

# NoteWorthy

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IWBC



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

Summer 2013 • Vol. 19, No. 1

## From the President

We are on a roll, moving into the 21st century with a Facebook page already up and running, online registration and monthly news on the way, and a June 2014 Conference scheduled at Northern Kentucky University. If you want to get involved, now is a great time to do it!

I still have a letter that Susan Slaughter sent to female brass players across the country in 1990, asking if we would be interested in attending a conference of women brass players. I had heard of Susan, had heard of many other women brass players, but had not met many because we were so few and so scattered. I joined the IWBC at its inception to meet people, as well as to feel that I belonged to a larger community of women that loved to do what I loved to do, faced the same issues I faced. As I am writing this, I received news that Karin Bliznik won the Principal Trumpet position with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Not only do we have a network to celebrate this, but we heard her play at the Kalamazoo conference and we know how good she is.

We have gone from that first conference in 1993 to a conference every two years. We have a website, an ensemble (Monarch Brass), a newsletter. There are so many more of us now. And yet the need for IWBC still exists. We are still a tiny minority of professional brass players. We need to support each other, we need to educate both men and women as to the ongoing issues we encounter, and we need to provide young female brass players with opportunities to further their careers.

The next conference at Northern Kentucky University in June 2014 will provide opportunities --to meet each other, to present, to play, to hear each other. We are already working on more conferences beyond that

one. We are also making the IWBC more accessible online, and will provide more frequent contact as a way of sharing news, developments in the world of brass players and women, upcoming concerts, CD's, publications, and more.

I hope you will check out the website and facebook page, register online, consider coming to the 2014 conference, maybe even competing or presenting.

If you have any time to spare for the cause, we are always in need of volunteers, be it with a specialty such as publicity or publications, or just the time to be able to help with a committee. We would like to create more activities in addition to the conferences, and we could do that if we have more helping hands.

Thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Maureen Horgan, President

International Women's Brass Conference



Professor Marie Speziale

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Beth Mitchell

# NoteWorthy

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IWBC

## IWBC President

**Maureen Horgan** is Professor of Music at Georgia College in Milledgeville, GA and performs with the New Hampshire Music Festival. She was a freelance trombonist in Boston for many years where she performed with such diverse groups as the Opera Company of Boston, the Boston Philharmonic, Nashua (NH) Symphony, Capital Brass, and the Jazzables. Maureen holds degrees from the New England Conservatory, the Yale School of Music, and SUNY Stony Brook. She has performed at major international festivals including the International Trombone Workshop, the Eastern Trombone Workshop, and the International Women's Brass Conference, and has been a Guest Artist/Teacher at Yale University, University of North Texas, University of New Mexico, Western Connecticut State University, and others. Maureen's teaching credits include public schools in Massachusetts and Hawaii, Wheelock College, and the New England Conservatory Preparatory School. She has also taught and performed in Honduras, most recently in June 2009 where she was the featured soloist with the Banda de los Supremos Poderes de Honduras. An active proponent of new music, she has commissioned works four works, which can be heard on her CD *Moe's Bit o' Blues*, recently released by Centaur Records.



## Co-Editors



**Jennifer Marotta** is currently a freelance musician and trumpet teacher in Los Angeles, California. She is a former member of the "President's Own" United States Marine Band, and was the Assistant Professor of Trumpet at Kennesaw State University in Atlanta, GA, from 2006 until 2012. Jennifer is currently a member of the Grand Teton Music Festival, the Chicago Music of the Baroque, and is a substitute with the San Francisco Symphony. She has performed regularly with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Opera, Atlanta Ballet, Indianapolis Symphony, Rochester Philharmonic, Georgia Symphony, New World Symphony, and the Columbus Symphony. Marotta received her B.M. degree from Northwestern University and M.M degree from DePaul University.

**Raquel Rodriguez** 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. Rodriguez 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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jeanieklee@gmail.com

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Jennifer Marotta  
Raquel Rodriguez

### Design & Production

Debra J. Quinton  
ItsASnapMD.com

### Web Site Manager

Alex Thio  
LexoGraphix  
themusicianscoach@gmail.com

### Web Site Content Manager

Susan Rider  
smrider@verizon.net

## Co-Editors Corner

Jennifer Marotta

jennifermarotta11@gmail.com

Raquel Rodriguez

trumpet@solotromba.com

### Articles and NoteWorthy News Submissions

Please contact the co-editors for all potential article and NoteWorthy News submissions. The co-editors maintain final editorial rights over all materials.

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Membership directory is available on

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### Please Send Any Changes

#### in Your Contact Information to:

Jeanie Lee, IWBC Membership Chair

5241 Pine Grove Ct.

Toledo, OH 43615

jeanieklee@gmail.com

### Editorial

Dr. Raquel Rodriguez

Northern Kentucky University

Department of Music, FAC

Nunn Drive

Highland Heights, KY 41099

jennifermarotta11@gmail.com or

trumpet@solotromba.com

### Subscriptions

IWBC Subscriptions

c/o Sharon Huff, IWBC Treasurer

108 Cheltenham Drive

Normal, Illinois 61761-2733

seh819@aol.com

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## Lady Brass Series Abbie Conant: One of a Kind

Part 2

By Christina M. Cavitt, freelance writer and biographer

When we last left her, 15-year-old Abbie was packing for National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan.

"I'd never been away from home or anything, so the first day was kind of hard," Abbie said. "Then I got to know my Cabin 21 mates and it was just an absolute blast." Music campers were band geeks of the first degree and took the Interlochen learning experience seriously.

The camp featured practice cabins and strict supervisors to ensure campers put in all 60 minutes of their allocated time. They also helped if somebody had questions. Abbie's assigned room was so small that it was hard to move the slide to 7th position. But she made it work by keeping the door open and her playing caught the attention of the supervisor, Elaine Douvas as (who went on to become New York's Metropolitan Opera Orchestra principal oboe). Throughout the summer, "Elaine was incredibly nice and gave me practicing tips and encouragement." In fact, the oboist was so impressed that she recommended Abbie for a scholarship to the Interlochen Arts Academy.

### GENDER RULES

"My 'big rival at camp was a boy around my age," Abbie said. "He was really competitive with me, but I didn't exactly care. I played my best because it was fun. Maybe it was hard on his ego because I was this 15-year-old with beaded pigtails. It turned out that I mostly won first chair in orchestra, and he was mostly top dog in band." Little did Abbie know that his attitude toward her was a preamble to intense challenges she would later face as a professional performing artist because of her remarkable musical talent...and her gender.

But for the time being, in 1970, she was essentially carefree. So were her camp buddies. After lessons, practicing, rehearsals and concerts, their antics began.

### 'THIS IS GOD.'

"Interlochen was practically a military school in that everything was supervised and there were a million rules," Abbie remembered. "You couldn't get away with much, not that we didn't try. Tell a teenager she can't do something and you might as well drop a gauntlet at her feet. She'll pull everything she can." Pranks and minor rule violations became part of the younger campers' modus operandi.

Abbie recalls, "Cabin 21 had its own version of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling, with graffiti and messages from campers dating way back..." She went on, "The top bunks were freakishly close to the ceiling and my friend, Joan, had the top one. One time when she wasn't around, I snuck up there and wrote a long message, starting with, 'Dear, Joan. This is God.' That night, Joan looked up there and saw this whole thing. She started to hoot, which got the whole cabin laughing hysterically, which woke up the camp leader. She wasn't too happy with us, but oh well. It was just a lot of fun." The camp leader was extremely annoyed with us and stood by the door to listen for snorts and giggles...which only fueled the hilarity.

The summer finale was held in the big outdoor auditorium. Campers were organized and seated by age. Cabin 21 was toward the back. Naturally, the younger ones were fooling around and not paying much attention to the program. Suddenly, the kids around nudged her, saying "Abbie, Abbie, that's you. They called your name! Go up to the stage!"

"I was just sort of in this daze and kind of stumbled up on the stage where they handed me something. I don't even remember how I got back to my seat. A friend looked at the award and said, 'Oh, wow! You got a scholarship to the Academy!' I was completely delirious. It was almost out of body, I was so amazed. Then I called my parents back in New Mexico.

**Abbie:** I got a scholarship to the Interlochen Arts Academy.

**Parents:** Oh, dear. That's wonderful.

**Abbie:** Can I go?

**Parents:** No. It's too expensive. You know we just moved, and we have all these expenses and your sister's in college. It's just out of the question.

"I cried for 24 hours straight," Abbie said. "I think people were worried about me because my face was swollen and I was inconsolable. I was extremely disappointed. Anyway, I called Mom and Dad back, insisting there was something inside me that knew I would attend the Academy. It was just a matter of time before my parents conceded. To this day I am not sure how, but the administrators worked something out with my father so he could handle the tuition. My scholarship and work-study also assisted.

"I went home and returned to Northern Michigan in September," Abbie continued. "I felt like I belonged there. Finally, I was around people who got me. The Academy was like a hothouse for music, art and everything lofty. It was a glorious place to attend high school."

Abbie's trombone instructor was a fine teacher. Sadly, he didn't take her seriously. Nevertheless, her full immersion into a community that combined academics and the arts helped her ignore the passive aggression (and sometimes not so passive!) that was becoming an unfortunate reality in her musical life. Because she was female, people assumed she couldn't be a professional performer.

### NO-SOLO BLUES

Early in her junior year, when all her male friends were getting the advice as to where to continue their educations, the instructor never approached her. This was the same guy who left the studio to take phone calls during her lessons – the very one who passed her over on jazz band ad-lib solos.

Finally, Abbie asked him point-blank for college and career direction. He hemmed and hawed before sheepishly replying, "Well, you know, even the guys have a hard time landing a job. If you really want to go into music, you should major in music ed."

"I'd rather commit suicide," I thought. "You see, at an arts- and performance-oriented school, it was like a slap in the face that he couldn't envision me as a performance major." Deflated, but not defeated, Abbie rearranged her thinking and considered medical school. But the reality was that she wasn't interested in science. She wanted music to be her life and entered a period of confusion and lack of direction.

- continued on page 10 -

# NOTE-WORTHY NEWS



Stephanie Frye

## Tuba Player Stephanie Frye: Returns to teach and perform at the 2013 Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival

Stephanie Frye, low brass professor at Concordia University Wisconsin, and doctoral candidate in tuba performance at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, will serve as the tuba and euphonium teacher and performer for the 32nd annual Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival (LSM), held June 23 to July 21, 2013, at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. The residential musical training academy serves more than 150 student musicians in grades 8-12 from across the United States, and features three major ensembles: band, orchestra and choir, as well as a comprehensive keyboard and organ program.

As a member of the artistic faculty, Frye will maintain a private studio, coach two small ensembles, and perform with the Praetorius Brass Quintet faculty ensemble. In addition to performing solo recitals, playing fanfares, and being involved in worship services throughout the summer, Frye will perform with the LSM Festival Porch Brass Ensemble. Selected through a competitive application and audition process, tuba and euphonium students at LSM participate in a comprehensive curriculum that includes individual instrument lessons, a chamber ensemble, musicianship classes, symphony orchestra and/or band, and may also include electives such as jazz improvisation, conducting, collegium musicum, and more. Students perform alongside faculty artists in the LSM Festival Brass ensemble as well.

LSM students are served by a roster of 34 faculty artists – esteemed practicing professional musicians and academicians from throughout the United States. For a complete list of faculty along with biographies, visit the LSM Summer Academy section located at [www.lutheransummermusic.org](http://www.lutheransummermusic.org). All faculty live in residence on the host campus throughout the four-week program.

For more information on Lutheran Music Program or the Lutheran Summer Music Academy & Festival, visit [www.lutheransummermusic.org](http://www.lutheransummermusic.org) or contact the organization's national offices in Minneapolis at 888-635-6583 or by email at [lsm@lutheransummermusic.org](mailto:lsm@lutheransummermusic.org).

**Lauren Bernofsky's** *Concerto for Trumpet*, already available in a trumpet/piano edition from Balquhider Music, will soon be available in the version for full orchestra, from Theodore Presser. The orchestral score and parts will be available from Presser's rental library, and the full score will also be available for purchase both at study-size and full-size.

Bernofsky's virtuosic piece for trumpet and piano, *Saltarello*, will also be published by Theodore Presser.

**Carol Jantsch** is premiering a new concerto for tuba called *Reflections on the Mississippi* by Grammy-award-winning composer Michael Daugherty. The work was commissioned by Temple University, and she will be performing the piece with the Temple Symphony Orchestra on March 24th in Verizon Hall in Philadelphia, and on April 5th in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in NYC. The piece will also be recorded for release on Temple University's label.

**Laura Pettigrew – Canada**  
I had the great opportunity to attend the world premiere of my brass quintet piece, *Tranquillitas Animi (Peace)*, by the Borealis Brass (Fairbanks, Alaska) on December 19, 2012, at Chiesa Del Gesu in Rome, Italy, which was commissioned by Dr. Karen Gustafson (University of Alaska). The Natale Musica concert series hosted by the Adkins Chit Foundation, Donne in Musica, featured the Borealis Brass in concert December 19 – 23, 2012 at sacred venues throughout Italy, performing works by women composers globally.

On March 18, 2013, my work, *A Terra (Earth)*, was premiered by Massive Brass Attack, a Portuguese Youth Symphonic Brass Ensemble on March 18, 2013 at the Esmae- Porto High School of Music and Arts Festival. The concert was under the direction of Sergio Carolino, principal tuba of the Orchestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Musica in Porto, Portugal.

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))

## 2013 Holiday Brass Concert

Although it doesn't take place until December, **Christine Hayes** and **Beth Mitchell** are hard at work getting ready for the 2013 Holiday Brass Concert. The venue is secured, choirs are being auditioned, and it's beginning to feel a little like Christmas already...

December 4th, 2012 marked the second annual Holiday Brass Concert, Los Angeles, a future fundraiser for the International Women's Brass Conference. The concert took place at the historic Immanuel Presbyterian Church, near downtown Los Angeles. The ensemble was conducted by Robert Feller and consisted of musicians from the Los Angeles Philharmonic past and present, freelancers, and musicians from the major recording studios. The ensemble included such notables as Malcolm McNab, Jon Lewis, Ralph Sauer, and Bill Booth. The brass ensemble shared the stage with the Global Messiah Women's Choir, the Paul Delgado Singers, and the Heights Christian School Choir. Lynette Ball McGee held her own on organ, and bagpiper Richard Cook took our breath away on Highland Cathedral. Organizers Beth Mitchell and Christine Hayes were pleased with the concert. Said Mitchell, "All of our musicians were amazing, and our audience doubled from the previous year. This is fast becoming a popular Los Angeles tradition."

For more information about next year's Holiday Brass Concert in Los Angeles, check out [www.holidaybrassla.com](http://www.holidaybrassla.com)



# NOTE-WORTHY NEWS



JoAnn Lamolino

**JoAnn Lamolino** is holding the position of 2nd Trumpet of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons after a successful national audition for the position in September 2012.

**Liza Zumbrunnen** had an arrangement of hers published by Waterton Brass Music. This is her first publication and hopes to publish more soon. For more info: Liza's website's link: <http://www.watertonbrassmusic.com/> Liza's profile link: <http://www.watertonbrassmusic.com/zumbrunnen.shtml>

**Per Brevig**, Music Director of Strathmere Festival Orchestra and Faculty member at The Juilliard

School, Manhattan School of Music, New York University and Aspen Music Festival and School, has been honored with the International Trombone Associations "2012 ITA Award". The award was presented to him "In recognition of his distinguished career and in acknowledgement of his impact on the world of trombone performance".

The International Trombone Festival was held in Paris where Per Brevig was presented with the award at a gala concert.

 The IWBC organization would like to thank and give Christina Cavitt and Cavitt Productions photo attributions to all IWBC Conference photos used in the Fall 2012 Newsletter. For more info on Cavitt Productions please visit: [www.cavittproductions.com](http://www.cavittproductions.com)

## NOTE-WORTHY NEWS

On April 6, 2013, the Ohio Chapter of the International Trumpet Guild held its annual OITG meeting on the campus of Northern Kentucky University (NKU) in Highland Heights, KY, attracting close to two hundred players, teachers and enthusiasts, and nine exhibitors. The one-day event was hosted by **Raquel Rodriguez**, Assistant Professor of Trumpet at NKU, and John Zappa, Lecturer of Trumpet and Jazz Studies at NKU. The featured guest artists included Joe Burgstaller and Ingrid Jensen.



Joe Burgstaller with the NKU Brass Choir

## IWBC Conference Announcement



June 4-8, 2014

The IWBC is glad to announce that the 2014 Conference will be held at **NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY** in Highland Heights, KY on **JUNE 4-8, 2014**. The 2014 International Women's Brass Conference will be hosted by Raquel Rodriguez, Assistant Professor of Trumpet at Northern Kentucky University.

The conference will include the 2014 Susan Slaughter International Solo Brass Competition. The competition is open for trumpet, horn, trombone, bass trombone, euphonium and tuba. The competition is open to all brass players: women and men, students, amateurs and professionals of all ages.

Information on the required repertoire, prizes, age categories, contest rules, and registration, will be available soon.

Northern Kentucky University, a growing metropolitan university, is located in the quiet suburb of Highland Heights, Ky. - just seven miles southeast of Cincinnati, Ohio. Participants to the conference will have the opportunity to explore Cincinnati and its world-class arts and culture scene, fine dining, and major league sports. Cincinnati is easily accessible by air (Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport), rail, or by car. Bring the family and visit the Cincinnati Zoo, Newport Aquarium, or Kings Island (Amusement and Water Park).

The conference will feature world-class brass artists, new commissions from significant composers, exhibitors, and plenty of workshops and performances. We hope to see you at what should be a fun and exciting conference. See you in June 2014!

Please visit the official IWBC 2014 conference website for more info: <http://www.iwbc2014.com/>

## Keeping in Touch at the IWBC Web Site

How can you stay in touch with the IWBC in between receiving these excellent newsletters and attending conferences? By visiting the IWBC web site, of course! Which composers and what works have been commissioned by the IWBC? Who are some of our female brass player pioneers? Who were the winners of the 2012 Susan Slaughter solo competition? Where and when are the annual Holiday Brass concerts? These answers can be found at [myiwbc.org](http://myiwbc.org). Additionally, there is access to previous newsletters, pictures from past conferences (Toronto 2010 and Kalamazoo 2012), and information about the people who serve as the backbone of this organization.

Do you have any professional news you would like to share? Would you like to list a job announcement? Please let us know, and we can put it on the web site (contact **Susan Rider** at [smrider@verizon.net](mailto:smrider@verizon.net)). The IWBC is here to serve, educate and support you. Thank you for your continued membership!

## JANE SAGER (1914 – 2012)

*"I just had to play that horn, that's all there was to it."*

Born in 1914 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, Jane showed early promise as a violinist. At ten, she performed Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* on the radio. As a reward, her father bought her a bike. She took it out for a ride and was hit by a car. "The back wheel ran over my left hand," she said, "so you can imagine how much violin I could play." But after seeing a high school girl play cornet, Jane bought a trumpet, took it home, and "practiced till I fell over."

While attending Stevens College and the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, she supported herself by playing trumpet. She studied with Edward Llewellyn, principal trumpet (1912-1936) of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. But her true love was jazz. She studied with her idol, jazz trumpeter Roy Eldridge, and often sat in on jam sessions at Chicago clubs like the Three Deuces. "I just had to play that horn, that's all there was to it."

Being a woman was no impediment she said. "If you had a horn and proved what you could do ... if you could blow and you had a soul, that was it. I went everywhere. People don't realize how close we were, the black and white musicians in those days."



photo by Jeannie Gayle Pool

In the 1930s, she joined Rita Rio's All-Girl Band. When Rio's group broke up, Jane played a pivotal role in organizing Ada Leonard's All-American Girls band. During World War II, they played at USO shows and often featured Jane soloing on Harry James' *Trumpet Concerto*. After moving to California, she played radio shows with the Victory Belles and with a CBS Studio band in Hollywood. Two highlights of her career included working with the Johnny Richards Orchestra in the 1940s and with Charlie Barnet and His Orchestra in the 1950s.

In 1964, Jane organized The Frivolous Five with veteran women musicians such as woodwind player Peggy Gilbert. The group performed music interspersed with a comedy routine. They appeared several times on the *Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson, and with Jack Benny's comedy shows in Las Vegas and Tahoe.

"She was never afraid to speak up," said Peggy Gilbert. "She stuck her neck out every time, to fight for what was due. ... There weren't many women musicians that I can think of that had the courage to get up and face anybody and really talk. ... But Jane was such a fine musician, she could get by with it."

In later years, her teaching ability became legendary. She had a music studio in Hollywood. Her friend, bandleader and woodwind player Ann



photo by IWBC

Patterson, said: "The best [trumpeters] in Hollywood were trained by her when they were young, and 'repaired' by her when they were seasoned pros with problem chops."

In 1997, the IWBC honored Jane as one of three Pioneers. In January 2002, the International Association of Jazz Educators presented Jane Sager and Peggy Gilbert with the Lil Hardin Jazz Heritage Award. In May 2011, Jane suffered a fall and entered a nursing home. She died March 30, 2012 at the age of 97. As her friend Norma Petersen put it: "She was a wonderful friend and a great musician. She will surely be missed."

Sources: *Jazzwomen: 1900 to the Present*, Sally Placksin (1982); *Jeannie on Jazz: Trumpeter Jane Sager dies at 97*; a blog by music historian Jeannie Gayle Pool, author of *Peggy Gilbert and Her All-Girl Band* (2008); *Overture*, newsletter of Los Angeles Local 47, American Federation of Musicians

For many years Susan Fleet was a freelance trumpeter in the Boston area while teaching at Brown University, Wheaton College, and Berkeley College of Music. At Berklee, she created and taught a course about female musicians. Her e-book, *Women Who Dared: Trailblazing 20th Century Musicians*, profiles trumpeter Edna White and violinist Maud Powell. [http://susanfleet.com/women\\_who\\_dared-vol1.html](http://susanfleet.com/women_who_dared-vol1.html)

Between 2001 and 2010, she lived in New Orleans, the setting for her award-winning mystery series. For more information, visit her website. <http://www.susanfleet.com>



## Shepherd School of Music Bids Farewell to Retiring Professor Marie Speziale April 8, 2013

February 4 was a bittersweet evening at the Shepherd School of Music as we celebrated Marie Speziale, Professor of Trumpet and Chair of Brass. She will retire in May after eleven years at the Shepherd School. Also honored that evening was Kathleen Kaun, the retiring Lynette S. Autry Professor of Voice.

Acknowledged as the first woman trumpeter in a major symphony orchestra, Speziale retired from the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in November of 1996 after having served as its Associate Principal Trumpet for thirty-two years (1964-1996). A graduate of the College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, Ms. Speziale studied with Robert Price, Robert Braunagel, Eugene Blee and Arnold Jacobs.

In a grand collaborative evening, students, alumni, friends and colleagues gathered to honor and celebrate Speziale's distinguished career. The event was months in the planning, as Speziale reached out to former Rice students across the country, inviting them to participate in the celebratory concert. Speziale said, "I was thrilled that so many former students were able to be a part of this wonderful experience. It was truly a reunion, bringing everyone back together." A long beloved figure at the Shepherd School, Speziale hosted a welcome party the night before the concert for all of the brass players who had gathered for the dress rehearsal, as well as members of the Shepherd School brass faculty.

Twenty-four alumni of the Shepherd School trumpet studio traveled from across the country to pay tribute to Speziale. Performing that evening were Thomas Siders, Assistant Principal Trumpet of the Boston Symphony, and a quartet of trumpeters in service with national military bands: Carl Lindquist (U.S. Naval Academy Band), Jeffrey Northman (U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own"), Kevin Lynch (U.S. Infantry Regiment "The Old Guard"), and James McClarty (U.S. Marine Band "The President's Own").

Alumnus Kenneth Fitzgerald traveled farthest to attend the celebration. An attorney by day, Fitzgerald plays trumpet in the La Jolla (CA) Symphony, and continues to support students at his alma mater through an endowed music scholarship.

Alumnus Kenneth Fitzgerald traveled farthest to attend the celebration. An attorney by day, Fitzgerald plays trumpet in the La Jolla (CA) Symphony, and continues to support students at his alma mater through an endowed music scholarship.



L-R: Larry Rachleff, Thomas Siders, Carl Lindquist, Marie Speziale, Jeff Northman, Kevin Lynch, James McClarty

A brass choir called the evening to order with Richard Strauss' *Vienna Philharmoniker Fanfare*, conducted by Larry Rachleff, Music Director of the Shepherd School Symphony and Chamber Orchestras. The audience also enjoyed Bruce Broughton's *Silverado* played by the Shepherd School Horn Choir led by Professor of Horn William VerMeulen. The stirring finale of the evening was an arrangement of *America the Beautiful* by Professor of Composition and Theory Arthur Gottschalk featuring Tom Siders, the Military Brass Quintet, and the full company of brass and voice students assembled to honor their teachers. A post-concert reception gave them a chance to let Speziale know what her presence in their lives had meant, and for those of us in Houston to say farewell as she returns to her longtime Cincinnati roots later this year. As we say goodbye to Professor Speziale, we thank her for the wonderful years of music she has given the Shepherd School, and we are proud to have Barbara Butler and Charles Geyer joining the faculty of the Shepherd School in Fall 2013.

For media inquiries contact Holli Ryan, External Relations Coordinator, The Shepherd School of Music. [hryan@rice.edu](mailto:hryan@rice.edu) or 713.348.4157.

## Tuba Test Pilot

By Beth Mitchell

I'm currently in my second year working as a tuba test pilot for the Kanstul Musical Instrument Company. What does this involve? I use the latest models of Kanstul horns in every imaginable situation possible.

Being a free lance musician in Los Angeles is really perfect for this kind of job.

Phase One - Try the horn at the factory. It isn't unusual for me to get a call from Zig Kanstul saying, "Hey Beth, come down to the Kanstul factory, we have something new for you to try." I get there and they hand me a horn that is still warm from being worked on.

The instrument has to meet my expectations on several levels:

First, how does it sound? How does the sound carry? How is the sound in every register- Is it clear or stuffy?

Secondly, are they in tune? Are partials easy to hit? Do the partials fall where you would expect them to, or do you have to lip them up or down? If you have to adjust your embouchure for a note, is it an acceptable amount or is it extreme? If it's extreme, then an adjustment to the horn needs to be made.

Then, how does the instrument react with fast or slow air, hard attacks, and soft attacks? Does it handle extremely loud and soft playing well? Different brands of horns require different approaches. I have found that a 'relaxed air approach' works best with the Kanstul tubas.

Finally, how does it react to different types of literature? Does it handle super fast solo literature easily? Big orchestral excerpts? Etudes?

When I encounter problems, I ask myself, 'Is this a Beth problem or a horn problem?' To be sure, sometimes I will borrow a horn for a few days to see if I can work through the difficulty- if I can, it was my problem. If



Beth Mitchell with Kanstul Solo F tuba

not, the horn goes back to the factory to get reworked.

Another consideration is whether the instrument is comfortable- can different hand sizes reach the slides and the valves easily?

Phase Two- Trying the horn in forgiving environments, such as lessons with students, minor gigs, or in rehearsal with really great players that can give me good feedback. Sometimes I will take a lot of time in phase two learning how to play each particular horn. Once I am really comfortable with the horn in this setting, I know it is time to move on to phase three.

Phase Three- Trying the horn on a professional gig. This can be a solo or chamber recital, a good orchestral concert, a recording session, a quintet gig, or just something where I can get lots of professional feedback.

By the end of this school year, Kanstul tubas will have been featured in my 12 recitals, many orchestral performances, chamber music gigs, and recording sessions this year.

This all leads to the furthering development of these great horns. Tuba technology is always changing, and it's an honor to be a part of this very exciting process.

I currently use the Kanstul Orchestral Grand Cc tuba, the 4/4 Kanstul 4/4 Chamber Cc, and the Kanstul 3/4 Solo F models. I am currently testing the Cc and F Cimbassi for Kanstul.



Working on the new F cimbasso at the Kanstul factory



Testing the C cimbasso with the Los Angeles Cimbasso Choir at Colburn

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## Spotlight on...Kelly Watkins



### Professional Positions:

United States Coast Guard Band

### Hometown:

Henderson, TX

### Education:

BM Northwestern State University and MM Illinois State University

### Biggest Influence(s):

My biggest influences have been

my parents Robin and Gayle Watkins, my brother Stephen, my trumpet teachers Tommy Moore (Henderson) Galindo Rodriguez (NSU) and Amy Gilreath (ISU), as well as my colleagues in the US Coast Guard Band. I consider myself extremely fortunate to be a part of such an inspiring group of people and musicians each and every day.

### Most Memorable Musical Moment:

Oooo, tough one! There are really too many to list, but they include performing alongside the Japan Coast Guard Band in 2008 and traveling to Taiwan with the Coast Guard Brass Quintet in 2010 and performing several recitals throughout the country and alongside the Taiwan Ministry of National Defense Symphony Or-

chestra. Additionally, performing with Monarch Brass during IWBC conferences has been incredibly memorable.

### Favorite Pieces of Music:

All the Ewald Brass Quintets, Symphonie Fantastique, the music of Grainger, Stravinsky, Barber, Strauss...ahhh, there's just too many!!

### Greatest Accomplishments:

Definitely winning my position in the Coast Guard Band, as well as my involvement with the IWBC. Through both of these my hope is to have offered even the tiniest bit of inspiration for a young woman aspiring to become a professional musician.

### Words of Wisdom (optional):

Simply...be kind to one another.

## Abby Conant, Part 2 Continued

"I had a huge depression crisis at that time," she said. "My grades plummeted and I almost didn't return for my senior year. Fortunately, I knew myself well enough to understand I was in crisis." She figured it out on her own. She had no other choice as this was the early 70s and sexism was rampant. Although her teacher's chauvinism was small potatoes compared with what she would later face as an orchestral musician, his attitude toward her cut deeply.

Interestingly, a decade later, Abbie ran across that instructor again at a trombone conference. The two had a long conversation late into the night. She told him how much he had hurt her by not taking her performance goals seriously. Then, "He actually wept - he totally got it and he was so sorry," Abbie said. "Twelve years later, he attended one of my music theater concerts. He was the trombone professor at the local university and brought his women students. As he introduced me to them after the performance, he gave me photos he had saved over 22 years of me playing trombone at Interlochen. It was really an incredibly beautiful gesture. He made a huge effort to try to make up for how he felt he had treated me in high school. I am deeply grateful for the breadth of his character and huge heart.

### M&M/PEANUT DIET

After high school graduation, Abbie went to an Outward Bound adventure in the Rocky Mountains. It rained 20 of the 21 days her group was in the wilderness and the guide was a grump. But at least she came home more physically fit than she'd ever been. She'd lost 20 pounds, which she attributes to the "M&M and peanut diet," she explained. "I was a vegetarian and that's about all they offered that I could eat." The experience still didn't lead her to any university decision. Upon returning from the Rockies, she announced to her parents that she would take a year off, get a job, rent an apartment and just live.

"Mom and Dad flipped," Abbie said. "They said, 'You mean we sent you to such an expensive school and you're not going to go to college? We don't think so.'" They feared I would turn out to be a hippie or some good-for-nothing nobody. But I was adamant about not going to

college. For one thing, I didn't know where to go. That was the first time I ever seriously defied my parents and it made me literally ill. Finally, we compromised and agreed that I would try the University of New Mexico for one semester.

"Since my folks thought I might steal away in the night, they drove me to campus, signed me up and escorted me to my dorm room," Abbie said. "My mother took one look at my roommate's belongings - cheerleader stuff - and knew I wouldn't have lasted 'til morning." Mrs. Conant marched right back to the front desk and requested a more appropriate housing situation for her daughter.

"Well," said the clerk, "there's a private dorm, but it's lots more expensive."

"Mom suggested we check it out and, much to her relief, I thought it was really cool," Abbie said. Her parents ponied up the dollars needed for a small suite, thus ensuring Abbie could have her own bedroom. Then they learned that her suite-mate was an art major friend from Interlochen. Her parents departed with a sense of certainty that Abbie would make it through the first semester.

Did Abbie run off? Where did her many talents take her? To find out, watch for Lady Brass Part III, Flabbergasting Abbie, in the next edition of the IWBC newsletter.

- from page 3 -

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