Ultimate Low Horn

Music of Bordogni, Gallay, and De Pre to Develop Low Range Facility and Characteristic Playing

Edited by John Ericson
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Preface

It is not a secret; every horn teacher knows that developing tone and facility in the low range is the key to everything for an advancing hornist.

*Ultimate Low Horn* reflects a long search for practical, effective materials to develop the low range. This collection begins with 22 of the Bordogni etudes in a lower key than seen in the popular version for trombone arranged by Rochut. Eleven of the 12 Studies for Second Horn, Op. 57 of Gallay follow and the volume concludes with 17 of the low horn etudes by De Pre.

The Bordogni etudes which open this volume follow the same numbering and content scheme as the more familiar Rochut version, but with the goal of playing them in the written key a fourth lower than that seen in the trombone version. This was intentional as not only are these studies now in a more effective range than the standard trombone version, but also if played on horn in F they are at the same sounding pitch level as if played from the standard Rochut version on trombone or tuba, with which they may be performed. To facilitate learning the etudes in this low range I have paired each low etude with the same etude one octave higher. Besides aiding the learning of the low range version this section also puts these studies in a range that actually very effectively works on the “break” range, and as such they are also useful for working through embouchure problems in this range.

In the Bordogni I would encourage students to approach these etudes as musical, lyric studies (which is a considerable challenge initially as the range is so low), in the De Pre I would encourage a more literal approach to dynamics and style, and in the Gallay I would encourage aiming for a light but characteristic orchestral tone and style.

I would also strongly encourage students and teachers to choose etudes from each portion of this volume when working on the low register rather than work on the entire book from beginning to end.

The specifics of how to arrive at the best low range production tend to be highly individualized but my general advice is to think of the embouchure being very open and fairly firm, keep the tonguing low and forward in the mouth, and be willing to explore “breaking” the embouchure with the goal being results.

Now get busy and build your low range.

John Ericson
Allegro moderato

No. 2

mf con grazia

p

f

mf

p

mf

p

dolce e leggeramente

f

mp

Allegro risoluto

No. 3

f con forza

p