

Volume 2, Issue 3



IHS 57, 2025

Alphorn Association of North America

<http://www.alphornassociation.org/>

*The Official
Newsletter of the
AANA*

Welcome to our 3rd issue of 2025. This is our special issue reporting on the International Horn Society Symposium 57 – “Heritage Horns” – and the exceptional participation of the alphorn community. Thank you for reading, and if you have any suggestions, short articles for future issues or updated event information, drop me a line at rosebone@icloud.com !



Bill Rose, Editor

IHS 57 James Madison University “Heritage Horns”

The fourth annual Windy City Workshop was held May 14-17, based at Lake Forest College on Chicago’s north shore. Natalie Grana, Shawn Hagen, and Laura Nelson conducted warmup and fundamentals. The alphorn community was exceptionally well represented at the International Horn Society Symposium 57, June 24th through 28th, 2025, on the campus of James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. This edition of the symposium drew horn players and alphorn players from all over the world.



William Rose, editor

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The theme of this symposium, chosen by host Ian Zoom (professor of horn at JMU), was “Heritage Horns.” In Zoom’s words: “It is vital to engage with the legacy of the horn’s pedagogical history, performance traditions and styles, instrumental design and development ingenuities, and how the great performers have

continued to evolve their technique to achieve those indelible moments of musical artistry and connection.”

As a distinct community of musicians on the alphorn (which incorporates musicians who perform professionally and in the amateur world on trumpet, horn, trombone, euphonium and tuba, as well as those who focus solely on the alphorn and büchel), we are grateful for the recognition and inclusion of our community in the overall structure of this conference.

Shawn Hagen

There were many sessions, lectures and performances, that featured the alphorn, starting from Day 1. Contributing Artist Recital #1 featured alphornist Shawn Hagen (25-year hornist with the premier bands of the U.S Army in Washington, D.C., and recipient of the historic honor of being first alphorn soloist at the U.S. Capitol) in the premiere of James Naigus’ *Luna* for alphorn and fixed media. [*See later

in this newsletter for a review of this work.] Commissioned by Shawn, he set the emotional tone of the work by reciting the poem which he chose as the inspiration for Naigus’ composition. His solo performance was masterful, showcasing a beautiful rich sound and evocative musical mood.

Shawn also led two other sessions, as well as conducting: “Drop in and Warm up: a mindful start to your playing day” on Wednesday early morning; the interactive lecture “With Ease and Intention: Mindfulness Tools for a Musical Life” on Thursday; as well as directing the “U.S. Joint Services Horn Ensemble” in concert on Saturday. Congratulations to Shawn on your accomplishments!





Peggy DeMers

On Thursday's Contributing Artist Recital #9, Peggy DeMers (author and translator of Gassmann's *The Little Alphorn Book* in English, a highlight in the field of Alphorn music) led a program of contemporary and traditional alphorn music, performed by "Midwest Alphorns & Friends." This group was literally a "who's who" of alphorn players, including: Robert Brazelton, Tony Brazelton, Tobi Cisin, Peggy DeMers, James Downs, Shawn Hagen, Brandi Jones, Lindsey Jones, Barbara Myckowiak, Brian Priebe, Sonja Gray Reynolds, William Rose, Erik Schaelling and Nozumu Segawa; with Josh Sheppard, percussion.

The program for this concert:

There and Back (for Peggy DeMers) (Premiere)* Douglas Hill
Soloist, Peggy DeMers

Afro-Alp William Rose
Conducted by William Rose

Rouge ce jour, juste avant la pluie Unknown

Tiger Rag arr. Berthold Schick



[*Please see the review by Dr. DeMers of *There and Back*, by Douglas Hill in the next issue of the AANA Newsletter]

Friday morning, taking place on the quad outside the School of Music, Peggy DeMers led the lecture/hands-on session “Exploring the Alphorn: the Ancestral Voice of the Modern Horn.” Over twenty-five instruments were in use during this session, with instruments provided by the Alphorn Institute, Silver and Brass, Alpensong, and the McNeese State University Alphorn Ensemble. Over 40 conference attendees participated in the session. Thanks go to Dr. DeMers for her leadership of this session, as well as Bill Rose, Tony Brazelton, Rob Brazelton, Erik Schaelling, Sonja Reynolds and Brandi and Lindsey Jones. The session started early and, to accommodate all of the participants, lasted until approximately 12:30pm.



Sonja Reynolds/ High Desert CORtette

Friday afternoon Sonja Reynolds/High Desert CORtette presented the Lecture/Recital: “Hands Across the Sea.”

Members shared family stories and histories, with accompanying musical selections to illustrate their stories. Two works for alphorn quartet were included in this session: *Choral für Reinach*, by Robert Kornli; and *Alfons Polka*, by Berthold Schick.



There were several ad hoc playing sessions occurring during the week: an evening session with the Alphorn Institute on the quad which drew almost 20 players; and a sunset session on the peak of Mt. Massanutten with Peggy DeMers, Barb Myckowiak and Bill Rose. In each case, the sound of the alphorn served as a “people magnet,” to draw an impromptu audience, and interest people in trying the horn.

Alphorn instrument makers, mouthpiece makers, music publishers/distributors, instrument/mouthpiece distributors and the Alphorn Association of North America were also well represented at the Symposium. In attendance in the exhibit rooms were: AlpenSong/Silver and Brass; Hagen Mindfulness, LLC; The Alphorn Institute; Reynolds Alphorns; and Treble C Music. Their presence at the conference is an important element in increasing the visibility of the alphorn community.





All-in-all it was a successful week for the alphorn world in Harrisburg, Virginia at James Madison University for the 57th edition of the International Horn Society Symposium. Congratulations and thanks go to all the participants from the alphorn community who participated leading sessions, performing, and presenting publications, instruments and mouthpieces.

editor *William G. "Bill" Rose*

A Review of "Luna" by James Naigus, for alphorn/natural horn/horn and fixed media

"LUNA [is] a wonderful new work for Alphorn and fixed media by James Naigus, based on a Mizuta Masahide haiku "Barn's burned down, now I see the moon," quoted from Shawn Hagen. *Luna* was commissioned by Shawn Hagen and premiered on the opening day of the International Horn Society Symposium 57 at James Madison University in Harrisburg, VA. Its written range: C2 - G4 (sounding F1-C4); the format: solo instrument in F (alphorn, natural horn, horn) with fixed media. All files are available as downloads directly from James Naigus: <https://jamesnaigus.com/purchase-music#horn-and-fixed-media>.

There are two different .pdf solo parts provided: a standard single line solo part and a two staff score, with a sketch score of the accompaniment and the solo part included. Written notation is easy to read, with no obvious misprints. Multiple versions of the accompaniment part are also provided: click track, click track with accompaniment, accompaniment .wav files at A=440 and 20 cents sharp, and accompaniment .mp3 files at A=440 and 20 cents sharp. The files at 20 cents

sharp accommodate alphorns and other instruments which are tuned to a slightly sharp European pitch.

The notation of the solo includes the use of 20th century indeterminate rhythmic notation and pitch bends; polyrhythmic interaction between the solo part and the accompaniment is extensive. The tessitura of the solo part is moderately high; there is substantial use of large (over two octave) compound intervals, and the solo requires that the performer be accurate in large leaps both directions from lower and upper register and has advanced auditory and rhythmic skills.

The accompaniment part is very “orchestral” in sound; *Luna* is accessible to the audience member as well as rewarding for the performer. This is an excellent addition to the alphorn repertoire; over time it should be embraced as a standard work for performances and recitals. (WGR)

•for submissions to the AANA Newsletter:

please submit your article to Bill Rose rosebone@icloud (submission guidelines – three to four paragraphs, and anywhere from two to four pictures of the event).

•for Submissions to the Google Calendar of events:

Contact Brandi Jones sierrahorns@gmail.com

•Google Calendar of events link: [Calendar](#)

Cheers, and Happy Blowing!

Bill Rose

