll be playing tonight. I love the vast number of unique colours which Schumann manages to summon from the depths of these oddly shaped brass pipes, ranging from extreme beauty and stillness to riveting excitement! The interplay between the four horn parts and the virtuosic writing in each never ceases to bring a smile to my face. There are also many wonderful recordings that do the work justice. Perhaps my favourite is the 1998 recording with John Eliot Gardiner and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique – a thrillingly exciting performance by Roger Montgomery, Gavin Edwards, Sue Dent and Robert Maskell. This rendition is made all the more impressive by the fact that they were playing on historically appropriate single F instruments from the 19th century!

If I wanted someone to fall in love with the horn, I would play them *Four Last Songs* by Strauss. At the end of the second song 'September' lies, for me, the most beautiful horn solo ever written; incredibly simple, but endlessly moving in the right hands (listen to Nick Busch play this to experience bliss).

If I were lucky enough to win, I would use the money to help fund my postgraduate studies next year. Completing a postgraduate degree should bring even more opportunities to develop as a horn player, musician and human being, but is, these days, a very expensive pursuit!

With heartfelt thanks to our anonymous donor for her ongoing support and encouragement of horn playing at Guildhall

This concert was performed on Monday 5 July 2021 in Milton Court Music Hall. It was recorded and produced live by Guildhall School's Recording & Audio Visual department.