

# NoteWorthy

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IWBC



[www.myiwbc.org](http://www.myiwbc.org)

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## From the President

Greetings from 30,000 feet! As I return home from an amazing weekend of brass banding in Cincinnati, I am reminded of the importance of musical camaraderie. An atmosphere not all too unfamiliar, I love leaving conferences feeling recharged and inspired. I find no greater passion than sitting amongst friends while enjoying an emotionally moving and musically invigorating performance. And after my weekend, I'm even more fired up for our 7th IWBC in Kalamazoo.

We're within 3 months of the conference and boy, are the details coming together spectacularly. Lin Foulk and Deanna Swoboda continue their tireless efforts to make this IWBC one for the record books. Plans for the conference include three IWBC commissioned world premieres by female composers, including Victoria Bond, Libby Larsen and Tania León. Our guest artists and ensembles are lined up as well, including performances by Karin Bliznik (Atlanta Symphony Orchestra), Kiku Collins (commercial recording artist), Genghis Barbie, Amanda Davidson (San Antonio Symphony), Jen Krupa (DIVA & U.S. Navy Commodores), David Vining (Body Mapping specialist), Mizuho Kojima (International Euphonium Soloist), the Athena Brass Band and our very own Monarch Brass. Whew. What a lineup!

I hope you've made plans to attend and if not, please visit [www.iwbc2012.org](http://www.iwbc2012.org) right away to register. Kalamazoo is an exciting town with a beautiful campus at Western Michigan University. I hope to see you there!

Remember, the IWBC exists to "educate, develop, support & inspire all women brass musicians." I invite everyone to help serve and support this mission. The IWBC exists for you. Let's help keep that spirit of camaraderie and musical excellence going!

Kelly Watkins, President  
International Women's Brass Conference



Samantha Keehn

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Leah Schuman

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## IWBC President

**Kelly Watkins** currently serves as a member of the United States Coast Guard Band. She is also Principal Solo Cornet with the New England Brass Band. Prior to joining the Coast Guard Band in 2003, Kelly performed with the Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Peoria Symphony Orchestra, Opera Illinois and the Illinois State University Faculty Brass Quintet. She has been a prizewinner at the solo competitions hosted by the ITG, IWBC and the National Trumpet Competition. Before becoming President, Kelly served as the IWBC's Executive Director. She earned her B.M. from Northwestern State University of Louisiana and M.M. from Illinois State University.



## Co-Editors



Jennifer Marotta currently teaches trumpet at Kennesaw State University, while actively performing in Atlanta and across the country. Prior to living in Atlanta, Jennifer was a trumpet/cornet player with the "President's Own" United States Marine Band for four years. She regularly performs with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Opera, Atlanta Ballet, Grand Teton Music Festival, Chicago Music of the Baroque, Georgia Symphony Orchestra, and the Columbus (GA) Symphony. She has also performed with the Indianapolis Symphony, the Chicago Civic Orchestra, the Rochester Philharmonic, and the New World Symphony. Marotta received her B.M. from Northwestern University and M.M. from DePaul University.

**Raquel Rodriquez** is the Assistant Professor of Trumpet at Northern Kentucky University. Raquel is a versatile musician having appeared as a clinician, soloist, and chamber musician throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and China. Raquel was a performing member of the internationally known Synergy Brass Quintet in their 2008-09 national tour and performed in over 200 concerts and clinics across the nation. Dr. Rodriquez received her BM and MA degrees from West Texas A&M University and DMA degree at the University of North Texas.



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## Selecting Beginning Brass Students: Realities and Misconceptions

By: Leah Schuman  
Assistant Professor of Trumpet and Brass  
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For many of us, it has been so long since we first began playing a brass instrument, that we can hardly remember the very first steps in this life-long endeavor. Every fall, instrumental music teachers across the globe sit down with students and parents to help children select which instrument they will play. This was the critical moment when the journey began for many of us. It is fascinating to imagine how different our lives might be had we been directed to play a different instrument; one for which we did not feel the strong affinity that we do for our brass instrument.

As critical as this decision is in facilitating a beginning student's future musical path, there are still many misconceptions about the factors that most accurately predict a young student's success on a brass instrument. The goal of this article is to help dispel some of the misinformation that is still widespread among instrumental music teachers, while also providing some useful tips on what to look for in beginning brass students.

Many music teachers have been taught to screen students based on physical traits including the student's overall size, how thick or thin the student's lips are, dental formation, and occasionally even the student's gender. One need only take a cursory survey of the range of physical statures of professional brass players to see that a student's overall height is not an accurate predictor of their success on a brass instrument. It is true that a student's adult height generally correlates with lung capacity, but there are many examples of players who are able to use a relatively small lung capacity with such efficiency, that it does not hinder their abilities. Perhaps most noteworthy among these examples was Arnold Jacobs, who continued to play tuba in the legendary Chicago Symphony brass section for decades, after having approximately half of his lung capacity removed due to cancer. There are numerous examples of successful brass players, including Veniamin Sovelievich Margolin, former solo trumpet of the Leningrad/St. Petersburg Philharmonic, who are less than five feet tall.

With regard to lip shape, the traditional wisdom was that students with full lips should play low brass instruments, while those with thin lips should play high brass instruments. Again, reality does not bear this out. From Louis Armstrong to Dizzy Gillespie, and Wynton Marsalis to Phil Myers, many of the greatest high brass players of the past century had full-shaped lips. Meanwhile, many world-class low brass players, including Joe Alessi, Edward Kleinhammer, Jay Friedman, and Carol Jantsch have relatively thin lips. The thickness or thinness of a player's lips does not correlate to their success on brass instruments. In his magnum opus *Trumpet Pedagogy*, David Hickman suggests that the flatness or roundness of a student's lips, not the thickness or thinness, should be considered.

The traditional wisdom with regard to dental formation was that students with dental anomalies should be discouraged from playing brass instruments. While it is true that certain dental formations can cause discomfort and complications, many brass players with unusual teeth achieve great success. Lead trumpeter Jon Faddis, for example, has a pronounced gap between his front teeth, and trumpet virtuoso Maurice Andre played



Leah Schuman

with his mouthpiece offset to one side due to irregular teeth. Braces, too, are a difficult factor to consider. While braces can cause tremendous frustration for some students, others encounter very little difficulty. Some students are also turning to removable dental gear, such as Invis-align, instead of traditional braces.

Gender stereotyping in instrument selection is still an issue in many beginning brass programs everywhere. In my own experience, I have heard an internationally renowned soloist state publicly in a master class setting that girls should steer clear of low brass instruments. His rationale was that because the range of the instrument does not generally match the female vocal range, it would be harder for a female player to distinguish intonation. Needless to say, I have never heard the same logic applied to male trumpet players! Many well-intentioned band teachers unknowingly steer students toward instruments that reflect the gender-based stereotypes they grew up with (flute is a "feminine" instrument, for example, or tuba is a "masculine" instrument). Such stereotypes can get in the way of young students discovering the instrument for which they are truly best suited.

One final, and particularly widespread misconception is that students who quickly and ef-

fortlessly produce the buzz on a mouthpiece are those who will be successful on the instrument. In my own experience teaching hundreds of students individually and perhaps thousands in technique classes over the years, the initial buzz is not a very accurate indicator of a student's success. I have had many students who struggled in their first weeks to produce the basic tone, but then went on to achieve great success. I have had other students who could immediately produce a sonorous buzz, but whose development quickly reached a plateau after that. I have also seen students who struggled with the initial coordination at a very young age and decided not to continue, but then went on to play very successfully when they re-started the instrument after another year or two.

So if the traditional physical traits are not reliable indicators, and if even the initial production of the buzz is relatively meaningless, how DO we help students decide whether or not a brass instrument is right for them?

First, while I think it is a mistake to over-emphasize the student's physical traits, I do believe it can be helpful for instrumental music teachers to be aware of the possible challenges presented by certain particular physical traits, including: 1) The "dew drop lip," also called a tubercle. 2) An extreme overbite. 3) Sizeable amounts of scar tissue at the aperture. 4) Ankyloglossia, which is a short or tight frenulum which restricts movement of the tongue. If I were certain that a student were going to need braces, I would also take this into consideration. Personally, I would not prohibit a student from playing a brass instrument because of any of these traits. On the other hand, if a student with one of these traits were equally attracted to another instrument group, I would nudge them in that direction, in hopes of avoiding unnecessary frustration.

Beyond those specific physical traits I have just addressed, I believe there are two absolutely critical factors that teachers should consider. The first is timbral preference, which in my experience has been the most accurate predictor of a student's success and staying power on a brass instrument. Researchers Edwin Gordon and Richard Grunow have found a strong correlation between a student's achievement and the degree to which that student likes the sound of the instrument. It makes sense. The better a student likes the sound of the instrument, the more they will play it. The positive momentum builds: the more they play, the better they will become, and the better they become, the more they will want to play.

It can be challenging to differentiate between timbral preference and other closely related factors, such as the way an instrument looks or any other associations. A student who chooses baritone saxophone because it reminds them of Lisa Simpson, for example, because it is big and shiny and vaguely associated with jazz, is not making a decision based on timbral preference. Gordon and Grunow have developed a timbral preference

assessment that can be given to all students in the spring, before they begin band. This helps to separate tone quality from visual stimuli.

The second important factor to consider is the student's ability to match pitch or sing back simple tonal and rhythmic patterns. Students whose aural skills are not adequately developed are likely to find brass instruments frustrating. As fiscal woes cause more and more school districts to cut general music programs from the early grades, a growing number of students lack critical musical exposure and interaction prior to starting an instrument. While I would not go so far as to say that a student with poor aural skills cannot succeed on a brass instrument, I would say that such a student is going to need extra help developing their aural skills in the early stages of instrumental instruction. Simple singing exercises and mouthpiece buzzing can be studied individually with the band director or in private lessons. Even with the best instruction, under-developed aural skills will often slow the student's learning curve on a brass instrument.

Overall, a student's love of the sound of a brass instrument appears to be a driving force behind their success and longevity as a brass player. Timbral preference, when coupled with perseverance and musicality, seems to be the key. It is hard to believe that it's been thirty-three years since I begged my parents and beginning band director to let me play the trumpet, and I am pretty sure we made the right decision. I still look forward to taking the horn out of the case and hearing its vibrant tone each day. One of the greatest joys shared by brass teachers of all levels is having the opportunity to help students find their voice and follow their passion, and it all starts with choosing the right instrument.

## **The 38th Brass Chamber Music Workshop at Humboldt State University in Arcate, California**

Held amidst the towering Redwoods and picturesque Northern California coast, the Brass Chamber Music Workshop (BCMWS) at Humboldt State University welcomes brass instrumentalists to a unique one or two week musical experience. The workshop setting provides opportunities to play in a variety of ensembles, ranging from trios to dectets, with coaching from professional brass chamber musicians from across the United States. The BCMWS library boasts one of the largest collections of brass chamber music in the world and is well known for its promotion and support of new music for the idiom. Participants perform daily in a casual

and supportive environment, can further their musicianship through special interest sessions, and have time for relaxed freelance groups. Scholarships are available. Dates:

Week 1- July 22-27, 2012

Week 2- July 29-August 3, 2012

Applications available: [www.humboldt.edu/brass](http://www.humboldt.edu/brass)

# Artists or Artisans: Cultivating Spontaneity in Today's Musicians

By Dr. Samantha Keehn

*"We learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself." ~Lloyd Alexander*

Most of today's pedagogies for brass address technique-based questions that often have clear answers. How can I make my slurs smoother? How can I work on a technical passage? How can I increase my range? But where expression is concerned, the answers are not as clear and there seems to be a lack of pedagogy focusing on honing these skills. The most common technique used for teaching expression is modeling, either via a private instructor or by listening to recordings. This technique is highly effective for creating a "musical" performance, but does little to teach one to be spontaneous and creative.

Often, musicians are consumed with the idea of playing things "correctly." It does appear that much music making today falls under the notion that performers are artisans not artists, reproducing finely crafted products instead of creating original art every time.

I vividly remember being a high school freshman and going to my state solo and ensemble contest. I was to perform *The Blue Bells of Scotland* from memory for my judge, former UT Austin trombone professor, Donald Knaub. I chose this piece because the first tape I owned was a Christian Lindberg recording that included it; the work sounded the hardest, so of course, I wanted to learn it. I must have slept with that tape running because when I finished, Mr. Knaub turned to me and asked if I had been listening to Christian Lindberg. I proudly said yes, as I imagined that mimicking Lindberg's performance was the best way to demonstrate my abilities.

I learned a lot from my preparation for this contest, but the one thing I did not learn is to think for myself. Now, maybe at 15 years old I was too young to learn to interpret a piece of music; however, I like to think that given the right guidance, I could have very well questioned my approach and made the piece more my own.

## Musical Expressive Markings

Similar to my high school experience, current pedagogies effectively address issues of fundamentals, technique, and discipline, but in the teaching of musical expression, none go far enough to produce creativity and flexibility in the expressive component of musical performance.

One reason for a lack of pedagogy for musical expression could be the nature of expressive markings. They are often vague and sometimes misleading. A player can be misled into believing that by following a prescribed order of volume, tempo, note length, and phrasing directions, that one will be musically expressive. In addition, each of those instructions reveals the vagueness of this notation system. How loud is forte? How short is short?

In an article from the *Music Educator's Journal* entitled, "Read Between the Notes: The Role of the Conductor-Teacher," former director of bands at Calvin College, Dr. Derald De Young stated:

"Music notation has become increasingly more precise in the twentieth century compared to notation in previous periods, but it is still



Dr. Samantha Keehn

only a rough chart of the composer's original idea." (35-36)

There is too much emphasis put on following the directions in the score, and not enough emphasis put on discovering what is not, and can never be, put in the score.

## The Triangle

Before we explore how one becomes expressive, we must address what it means to be expressive. Where does musicality come from? When asked this question, my students usually answer with an internal source, the heart or spirit, or an external source, such as the piece itself or a recording. The binary answers that I often receive reveal a lack of student understanding of the issue's complexity. While there is no single answer for this question, a very important triangle between the composer, performer, and audience can lead us in the right direction.

...continued on page 8

## NOTE- WORTHY NEWS

### Marie Speziale Conducts World Brass Ensemble

Marie Speziale conducted a brass ensemble of professionals (World Brass Ensemble) at the West Chester University (PA) annual event, the International Trumpet Festival, from February 16-19, 2012. Dr. JC Dobrzelewski, professor of trumpet at WCU and festival host, brought together a number of brass performers, including the following:

Antoine Acquisto, principal trumpet, Royal Opera of Belgium

Denver Dill, trumpet, US Army Band at West Point

Natalie Mannix, principal trombone, Delaware Symphony Orchestra (and IWBC member)

Philippe Massart, principal trombone, Royal Opera of Belgium

David Miller, trombone, US Navy Concert and Ceremonial Band, Washington, DC



Marie Speziale,  
Judy Saxton,  
and Amy Gilreath

Ms. Speziale explains, in her own words, “It was such an enormous honor and privilege to have been invited to conduct this group of outstanding performers. While there, I also presented master classes and worked with the university’s trumpet ensemble in preparation for the upcoming National Trumpet Competition.”

In addition to Natalie Mannix, two other IWBC ladies were featured guest artists at the festival, Amy Gilreath and Judy Saxton. Both performed as soloists and gave outstanding master classes.

In March of 2012, Ms. Speziale presented master classes and worked with the trumpeters in Dr. Cathy Leach’s studio at the University of Tennessee School of Music in Knoxville. Ms. Speziale will again teach and conduct the brass ensemble at the Round Top Music Festival in Round Top, TX in the summer of 2012.

On March 8, 2012, trombonist **Monique Buzzarté** gave the world premiere of Frances White’s *Tracing* (2011) for trombone and electronics sound on an Interpretations series program, held at Roulette in Brooklyn, NY. *Tracing* was commissioned by the MAP Fund for Monique Buzzarté, and has a duration of sixteen minutes.

- Interpretations video of an interview between composer Frances White and trombonist Monique Buzzarté: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rY0uKLe9si0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rY0uKLe9si0)
- Announcement of MAP Fund grant: [www.mapfund.org/grant\\_603.html](http://www.mapfund.org/grant_603.html)
- Listing of Buzzarté’s “New Music from Women: Trombone” project: [www.buzzarte.org/commissions.html](http://www.buzzarte.org/commissions.html)

**Elizabeth Raum** finished a transcription of her concerto, *Sherwood Legend*, for French Horn with band accompaniment. It is going to be premiered by the Silverthorn Symphonic Winds with Christopher Gongs, associate principal horn of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The performance will take place on April 22, 2012. The new transcription is available from Cimarron Press. There is also a version for both piano and orchestral accompaniment. If you have any questions, you can contact the composer at [www.Elizabethraum.com](http://www.Elizabethraum.com).



Fashioned of tough, moisture resistant, industrial polyester, the **AcoustiCoil** resembles a small, compressible sleeve with stepped interior dimensions. The AcoustiCoil has been developed as an extension of AAIIRR (Acoustically Adjusted Interference for Improved Response Repair) patent number #3,973,464. Improvements in 2008, Patent No. 7,335,832, tweak the overall design and make all of the models 10-20% more effective. The improvements basically expose more of the “edge” that creates the “constructive interference” that is central to the increased power that it provides. AcoustiCoil a “Cool Tool” for players: [www.dmamusic.org/acousticoils](http://www.dmamusic.org/acousticoils).

Composer **Lauren Bernofsky’s** new orchestration of her work, *The Castle-Builder*, for alto, cornet, and chamber orchestra, was premiered on March 2, 2012, by the Santa Rosa Chamber Orchestra, under the baton of Nick Xenelis. The musicians that premiered the new orchestration were Aja Gianola-Norris, alto, and Dan Gianola-Norris, cornet.

SYMBIOSISDUO—**Dr. Stacy Baker** (tuba), **Gail Robertson** (euphonium), **Dr. Eunbyol Ko** (piano), and **Dr. Deb Eastwood** (cornet/flugel)—will perform as featured artists at the International Tuba Euphonium Conference (ITEC) in Linz, AUSTRIA, June 25-30, 2012. Stacy and Gail are

Send your NoteWorthy News items to Jennifer Marotta ([jennifermarotta11@gmail.com](mailto:jennifermarotta11@gmail.com)) or Raquel Rodriquez ([trumpet@solotromba.com](mailto:trumpet@solotromba.com))

## New Release From Heavenly Descants Publications

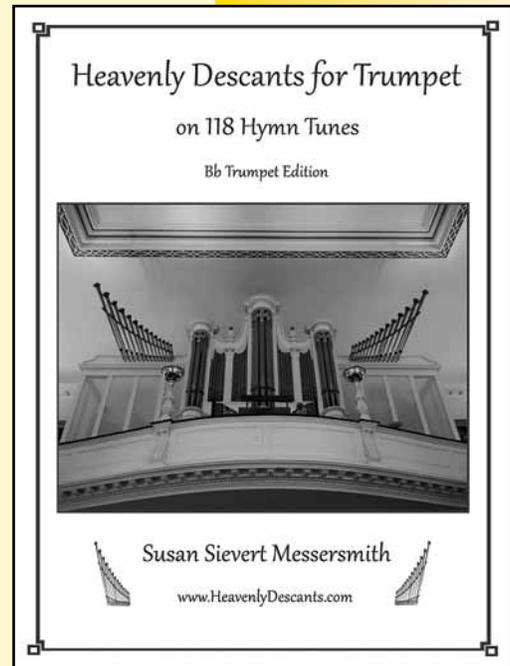
*Heavenly Descants for Trumpet on 118 Hymn Tunes* by Susan Sievert Messersmith is the newest release from Heavenly Descants Publications for Bb or C trumpet.

These original descants have been cross-referenced with the harmonies from 5 different hymnals, primarily Episcopal, Lutheran and Methodist, with some references to a few other hymnals. Each descant has the various hymn numbers listed at the bottom of the page; no testing necessary! This is the most comprehensive trumpet descant book on the market, and will pay for itself the first time you use it. It will be the "go-to" book in every trumpet player's music bag for church service gigs, as well as weddings. Endorsed by trumpet players of the Cleveland Orchestra and Los Angeles Philharmonic, as well as organists and composers, *Heavenly Descants* is a "must-have" in every serious freelance player's bag. It also makes a great gift for trumpet players of all levels, or for your church music director. For more information and to purchase your copy, please visit: [HeavenlyDescants.com](http://HeavenlyDescants.com).

According to **Judith Saxton**, Trumpet Artist/Faculty at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, "Susan Messersmith has utilized her considerable talents as a player, liturgical musician, and detail-oriented person to provide a very useful compendium of descants from the most standard hymn tunes. In this convenient collection, she offers a wonderful service to music directors, churches, and trumpeters alike: playable, idiomatic descants that are at the same time respectful to the text and, with the C and Bb parts, helpful to all genres of trumpeters. This thorough and practical publication goes to great lengths to lessen the weekly workload of organists and trumpeters everywhere by referencing and including multiple descant versions of the same hymn melody for the different harmonizations. *Heavenly Descants for Trumpet* is a handy and valuable addition to every trumpeter's library."

Susan Messersmith is an adjunct faculty member at Charleston Southern University, where she teaches Trumpet and conducts the Brass Choir. She was a 14-year member of the Charleston (SC) Symphony Orchestra, the Wintergreen Festival Orchestra (VA), and the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival Orchestra (VA). In addition, she performed in the 2011 Symphonic Voyages Orchestra on the Celebrity Mercury cruise ship, on a 12-night trip to the Caribbean! Susan holds degrees in Trumpet Performance from Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music (BM), the Eastman School of Music (MM), and also did post-graduate study at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

## NOTE-WORTHY NEWS



also excited to perform Austrian composer Franz Cibulka's *Concerto for Tuba/Euphonium Quartet and Wind Orchestra* as members of the tuba/euphonium quartet, JUNCTION, with Kelly Biese (euphonium) and Velvet Brown (tuba) for the opening concert of ITEC 2012!

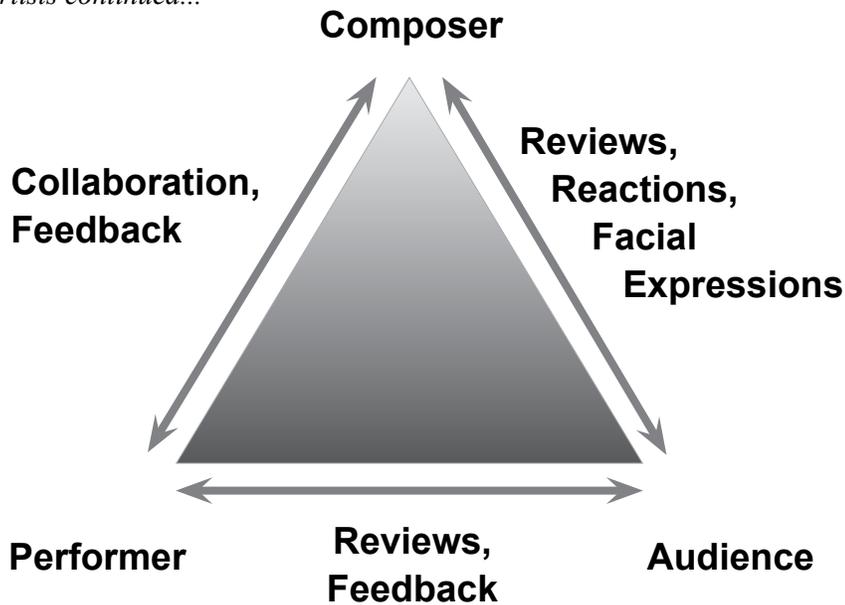
**Dr. Stacy Baker** will perform as a featured soloist with the Morehead State University Symphonic Band on the group's 4th International Concert Tour, May 13-22, 2012, to Beijing and Tianjin, CHINA. Dr. Baker will perform a new arrangement of Philip Wilby's *Cyrano* for Tuba and Wind Band, by Dr. M. Scott McBride and Mark Webster.

**Maureen Horgan's** solo CD, *Moe's Bit o' Blues*, will come out on the Centaur Record label this spring. It features new music for trombone, joined with electronics, brass quintet, trombone quartet, and piano. The CD features music of Douglas O'Grady, Kenyon Wilson, Perry Goldstein, Jonathan Santore, Robert Suderburg, and Richard Zarou.



The Zinkali Trio (**Susan LaFever**, horn; Elise Carter, flute and Laura Ravotti, piano) performed at the International Horn Symposium 44 at the University of North Texas on May 18, 2012. On the program were movements from the latest commissions by the trio, including *Lanterns* by Lydia Busler-Blais and *War Stories* by Adrienne Albert.

Artists continued...



This triangle helps students to understand their role as the performer. It is their job to convey the composer’s ideas in their own “voice” to the audience. Not only do they need to figure out what the composer’s ideas are, but they also need to formulate their own ideas and understand how to convey these ideas to an audience.

### The Composer’s Idea

This topic is one of great complexity and must be navigated delicately because composers vary in their compositional style. Some composers write music with one precise idea in mind while others write music with a flexible approach, leaving many decisions up to the performer. This can often be gleaned from the amount of marks and words on the page, but a performer must remember that sometimes composers put those on the page just for publication’s sake. Either way, the performer must research the composer’s style.

When dealing with deceased composers, it is important to look to historical recordings in which the composer was involved, well-researched historical conventions, and multiple established editions, if available. In February of this year, conductor Mark Wigglesworth wrote a blog entry in *Gramophone Magazine* entitled, “A Composer’s Conduct.” According to Wigglesworth:

“[Boulez] felt the fixed nature of printed texts can run contrary to a constantly evolving composer’s mind and what Stravinsky wrote on one day wasn’t necessarily what he wanted to hear on another.” (1)

Wigglesworth goes on to cite many other composers who believed their music to be living works, as is evidenced by multiple revisions, diversions from the score in their own performances, or writings about the performer’s role.

When dealing with a composer that is still alive, one may assume that it is easier to know their intentions because you can simply ask them, but many times it is more difficult. The brain derives enjoyment from hearing the familiar. As we listen to things, our brain creates a rut, and every time we hear it again, that rut gets deeper and starts to anticipate what it will hear next. Imagine working on a piece for months, hearing it over and over a cer-

tain way, and then being jarred from that “rut” with a performance that differs. This is the experience for the composer and it explains why they can be particular, even if they too believe the performer should interpret the music freely.

### The Performer’s Idea

With the knowledge of your composer’s intentions, you can now begin to look at a piece and formulate your own ideas. When learning a new piece, I operate from the ideology that we should try to learn most of the notes, rhythms, and articulations first, very slowly. One’s musical expressive abilities should never be hindered by technique. After you have mastered most of the technical aspects of a piece, you can begin to focus your work on musicality.

I have developed a number of ways to explore a piece of music through the adaptation of theatre pedagogy. This pedagogy seeks to find ways to help young musicians explore and embrace the notion of improvising within the composer’s given constraints, rather than simply following a sequence of ordered events.

In order for these exercises to be effective, I composed etudes that have no expressive markings including tempo, style, and dynamics. I feel that students need room to practice and find their own voice before the addition of constraints; often, too many expressive markings litter the page and hinder “musical” performance. When ITA President Emeritus Don Lucas played the etudes, he said:

“While playing these etudes, I felt different than I ever have while reading music. I believe that normally when we play music with markings, (tempi, style, articulations, dynamics) we are often tempted to make only casual reference to them, while focusing more on the technical aspects of playing. By playing these etudes with none of these markings, the process reverses itself by making us keep the projection of a style as the priority, relegating the more casual focus on the technique. I felt initially naked reading them, but while playing them with no written guidance, I had to strengthen my projection of musical styles and ideas.” (Keehn Intro)

These etudes are the cornerstone to the techniques. They are based upon the theatre pedagogy that some directors employ, in

which they black out all stage directions in their scripts. They are seeking to create a more true performance. While I do not encourage musicians to black out expressive markings, I do believe that we must search for their intention rather than blindly follow them.

The first theatre-based technique is called Repetition. With this technique, the musical ideas come from the collaboration between the student and the teacher. The two pass a phrase back and forth, allowing it to morph each time. The idea is to squeeze out a vast number of possibilities for playing the passage. The two, working together, often come up with an exponentially larger number of possibilities than one person on their own could achieve. Although this technique has more detail and, in practice, is much more involved, this description provides a summary.

The second technique is called Atmospheric Words. Most of us have been told, at some point in our training, to think of something else while you play. You may even write some "extra musical" ideas above your music to help remind you before you play. My technique takes this idea a bit further. It begins with just the notes and rhythms. Then I ask the player to think whether the music reminded him or her of anything: A scene in a movie? Other pieces? Or maybe a dance? I asked them to come up with a word or phrase that summarizes their atmosphere or mood. I also provide a list of possible atmospheres to choose from to help my hesitant students.

After the player identifies an atmosphere, s/he plays the etude under that atmospheric umbrella, thinking only of conveying that mood. I then like to ask the player to try on other atmospheres and see if they "work" or not. Things like articulation, dynamics, color, etc., should be changing significantly as the atmospheres change. This technique is not completely disconnected from general musical markings, but it is a more organic approach to creating a mood and/or telling a story; it also helps the player's understanding of the possibilities available in conveying musicality.

When using this technique on longer etudes, form must also be identified, as pieces rarely have only one idea. For a differing section, changing to another atmosphere is suggested. When ideas return, I always ask the student to question whether what has returned is the same, or somehow different, and have them mark the atmosphere appropriately.

### Conveying Ideas and Reception of Ideas

How many times has this scenario played out in which you were either the student or the teacher?

Student plays a phrase.

Teacher asks, "You played all the right notes and rhythms, but where was the music?"

Student responds, "But I thought I did something."

And of course they did not. Conveying ideas can be one of the hardest aspects of musicality, but is the one that matters most. Often, we hear the phrasing in our mind and our brain superimposes these ideas on the sounds that we make. We don't actually listen to the sound as we play; we are only thinking.

Ninety percent of all musical phrasing on a brass instrument comes from air. One way to listen to your musical phrase is to simply blow air into the palm of your hand and listen to the phrase. This is particularly effective when students hear your "wind pattern" next to theirs and realize they are not shaping their air enough. *The Brass Gym*, by Patrick Sheridan and Sam Pilafian, mentions "wind patterning" in almost every section, and

I have found it to be highly effective in creating musical line.

Conveying our ideas is not exclusive from the reception of the idea. In James Thurmond's book, *Note Grouping: A Method for Achieving Expression and Style in Musical Performance*, he asserts that the most compelling and moving musical performances are grounded in metric clarity. This is because audience members need something familiar to grasp onto and often rhythm is the easiest, especially in a first listening. According to Dr. Daniel Levitin, musician, author, and neuroscientist, "Musical rhythms, especially those of Western classical music, are considered highly regular and predictable, and this predictability has been hypothesized to underlie rhythm's contribution to our enjoyment of music." (1)

The third exercise I developed helps facilitate metric clarity and rhythmic precision, especially in transitions between tempi and style. It is another theatre-based exercise, called Gesture Scoring, and it involves developing a physical gesture for each atmospheric umbrella of the piece, and performing a sort of "dance" while singing the music. Of course, you should not perform these movements during performance (at least not all of them), but the kinesthetic connection will still be firing in your brain, thus helping you to stay connected to the physical gestures.

### Audience

The last corner of the triangle is the audience. The listening audience is made up of many different members with varying familiarity to any chosen work. The brain is a very complicated organ and has some surprising characteristics. In his extensive research of the relationship between the brain and music, Dr. Daniel Levitin has discovered that, "Much of our enjoyment of music comes from its balance of predictability and surprise." (1)

### Conclusion

We must harness this idea as performers, and practice creating the musical phrases we all hope to hear, as well as learn how we can deviate from the expected and make performances memorable. Spontaneity and creativity are what drive us to want to attend live music. The answers for musical expressivity are not written in the manuscript, but lie in our own brains as an amalgamation of everything we have experienced thus far. Look for it.

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## Spotlight on...Karin Bliznik



### Professional Positions:

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra,  
Associate Principal Trumpet  
Santa Fe Opera, Principal Trumpet

### Hometown:

Brockton, MA  
(South Shore of Boston)

### Education:

Boston University, BM  
Royal College, Study Abroad  
Northwestern University, MM

### Biggest Influences:

I would have to say that my teach-

ers have been my biggest influences...every single one of them! It is also whatever inspires me at the moment, whether it's a colleague next to me making some beautiful music, or a new intriguing song on the radio that fires me up. It's fun trying to find inspirations everyday, which is why my day always starts with an array of music. I think it's amazing how much we are molded by everything that we are or ever have been exposed to.

### Most Memorable Musical Moment:

It feels impossible to pick just one, but I think many people in the ASO would agree that our performance of Bruckner's *Symphony No. 8*, under the direction of Donald Runnicles, was something that we'll never forget. If I could describe it, I would. The best I can do is tell you that the sense of pride and collaboration of over a hundred people on a stage bringing the notes to life in a uniform way is breath taking, even from my third trumpet seat!

### Favorite Pieces of Music:

I listen to everything, and it's ever changing since I can't get enough

of it! Classically, I'm listening to whatever I am performing that week, and you can't go wrong with Mahler, Bruckner, Strauss, and Beethoven recordings. I haven't quite come around to Mozart, but maybe someday! As for non-classical, right now I'm really into M83, Brandi Carlile, Ray LaMontagne, and the Punch Brothers. I just might be partially obsessed with finding new music. Anyone that has been in my car knows that music is constantly on, and it's always something new!

### Greatest Accomplishments:

I don't think any accomplishment has been greater than another. I'm very excited to be premiering Libby Larsen's new uninterrupted suite, *Ridge-Runner*, at the 2012 IWBC in Kalamazoo, so hopefully that will be my next accomplishment!

### Words of Wisdom or Advice:

Something that Barbara Butler has reminded me of time and time again—"Remember that there is no place to arrive at... it's all a journey. It isn't the destination, but the voyage that makes life the joy that it is."

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