

Hello, everyone!

Last week, we were treated to a presentation on the horn by Garrett Law. Garrett is the fourth horn of the Omaha Symphony and the second horn of the South Dakota Symphony and was kind enough to join us in between his rehearsals for the Omaha Symphony's first in-person concert since the pandemic. Symphony orchestras generally have between 2 and 5 horn players in the section depending on the piece. Some pieces, like Mahler symphonies, require more. Horn sections often have two players rotating on the highest part (Horn 1) to prevent player fatigue. Garrett explained that the horn has a reflective sound as opposed to a direct sound like a trumpet or trombone, which is why the instrument bell is seemingly pointed backward.

Garrett shared that the horn as we know it was developed from hunting horns. Hunters would use horn calls to communicate with one another out in the fields. The instrument initially did not have any keys to change pitches, but rather crooks to switch in and out. By switching a crook, the player could have a different fundamental pitch. He demonstrated this by playing a sequence on the fundamental pitch F, then repeated the same sequence by pressing down one key (imitating what changing the crook would do) and playing on the fundamental pitch E flat. At some point in history, a horn player discovered that they could change the pitch by adjusting their hand position inside the bell, and thus the desire for actual keys was born. The horn used to be called the French horn in the US until the 1930s. There are many theories as to why this moniker existed, including that the style of the horn mimicked the style of French hunting horns, the British thought the instrument was French, and that a French composer was the first to use the instrument in operas and in an opera pit.

Garrett played three pieces for us: Bach's Cello Suite No. 3 (Bouree 1&2), Mozart's Concerto No. 2 in E flat K.417, and the mysterious Irish Folk Song #24. Each piece had a different aspect of the horn's sound or technical ability on display. Thank you, Garrett!

**This week**

For this week's meeting, we will be having a DJ hour. Please send your requests (with a YouTube link if there's visual listening involved) to Chrysa or Julianne by noon Pacific on Thursday so we can assemble the playlist. Requests can be favorite songs or just something you've listened to recently.

Until Thursday,

Chrysa & Julianne