



I've been back to New York less frequently lately, though I somehow thought I'd see Jerry again. But I missed him and will miss him.

-Lydia Busler-Blais is a teacher, performer, and composer in Montpelier VT

Jerry had a magical way of teaching. It surprised me in the end to hear myself. In 1981 I studied horn at the Manhattan School of Music with Joel Winter. Joel was known as the "routine man." I worked on my routine two-three hours a day. When I began my junior year, I decided I was pretty good at the mechanics of horn playing, a horn playing robot. Now I needed help making music. Joel sent me to Jerry.

The day I met Jerry Ashby changed my life as a horn player forever. I met him in the locker room of the New York Philharmonic and had all of my lessons there. I was a struggling student. He charged me only \$25 per hour lesson. Jerry had a heart of gold. We worked on Strauss 1 for an entire year. It was as if he was teaching me how to climb a mountain. We talked about what it meant to move from the first note to the next, which "rock" was an important one to aim for and why. Even though there were so many little stones along the way, not all of them meant the same thing. They were just "stepping stones" to the next landing. He explained music in a way that I could understand, and it was exciting.

I was exhausted after each lesson, as if I had actually been climbing a mountain. He was always supportive. No matter how tired my chops felt, or how overwhelmed I was feeling, he pushed me through with a firm but gentle voice, "Do *not* give up!" He opened my mind to the colors, textures, adventures, and stories that will always allow me to turn stones into music. He will be deeply missed.

- Nancy-Lee (Wildowsky) Mauger plays horn in the Boston area

I am deeply saddened on hearing about the loss of Jerome Ashby. I first became aware of his talent when he played with the Johnstown (PA) Symphony Orchestra, in the late '80's (I was still living my "dual" life as a hornist and cellist at the time). It was so wonderful to be right there in the cello section and experience his rendition of Strauss 1, up close!

I was excited to see him on broadcasts with the New York Philharmonic, and know that I had the rare opportunity to perform with such a fine performer and person.

- Terrisa Ziek is Horn Instructor at Emporia (KS) State University

Caswell Neal (1923-2007) by Dennis Houghton

Last December we lost a genuine musician and true student of the horn. Caswell Neal earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Stanford University, not in Music but in Electrical Engineering. The horn was a lifelong passion and avocation for this brilliant man. My wife Karen and I were fortunate to meet him in 1978, while rehearsing with the Downey Symphony (CA). One of Karen's first memories is of the Principal Horn

player reaching over to adjust her music stand – she wanted it up but Cas wanted it down – this guy really had the nerve! At one point during that rehearsal, Karen reached for her pencil to mark the music – Cas told her: "don't write it - just remember it!" Needless to say, things didn't start off smoothly, but we soon came to admire this man's marvelous control and musicianship.

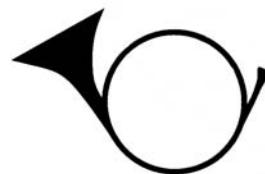
Cas received his basic musical training in the San Francisco Bay area. His first teacher was Herman Trutner, then solo hornist of the San Francisco Symphony. In turn, Trutner had been a student of Anton Horner, solo horn of the Philadelphia Orchestra and founder of the "German-American" school of horn playing. Later, Neal studied with other former Horner students, including Wendell Hoss, Gale Robinson, Sinclair Lott, and Attilio De Palma. De Palma had preceded Trutner as Principal Horn in San Francisco and was famed for his *cantilena* style of solo playing, popularized by Enrico Caruso.

Neal pursued musical studies at Stanford University under Sandor Salgo, violinist and conductor. During this time he served as Principal Horn of the Oakland and San Jose Symphonies, and played extra horn with the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Symphony, under Pierre Monteux.

His academic studies were just as successful as his musical pursuits. At Stanford, Cas developed an equation that significantly simplified difficult calculations – today a plaque with his name can be seen outside the Mathematics building.

He married Elizabeth DiCarlo (a pianist and school teacher) and started a family in the early fifties, while still in school. To help cover the rent, he worked the night shift in a mental hospital and a day job in a shoe store. Upon completing the Master's degree, new job opportunities led him to Southern California. In 1960 the family, now with five daughters, moved to Los Angeles. At this time he also began work at USC toward a Doctoral degree in Electrical Engineering.

The Cold War was in full swing in the early sixties and created strong demand for scientists. Cas used his math prowess to win a job with Hughes Aircraft where he pioneered an improved "artificial horizon" for military aircraft, and helped to develop other avionics technology. In the world of aerospace engineering, contracts were won and lost with regularity, and his engineering talent followed the industry. Cas was employed, at various times, by Boeing, Lockheed, and finally North American Rockwell. In the 1970s he was the head design engineer for the top-secret low-level radar system on the B-1





Cas performed with numerous regional orchestras in Southern California for many years, including the Beach Cities, Downey, and Rio-Hondo Orchestras. These groups were training orchestras as well as musical outlets for the LA studio players. His contacts in these orchestras led to additional playing opportunities. As a free-lance musician, Cas also played with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and as Principal Horn under Carmen Dragon, Henry Mancini, Elmer Bernstein, and others in the film and TV industry. Cas also arrived in the LA area in time to be a founding member of the Los Angeles Horn Club.

Like many extremely talented people, Cas could be strongly opinionated. James Decker recalls, "I'll never forget the [Los Angeles] Horn Club rehearsal where Cas argued with Gunther Schuller. Gunther had composed a piece requiring the horns to play in quarter steps and Cas argued at length that there was no such thing as a quarter tone. Gunther then proceeded to instruct Cas on the technique for producing them."

Not one to keep his feelings to himself, Cas would let you know if you let him down during rehearsal. Some infamous quotes include (to a stubborn section player): "Why don't you find somebody who likes you?" And to his fumbling second horn: "You're like an Albatross around my neck."

His best friend and fellow horn enthusiast Charley Mack recalls Cas' deep resonant playing: "He played full bore and encouraged me to really blow through the horn." Cas owned several DeLosa mouthpieces (as played by the Philadelphia horn section). He sounded marvelous on the deep funnel cup that most of us couldn't play. He was also a collector of rare Horner-model Kruspe horns, especially the nickel-silver version. I know that at one time he owned at least ten of them!

Cas was a listener who really studied music – he used to record his performances (even the community orchestras) with his big reel-to-reel tape recorder for later scrutiny. We would arrive thirty minutes before a performance and find Cas up in the auditorium's control room checking his microphone levels!

He loved the music of the great romantic composers, especially Brahms and Dvorak. He studied the phrasing of singers like Pavarotti and Sinatra, gleaned what he could from their stylings. This in-depth study culminated in two recordings: *Virtuoso Romantic Horn Masterpieces* (1980), accompanied by Armen Guzelimian (USC piano faculty), and *Paul Hindemith: Two Sonatas* (1982), recorded with Zita Carno (pianist for the LA Philharmonic). These were produced by Desto Records and sold commercially through classical outlets. Sadly, they have not been converted to the CD format.

Cas remained active as a hornist until April of 1999 when a severe stroke ended his horn playing. The costs of his medical care eventually forced him to sell some of his prized Kruspe horns, but he continued to be a listener until the end.

Although an engineer by trade, music and the love of the horn were the driving force in his life. Those of us who knew him were inspired by his dedication, perseverance, and high standards of musicianship. He encouraged us to be true students of the horn, always striving for excellence, and to revere the horn's sound.

Dennis Houghton currently repairs, modifies, and sells new and used horns from his shop in Keller TX (see his advertisement on p. 15), and performs in the Wichita Falls Symphony.

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