

## Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors:

As former director of sales and marketing for Boosey & Hawkes and a bassoonist, I must respond to Jeff Lyman's review of the publication Stravinsky *Difficult Passages for Bassoon*. My involvement in this project has generally been behind the scenes until now. The idea for this publication was mine and I could think of no one more qualified than Frank Morelli, my great friend of almost 30 years, to do the incredible task of selecting the excerpts. Finally, my department handled production of the book. Therefore, I am eminently qualified to discuss this book. I am also willing to take responsibility for some of the criticism of the book, but many of Mr. Lyman's complaints are completely unfounded. While preparing his review I know that Mr. Lyman spoke with Frank, but he never contacted me to discuss any of the publishing concerns or questions he might have had. (N.B. This is not an official Boosey & Hawkes response as I am no longer associated with that firm.)

In his review, Mr. Lyman completely understates the importance of having such a volume readily available to bassoon students, teachers and artists worldwide. This was the book's *raison d'être* from the very beginning. Frank and I wanted to make as much of Stravinsky's bassoon writing available as possible, while keeping the book reasonably priced. It was intended primarily for the student market. Mr. Lyman does the IDRS readership a great disservice by concentrating on what he feels is the most important aspect of the book, that is the correctness and completeness of the material, or rather, his perceived lack thereof. Other important aspects or features of the book are not mentioned in the review. In his perfect world, the book would have included complete parts for every composition, plus comprehensive critical notes, that would have cited the reason for every "correction" already included in the musical text of the book. That would have made it about 600 pages. The resulting retail price of this magnum opus would have put it out of the reach of its intended market, thereby destroying any chance for B&H to turn a profit.

Oops, I said the "P" word. Remember that B&H is a business that is tasked with generating profits for its shareholders. This was an extremely large project, as far as B&H's Printed Music Division was concerned. Most publications from the New York office are \$2 choral octavos. Occasionally

this office produces a band work for sale, or perhaps a study score for a work from one of its serious composers. But with regard to size of actual publication, number of pages to be selected, engraved, proofread, and printed, this was the second largest publication produced in the last 10 years. As a result there were many significant costs involved which determined the final retail price; editorial fees, engraving costs, proofreading expenses, royalties, artwork, printing and marketing costs.

It was never our intent to prepare a "critical edition" for this book, as this was economically impossible. Had there been one to use, we would have certainly made every attempt to secure permissions from the appropriate parties. But one did not exist and, as Mr. Lyman notes, a Stravinsky Critical Edition does not appear likely. This was one of my first proposals to the B&H London office back in 1990 and turned down then as too difficult a project and probably not very profitable! Therefore, we had to use the scores and parts as they were available to us and then, where certain corrections were known, include them. More on these corrections later.

Mr. Lyman laments that certain works were not included. He must not understand the publishing process otherwise he would not have made these statements. B&H's Legal Affairs office contacted all of the third parties involved, to request worldwide permission for the desired excerpts. Not all parties responded or gave permission. For example, we never received a reply from Forberg, the owners of the *Symphony in E-Flat*. As a result, we could not include that particularly nasty little solo that goes up to high E-flat! Worldwide permission was also not received for the 1945 *Firebird*. That is why it is not in the book.

In case anyone didn't notice, and apparently Mr. Lyman did not, all the music has been completely re-engraved, and very beautifully by John Forbes, one of the finest engravers/editors in the business today. Other recent excerpt books have simply offered reprinted rental parts. While easier to produce, this method is not aesthetically pleasing to the eye. A Stravinsky excerpt book prepared in this manner would have included works from different publishers, copyists, eras and engraving styles, etc. It would have looked hideous.

Proofreading this book was a major task. Frank proofread first and second drafts and caught many errors. In addition to writing a wonderful

preface about Stravinsky and orchestration, which Mr. Lyman does not discuss at all, Robert Craft was given third drafts to proofread. He started on this massive undertaking and unfortunately, about half way through, decided that he would not have either the time or the energy to complete this task. He submitted what corrections he found and they were entered into the materials. It was he who instructed the engraver to remove a footnote about the *Firebird* D/D-flat. In fact, if you look at page 48, there is an asterisk after *Berceuse* which should have been deleted too, since there was now no footnote. We originally intended to say in that footnote that the 1945 version specified the now infamous D-flat. (I have my own theories on that topic, too, but that's for discussion elsewhere!)

One last feature of the book, probably not recognized by most people is its special binding. If you have a copy, open it up to a center page and look at what happens to the binding. Notice the space between the cover and the signatures. The signatures are held together by glue and an extra piece of cover material. This new binding is called lay-flat and it allows for a thick book to lie flat when opened. How many people out there have a Stadio book in 5 or 6 sections? Raise your hand.

Is the book perfect? Absolutely not. Readers would be surprised to learn how many errors find their way into printed publications. Was it a missed opportunity? Perhaps, but the other choice would have been not to do such a book at all because of the costs and difficulties involved. To me, that would have been more of a missed opportunity. Do the perceived problems ruin the book? Not for me. And it shouldn't for anyone out there either. Does Mr. Lyman really need to take 60% of his column space to complain about B&H and to tell us how much he knows about Stravinsky? I don't think so. As the main copyright owner of Stravinsky's music, who else but Boosey & Hawkes could have produced such a book? Answer me that! No one else could because B&H would not give permission to any other publisher to include so much B&H material and rightfully so.

There has been discussion about this issue on the two double reed lists. Frank has pointed out other omissions and corrections to the review. Others have chimed in on both sides of the issue. I think the time has come to put all this behind. If you truly love Stravinsky's music, Mr. Lyman, I would suggest that you prepare an errata sheet, to be published in a future issue of *The Double Reed* and/or on the net. You might also submit it to B&H. If the book is ever reprinted (they will

have to sell 1,000 copies and fast – there's the "P" word again!) they might be incorporated into the reprint. But keep the type small. You only have two blank pages in the back of the book!

Sincerely,  
Harry G. Searing

Dear Ron,

It is truly unfortunate that Jeffrey Lyman's article in *The Double Reed*, vol. 21(3), ostensibly a review of my excerpt book for bassoon and contra bassoon entitled *Stravinsky: Difficult Passages*, is in reality almost exclusively an editorial about one topic. To be sure, his observations concerning inconsistencies and inaccuracies in some of Stravinsky's works are both valid and important. To the extent that these questions relate to the book he was supposed to have reviewed, his criticisms, although sometimes misleading, are relevant. Where Mr. Lyman fell far short was in his failure to give a balanced account in a spirit of fairness appropriate to this (or any) forum.

I was given the incredible opportunity to help create this book by my friend, Harry Searing, who by the way, is highly respected for his phenomenal bassoon and contra bassoon playing as well as for his expertise in the field of music publishing. He has also submitted a letter to the Editors of *The Double Reed* and it is my intention to avoid repeating his many fine observations.

Whenever possible I examined both parts and scores to the forty-seven works included in the book and referred to Stravinsky's recordings. This book contains 184 newly engraved pages of music. It is safe to say that more than 150 of these pages are being made available for purchase in this form for the first time. Mr. Lyman is both inaccurate and unkind in saying that only one mistake in all this literature was corrected. There were many discrepancies between parts and scores that were dealt with.

The choice of the term "selected by" (as opposed to "edited by") found on the title page was carefully chosen to describe my involvement. I called upon my experience as a performer, teacher and student of the bassoon when selecting the excerpts for this massive undertaking as well as in helping to design their ultimate presentation. I accept criticism and responsibility for wrong notes that I might have caught. What I am greatly disappointed and disheartened by is Mr. Lyman's omission of almost all other significant details concerning this unprecedented publication.

There are many important features that set this book apart from previous excerpt books, features that are routinely mentioned in IDRS reviews but were omitted by Mr. Lyman. Among the noteworthy elements deserving of mention are the following:

- *Difficult Passages* is also a comprehensive contra bassoon excerpt book,
- There are many pages of multiple parts in score form for section practice,
- Each excerpt includes the composer's metronome markings,
- Rehearsal or measure numbers are provided for each excerpt,
- Indications such as "+ oboes" or "bassoons alone" are given for each excerpt to help orient the player,
- Clear indication is provided for where each excerpt ends,
- For the first time, cue lines indicating parts played by other instruments or sections are provided for selected excerpts (found in more than a dozen works) including the openings of *The Rite of Spring*, *Firebird* and the *Octet*, as well as the aria "No word from Tom" from *The Rake's Progress*.

Also, Mr. Lyman is incorrect in describing my participation in the series of Stravinsky recordings made by Robert Craft, which included the Orchestra of St. Luke's. I am not a member of that fine orchestra. I did take part in the recording of several works of Stravinsky conducted by Robert Craft that were included on CDs which also contained works recorded by St. Luke's. In addition, several years ago I recorded "No word from Tom" sung by Dawn Upshaw with David Zinman conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's when their outstanding first bassoonist, Dennis Godburn, was unavailable. It is he and others who deserve recognition for the excellent playing of the orchestral works heard on St. Luke's Stravinsky CDs conducted by Robert Craft. In Mr. Lyman's effort to dramatize his criticism of the book he did a disservice to those fine artists.

Finally, Mr. Lyman fails to mention that he intends to give "a presentation on the state of Stravinsky's parts". Apparently he plans to publish this as well. Perhaps his own vested interest has something to do with the monothematic nature of his article about *Difficult Passages*.

More and more, musicians are purchasing books, music and equipment by catalog and over the Internet. Because this greatly reduces the opportunity for individuals to examine items prior to purchase, it is imperative that any publication

be described to the reader in a way that will be informative and balanced. Mr. Lyman did not do this. I am proud of what was accomplished with this unparalleled publication and will do my best, with the help of those who point out inaccuracies, to improve the book in the future. I trust my description of the book will be useful to my fellow bassoonists in determining its value to them.

*Sincerely, Frank Morelli*  
Jan. 24, 1999

**About the writer: Frank Morelli** studied with Stephen Maxym at the Manhattan School of Music and the Juilliard School, and was the first bassoonist to be awarded a doctorate by the Juilliard School. He is principal bassoonist of the New York City Opera, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the American Composers Orchestra. He serves on the faculties of the Juilliard School, the Manhattan School of Music and the Yale University School of Music.

Dear Editors,

I think this is the first time I have written to you, but I have written many, many times to Lowry and once or twice to Norma.

Thanks for publishing my photo in the section "Oboists in the News", but you crazy American people mistook an Argentine tango for a Spanish "flamenco"! Where did you get this idea? I'll try to make things a little more clear. The photo belongs to "Quinteto de Vientos de Bahia Blanca", called as well "Quinteto de Vientos de la Orquesta Sinfonica de Bahia Blanca". The members are: Gabriela Rodriguez, flute; Carlos Visnevitski, oboe; Diego Casoni, clarinet; Cesar Inchausti, horn; and Zully Alvarez, bassoon.

We play the regular repertory but add our own arrangements of Argentine popular music, such as tangos, milongas, zambas, etc. On that occasion, the Quintet invited the two dancers to dance some of our arrangements, and people were so happy that we repeated this strange combination in several theaters.

This couple of young dancers, Sergio and Adriana, have visited the USA three times, since Bahia Blanca is sister city to Jacksonville, Florida, and we have a system of cultural exchange (students, dancers, musicians, and so on).

So Daniel, I am glad to meet via e-mail and surely we will shake hands in Buenos Aires in 2000.

*Carlos Visnivetski*  
*Bahia Blanca*  
*Provincia de Buenos Aires, Republica Argentina*

Dear Editors,

I noticed an error in Ferdinand Del Negro's dates in the listing of the Honorary Members in the *Double Reed Journal*. Del was born in November of 1896 and died in late April or early May of 1986. The *Double Reed* lists his dates as 1897-1986. I recently visited his grave located in the Locustwood Cemetery on Route 70, Haddonfield, NJ. Enclosed is a photo of his grave marker that shows his dates. The error may have occurred in computing his birth year if one used his age at death which was 89.



I studied for many years with Del and he was a great teacher and friend. His lessons went beyond music and dealt with many aspects of life. To gain his wisdom in my formative years was a great blessing. I miss him dearly but his many words of advice still come to mind as I face problems today.

*All the best,  
Bill Woodward  
Greensburg, Pennsylvania*

Dear Editors,

As a many-year member of IDRS, I've watched the list of Stolen Oboes and Bassoons and always wondered if any are ever found or returned.

Well, what a surprise to arrive home last night (March 4, 1999) and find my household in an uproar over a large article in our local weekly paper, entitled "Bassoon found at Finley Jr. High."

My junior high ... the school I was going to for a 6th grade parents meeting at 8 p.m. that night!!!

At the meeting, I found out that the assistant principal had played on the missing bassoon while she attended Huntington High (same school district) from which she graduated in 1964! As I've e-mailed a few of my junior high and high school friends today, we've all wondered how the instrument found its way into our district and marvel at how long it's been there. Also, knowing how many of us played around on the instrument, too, is weird.

Mr. Waterhouse, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at an IDRS convention many years ago, will be visiting the school on Friday, March 19th to get his instrument and play a concert for the students. What an honor for the school/district to host such a marvelous bassoonist! And for such a monumental event!!

Of course, we've all commented, "wonder what the condition of the instrument is after all these years as a junior and senior high school student-use instrument?" The other buzz is, "do you think he'll donate it back to the schools?"

Best regards to you both from a member who keeps connected by *The Double Reed!*

*Beatrice Baim Clemons*