

Frances A. Jones

# The Alphorn through the Eyes of the Classical Composer

SERIES IN MUSIC

## About the author

**Dr Frances A. Jones** has over forty years of experience as a freelance professional classical musician, primarily as an oboist and French horn player. She has been a leading professional alphorn player in the UK since 2005, and she is regularly engaged as a tutor on international alphorn courses in the UK, Austria, and Switzerland. She has given lecture recitals and broadcasts about the alphorn internationally in English, French, and German.

*“Frances Jones’s groundbreaking book is a detailed, ambitious and essential contribution to our knowledge of the alphorn and its contexts. Written by an expert in the field, whose work is informed by international performance experience, it includes plentiful images and unpublished musical works. It offers a valuable and enlightening perspective on the semiotic identity of the alphorn in western art music.*

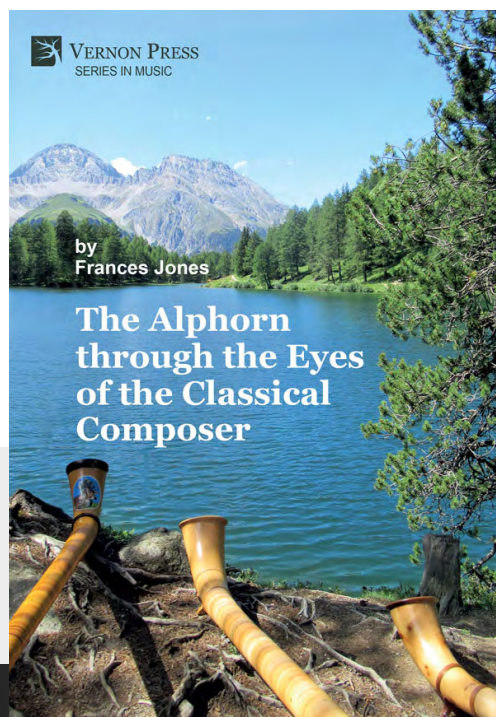
*The text is written with precision and persuasively situates the alphorn within its various geographical and cultural contexts whilst navigating its distinct identity against other instruments based on the harmonic series. It will be of benefit not only to alphorn enthusiasts but to the wider fields of musicology and historically informed performance practice. It is a distinguished contribution to knowledge of the alphorn and its heritage.”*

**Dr Simon Desbruslais**  
School of Arts, University of Hull

## Summary

‘The Alphorn through the Eyes of the Classical Composer’ is the first and definitive book to be written about the alphorn in English. It has been written with English-speaking readers in mind, as it examines the extensive interest of primarily non-Swiss composers, writers and artists in the alphorn as a symbol of the Alps, the influence and significance of the alphorn in culture, literature and the arts across the globe, and the ways in which the instrument has been specifically utilised by the Swiss as the iconic representation of their country. This book also explores the use of the musical language of the alphorn call, to ascertain why and how such references as those of Berlioz or Beethoven can convey so much meaning. Dr Jones seeks out what it is that a composer brings into the concert hall, the theatre, the opera house, the church, or the drawing room by such a quotation, to what heritage they are referring, and upon what basis there are grounds for an assumption that such a reference will be understood by an audience.

The book, which will be of interest to researchers in Swiss cultural studies and ethnomusicology, builds on Dr Jones’s research and PhD thesis. The six chapters deal with a variety of topics, including a basic introduction to the alphorn and an exploration of the promotion of the instrument as the symbol of Switzerland, as well as the reasons behind symbolic references to alphorn motifs by European and British composers in concert repertoire, jazz and film.



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