

# Holger Fransman

Biography

## Biography

*Holger Fransman is regarded as the father of the Finnish school of horn playing. He was the last pupil of Karl Steigler in Vienna. He joined the Helsinki Philharmonic as the third hornist in 1932, and was principal horn from 1937 until 1967. He was one of the most outstanding Finnish orchestral musicians, but perhaps even more influential as a teacher at the Sibelius Academy (1931-1973).*

*Fransman put horn playing in Finland on the map internationally. His legacy is preserved by at least four generations of pupils and the pupils of pupils. He was the first Finn to go abroad to study with international greats, in the 1930s. While studying in Vienna, he lived with Steigler's nephew, Gottfried von Freiberg, who succeeded Steigler as principal horn of the Vienna Philharmonic in 1932.*

*"There's no doubt that the Viennese ideals that Frani brought back with him are still maintained here," writes Markus Maskuniitty. "For instance, the fact that we play a good deal on the horn in F, whereas elsewhere in Europe they primarily use the B-flat horn. We go more for that dark, rounded sound and pay particular attention to the roundedness and softness of legato technique."*

*Esa-Pekka Salonen studied horn with Fransman, starting at age 11 and working up to the Oscar Franz Concert Études. He revered Fransman, hoping that one day he would be a great horn player, worthy of his teacher, and they remained close friends even after Salonen went on to become a conductor and composer. "When I was asked to write a piece for solo horn for the International Holger Fransman Memorial Competition (commissioned by the Lieksa Brass Week, Finland, July 2000)," writes Salonen, "I agreed right away. I decided to write my own Concert Étude, and thus create a little homage to my teacher, who in fact was like a grandfather to me. In this piece I treat the horn as a virtuoso instrument, capable of acrobatics as well as the idiomatic melodic expression. In a way, I wrote the piece for the great horn player I never became."*

*Another student was Olavi Vikman (1931-2006), a recipient of the IHS Punto Award in 2002.*

*Fransman wrote about the brass band tradition in Finland for Brass Bulletin and the Historic Brass Society Journal.*

*The Finnish Horn Club honored Holger Fransman with a "Maestro Del Corno" record that includes horn music arranged, conducted, and commissioned by Fransman.*

*Fransman was the first Honorary Member of the Finnish Horn Club (1973). He was elected an IHS Honorary Member in 1978.*

*From:  
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