

NoteWorthy

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IWBC



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From the President

Hello! I hope everyone had a great fall. Living in Florida, we NEVER get to see the leaves change colors. To fulfill this void, I usually travel somewhere in October to see the beautiful colors. This year, I went to Morehead State University in Kentucky to participate in Dr. Stacy Baker's annual OCTUBAFEST. It was called "The Wonderful World of Tuba" (after "The Wonderful World of Disney"). Of course, there was lots of Disney music and great fun!

The planning for the 2010 conference at Humber College in Toronto, Ontario, Canada is going well. The Solo Competitions Committee, led by Susan Slaughter, has started to choose literature. The Commissioning Committee, chaired by Scott Irvine, is in the process of selecting composers and the works to be written. The Artist Selection Committee, headed by Joan Watson, has also been working hard on which world-class artists will be invited to perform at the conference. There is global interest from a women's brass band in Japan, a New Zealand horn quartet, and possibly the Venezuelan Brass Ensemble from El Sistema, to name a few. There are also a number of American and Canadian soloists and ensembles. The prospects are very exciting!

According to conference co-host, Joan Watson, there are two words that a successful conference needs: SURPRISE and DELIGHT. She and the various committees feel it is critical to have experts in specific areas. There are also over 30 volunteers who have made expert contributions with regard to conference organization, exhibits, local support, merchandise, and all levels of brass playing. The spectrum of brass playing with a focus on women and their legacy and young women players will be represented fully. Joan is very excited to be working with someone that has vast experience in setting up conferences and is also an organizer for the annual Canadian event *Brass in the Grass* Music and Arts Festival. Plans are in place to engage politicians and local entrepreneurs. She is planning to

secure financial support and enthusiasm in every way possible. Joan also informed me about how much the City of Toronto is embracing this event, and that they are trying to declare the week of the IWBC Conference as BRASS WEEK in Toronto.

Please consider supporting the IWBC not only with a donation, but also with ideas and Conference suggestions (write me at GAREUPHAK@aol.com). Also, please support one of our Holiday Brass Concerts (www.holidaybrass.com). IWBC Conferences would not exist without you and these concerts. Cannot attend a concert? Buy *The Holiday Brass CD*. Many thanks to our HBC organizers Susan Slaughter, Joan Kohlmeier, Theresa Hanebury, Nancy Goodearl, and Ginger Turner!

My thanks to Executive Director and Web Site Manager, Kelly Watkins, and Sharie Huff, our amazing treasurer and my advisor! In addition, a special thank you to Susan Rider and Laurie Penpraze for creating such wonderful newsletters. On behalf of the Board of Directors of the IWBC, I wish you all a good winter and happy New Year!

Gail Robertson
IWBC President

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Frøydis Ree Wekre

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IWBC President

Gail Robertson is Instructor of Euphonium and Tuba at the University of Central Florida. Previously, Robertson taught at the University of Florida and Bethune-Cookman College. Her degrees in Euphonium Performance are from Indiana University and the University of Central Florida. A musician with the Brass Band of Battle Creek, Keith Brion's New Sousa Band, Symphonia, the Athena Brass Band, and the Brass Band of Central Florida, Gail was also a founding member of Walt Disney World's Tubafours. Robertson is in demand as a soloist, clinician, judge, composer/arranger, and enjoys traveling. She recently accepted an invitation to become a Sonaré Winds and York Euphonium Artist.



Co-Editors



Trombonist **Laurie Penpraze** is a member of the Sarasota Orchestra in Sarasota, Florida. Formerly, she was Assistant Professor of Trombone at Miami University and a Fulbright Scholar/Visiting Professor of Trombone at the Lithuanian Academy of Music. Penpraze frequently performs as a soloist and chamber musician in the U.S. and abroad. She is on faculty at the Lutheran Summer Music Festival and Academy, where she serves as Chair of the Brass Department. Penpraze received her B.M., M.M., and D.M.A. from the University of Michigan.

Dr. Susan Rider performs as a member of "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, Chamber Orchestra, and Chamber Ensembles in Washington, DC. She also maintains a private teaching studio in Northern Virginia. Susan continues to be an active soloist, orchestral, and chamber musician throughout the United States. She received her education from Indiana University (D.M. and M.M.) and The University of Northern Iowa (B.M.).



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Holiday Brass Concerts

Web site address: www.holidaybrass.com

Our very successful Holiday Brass Concerts have become an annual tradition! If you are able, please join us for an evening of joyous music by some of the premier brass players in the country. Your tax deductible financial support of the IWBC makes it possible for our organization to continue its mission. Thank you!

• Baltimore, Maryland

Cathedral of Mary Our Queen
5200 N. Charles St.
Tuesday, December 2, 2008, 7:30 p.m.
For ticket information, call: 410-337-7539

• St. Louis, Missouri

Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis
4431 Lindell Boulevard
Tuesday, December 9, 2008, 2:15 and 8 p.m.
For ticket information, call: 314-533-7662

Article(s) and NoteWorthy News Submissions

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

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www.chicagohornconsort.org
- Odyssey-Brass Ensemble
www.brassodyssey.com
- Trinity Girls Brass Band
www.tgbb.co.uk

La Verita: Real Life in an Italian Opera Orchestra

by Cindy Scaruffi-Klispie

Author's note: La Verita translated means 'the truth,' very much like the stone 'Bocca della Verita' (the mouth of truth) in Rome. A popular legend claims that the Bocca della Verita will bite off the hand of anyone who tells a lie while holding his hand inside its mouth.

It is said that "all roads lead to Rome," and my return to Rome and personal "Roman Holiday" must have come about from the coin I threw into the Trevi Fountain during the summer of 1984. I was a member of the Puccini Festival Orchestra and the musicians, all from the USA, were in Italy for that entire summer providing the orchestral accompaniment for operas and ballets in the historic towns of Northern Italy where Verdi and Puccini had lived and worked.

One of our maestros, Alberto Ventura, a staff conductor at the Rome Opera, asked me if I would consider auditioning for the Rome Opera Orchestra since they were in need of a principal trumpet. At first, I thought he was joking, but quickly discovered that he was really quite serious. Maestro Ventura liked my playing and did indeed set up an audition at the Rome Opera House. What transpired at the actual audition could fill a book, so I will move directly to the experience of being a member of a European opera orchestra.

Rome Opera Orchestra—being young, foreign, the lone female in the brass section, and their principal trumpet player

As one would expect, the musicians of the Rome Opera orchestra were primarily Italian. There were a few Western Europeans: English, German, and French. In the string section there were Eastern Europeans, mainly Polish and Romanian, who were escaping Communist governments at home. While I was at the San Carlo Opera House in Naples, a couple from Eastern Europe defected. Most of the female musicians in the orchestra were members of the string section; two of the female violinists were American. In fact, I believe the only instruments other than strings played by women were flute and harp. Most of them did not know what to make of the American woman who was principal trumpet. And having an Italian name, Scaruffi, and not being able to speak their language, further confused them.

The members of the orchestra addressed each other as "maestro," which at first seemed unusual, to say the least. We were addressed by others as professore or professoressa dell'orchestra. The ordinary citizens of Italy are very impressed by performing artists and my Italian cousins, who I found over there, exclaimed, "Un'artista!" when they first met me.

It was a difficult situation to be the youngest member of the brass section, a principal player, the only woman, and a foreigner. My command of the Italian language was not great when I arrived in Rome. You learn very quickly when the conductor is addressing you in rehearsal.

I did not find out until after I had moved to Rome that an Italian trumpeter was released when they hired me. That did not endear me to some of my colleagues. Some were resentful of my position in the orchestra. It seemed that it was not so much a gender issue, but rather that a foreigner took a job that could have gone to an Italian.

As in this country, many colleagues were supportive of female brass players but others were not, and were hostile, either openly or clandestinely.



Cindy Scaruffi-Klispie

When I performed *Petrushka*, some of my colleagues would come and listen behind the curtain and then leave so they did not have to speak to me at the end. Of course, the colleagues who liked me told me this was happening every night. I found it rather childish, but some of them found me to be an anomaly. They wanted to see/hear if I really could play, but did not stay around to compliment my performance.

While observing a rehearsal of the Spoleto festival, I happened to sit in a box with two young Italian fellows. I heard one ask the other who the girl was (wondering about me), and when his friend responded, "La prima tromba dell'Opera di Roma," the first guy almost fell out of the box. Not many Italian women played brass instruments at that time. When I left Italy, there were only two young Italian women playing trumpet professionally in the entire country.

One time when I was entering Italy, an Italian customs agent asked me to take one of my trumpets out of the case and play it. He could not believe they were my trumpets.

I auditioned for the extra list for the "Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia" and when I walked onto the stage, the outside committee member exclaimed very loudly, "Una signora?" The current members of the brass

section were snickering because they knew me socially and professionally and knew that I could, believe it or not, actually play the trumpet. I was put on their list and was fortunate to have performed with that outstanding ensemble.

The Rome Opera orchestra used a system of rotation for the musicians. There were two principals in the wind and brass sections. In addition to the principals, our section was comprised of two second trumpets and a third/section trumpet. The San Carlo Theater was similar, with two principals and four section players. When there was a work programmed with cornet and trumpet parts, I would play one of the first parts and my principal colleague played the other. Both section players would play. Generally, one second trumpeter would play with me and the other with the other principal. Sometimes one of them would be called on to play third or fourth and the third player might have to play second, but it usually went as I have indicated above. The contracts would state the obligation of playing in the section when needed. There was some rotation in the strings, too. At the San Carlo Opera, all the musicians had to sign in for performances regardless if they were or were not playing that particular show.

My colleague and I decided which productions each of us would play. He usually wanted to play the Italian Operas. I deferred to his choices since I was the new kid on the block, so it was good that I liked playing the music of both ballet and opera. I always attended rehearsals and performances of the works I was not playing in order to learn more about opera. Before I did the Puccini Festival and moved to Italy, I had played very few operas, those being only in college and at Lyric in Chicago. And although I did study with Tom Crown one summer to work on the opera repertoire, it was all so exciting and new to me that I wanted to soak it all in. The orchestra did a few symphonic concerts and chamber programs, too.

Our Rehearsal and Performance Schedule

Opera orchestras need to do longer rehearsals, but the work schedule was easier than most schedules in the United States. There were no “Pops” type programs. We did not have chamber groups being sent out to fill in services. However, when you played a production, you played the entire production, the entire opera, or the entire ballet, without assistants.

One cycle I did was a “*Trittico di Balletti*.” There were three ballets on the bill: *Les Biches* by Poulenc, *Phedre* by Auric, and *Petrushka* by Stravinsky. They were performed in that order and many times. I remember staring at the publicity poster on the side of the building and thinking, “Oh, gosh. I have to do all of that and *Petrushka* is last.” I learned how to get through the music even when tired. It was excellent on-the-job training.

The schedule for the entire opera house was posted every week. On it was everything: the ballet corps, the chorus, the orchestra, and the tech. Any town of any size in Italy has its own opera house. The larger cities have a complete ballet company with a school, a full chorus, and a full orchestra. All of the Italian musicians and some from other places in Western Europe were tenured, which has both good and bad consequences. Those not from certain countries in Western Europe were on contracts and had work visas.

The arts are highly subsidized by the Italian government, and that in itself allowed for ample preparation for each production with many re-

hearsals over a good length of time. We do not have that luxury in America. I would marvel at times when we had brass sectionals, especially on an opera like *Nabucco*, which consists of mainly block chords and short “Ta-Da!” rhythmic figures for the brass.

Instrument Preferences and Making a Living

The Italian trumpeters were all playing on Bb horns. Bach trumpets were the preferred trumpets and they were difficult to get and expensive. I played primarily on my other horns while there. I used a D for *Don Giovanni* and a C and piccolo (for the ending) on *Petrushka*. Some of them had never seen a D trumpet. One trumpeter walked up to me with a handful of money and wanted to buy my D/Eb. Much to his surprise, I did not sell it to him. One of the principal trumpeters of the Academia orchestra bought a C trumpet in 1988.

The salaries were not huge, but I could live quite comfortably in Italy because the cost of living was very low. Food was reasonably priced. Rents were controlled by the government and not outrageous. As a foreign worker, I was allowed to send up to 80% of my salary home.

A Melting Pot of Nationalities

The opera house was international. A famous Russian Ballerina, Maja Plissetskaja, was in charge of the ballet company. The choreographer for the previously mentioned ballets was Spanish. The chorus master was Dutch. Alain Lombard, who is French, conducted the ballets. There were many conductors, mostly European, leading the productions. It was not unusual to hear many languages being spoken at rehearsals. Many of my colleagues were bilingual or trilingual. At San Carlo, Dietrich Fischer Dieskau’s son, Martin, rehearsed “The Merry Widow” in English. That did not go over well with the Italians.

Just Another Day at the Opera House

The atmosphere at the opera house was also pretty interesting. Italians use their diaphragm muscle when they speak normally, so it sounds as though they are shouting and angry. That is just normal speech for them. But it was not unusual for tempers to flare during rehearsals. We had to stop a rehearsal one time when one of the musicians argued with the conductor that

“ I would encourage any musician to take a job in a foreign country. It will widen one’s perception of our world and help build international friendships and understanding. ”

he was playing the passage correctly. The amazing thing occurred a few minutes later, when the two of them were walking together with their arms wrapped around each other as if nothing had happened.

The orchestra musicians were not without their quirks. If a tenor held a high note a little too long and we all had our instruments up and were ready to play the big chord on the resolution, it was not uncommon for some of the musicians to start stomping their feet and start yelling, “Basta!” They would do this when the orchestra was clearly visible and within a few feet of the audience at Caracalla. Life was all very much like a Fellini movie.

There was another incident between two colleagues during a rehearsal. The trumpeter on one side of me just started yelling and calling the bassoonist on the other side of me a Bedouin, which is apparently a huge insult. I never found out what the problem was between the two of them. I cannot imagine that type of situation occurring in an American orchestra. We are much more restrained in this country.

The audiences are very particular about the caliber of performance. They are not shy about booing, or hissing, which is even worse, if they are unhappy about some aspect of the production. We had to stop in the middle of Don Giovanni, because of a heckler in the crowd. The singer who was the object of the booing decided he wasn’t going to take it without a good fight. He came back out on the stage, bouquet of flowers still in hand, and had a shouting match with the patron. Peter Maag, the conductor, just sat down and waited for all the yelling to stop. If you want to hear the rest of this crazy story, with a singer going into the audience after the heckler, e-mail me. I believe it was that night when I decided to relax and enjoy it because you just have to take the Italian culture as it is and not fight it. When in Rome...

We rehearsed in the morning, took a long break for a big midday meal, and then it was siesta time. Everything closes in the afternoon. There was usually an evening rehearsal or performance. The big topic of the evening was what everyone ate for lunch, in great detail, with the wine selection and a description of the particular sauce and the particular type of pasta. I believe we had one day off each week and it was Monday.

Those Summer Nights

The summer season was the most fun. At Caracalla, the outdoor venue in the ruins of the ancient Roman bath houses, the stage is huge, as is the pit. The place was packed every night, mostly by tourists. Traditionally, two operas and one ballet are performed during the summer. Curtain is late (9:00 p.m.), because it is still light late into the evening. Aida would last until 12:45 a.m. (Why are you in that silly tomb? Die, already!) The orchestras rehearsed the three productions and after all three were up and

running, our only obligations were the evening performances. I would be off completely on the days my colleague was playing the other opera.

What an Experience!

Despite the obstacles of trying to function in a different culture, understand the mores of the people, and understand the language and the laws (I had a lunatic landlord in Rome), it was an irreplaceable and unforgettable experience. I would encourage any musician to take a job in a foreign country. It will widen one’s perception of our world and help build international friendships and understanding. Music is, indeed, a universal language.

Cindy Scaruffi-Klispie received a Bachelor of Music degree from Illinois State University and a Master of Music degree from Northwestern University. She has played principal trumpet with the Rome Opera, the Italian Radio and Television (RAI) Orchestras in Naples and Turin, the San Carlo Opera (Naples), The Southwest Florida Symphony (Ft. Myers), and the Florida West Coast Symphony (Sarasota). Cindy currently plays with the Suncoast Brass, teaches at Edison College, and freelances in Florida.

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The 2008 Barry Tuckwell Institute a Success!

The Barry Tuckwell Institute (BTI) returned to Mesa State College in Grand Junction, Colorado and Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania during the summer of 2008. The two sessions brought together student, amateur and professional horn players from all over the country. Participants spent a week with Barry Tuckwell, Mary Bisson, Bob Lauver (Gettysburg only), Jean Rife, Karen Schneider (Gettysburg only), and pianist Tomoko Kanamaru (Gettysburg only) learning new techniques and enjoying playing the horn together. One of the particular features of the BTI is the creation of a supportive, non-competitive environment that encourages all participants to realize their potential.



One of the highlights of the Colorado session was a trip to the Grand Mesa just outside of Grand Junction. Horn choirs conducted by Barry Tuckwell lined up across a field with the antiphonal music spectacularly echoing off the nearby lake and mountains.

An unusual treat for the week in Gettysburg was a Ghost Tour lead by a local citizen who shared stories of some of the spirits that inhabit Gettysburg College. None were known to be horn players.

Both sessions featured master classes with Barry Tuckwell; sessions on assorted technical topics with members of the faculty; massed horn choirs lead by Barry and numerous horn ensembles that performed on each Finale Concert. Individuals were also showcased in recital performances during the week.

Mr. Tuckwell is pleased to announce that BTI will return to Mesa State College June 15-20, 2009. Details are still being worked out for the Gettysburg session as of this writing. Complete information and applications are available on the BTI's Web site at www.barrytuckwellinstitute.com.

Dr. Patricia Backhaus was selected as the new conductor of **The Studio Orchestra** in Madison, Wisconsin (www.disso.org). The ensemble is comprised of approximately 30 amateur musicians who perform classical, light classical, Broadway and popular standards. Active as a trumpeter, cornetist and conductor, two areas of Patricia's scholarly research include cornet soloists and their compositions, as well as women's bands.

Audrey Good began performing as a member of the horn section of the Charleston Symphony in the fall of 2008. She received her musical education at the University of Illinois and has performed with the Danville Symphony, Sinfonia da Camera, and The Four Hornsmen. She was an IWBC solo competition winner in 2003 and 2006.



Trumpeter **Karin Bliznik** is now principal trumpet of the Charleston Symphony, a position she began in the fall of 2008. Originally from Brockton, Massachusetts, Karin just completed her M.M. from Northwestern University. Some of her prior performance experience includes the London Philharmonic, Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra, Tanglewood Festival, Spoleto Festival, and the New World Symphony.



Lacey Hays is currently working on her DMA at the University of Oklahoma, studying with Karl Sievers. During the summer of 2008, she performed extra with the Guanajuato Symphony Orchestra (Mexico); played lead trumpet with the Cuban musician Paquito D'Rivera at the Alfredo San Malo Music Festival

Jan Kagarice Receives 2008 Neill Humfeld Award

Bass trombonist Jan Kagarice was awarded the 2008 Neill Humfeld Award by the International Trombone Association. This award recognizes outstanding trombone teaching, while honoring the teaching excellence of the late Neill Humfeld. Jan received this award at the International Trombone Festival in Salt Lake City, Utah in May of 2008. Jan is an adjunct trombone professor at the University of North Texas. She was a member of the award winning trombone quartet PRISMA and has been recognized worldwide for her groundbreaking work in the treatment of focal task-specific dystonia. The Neill Humfeld Award is granted by the ITA Board of Directors, Board of Advisors, and Council of Past Presidents.

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(Panama City, Panama); and toured Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay as principal trumpet of the Youth Orchestra of the Americas. In November, Lacey performed as principal trumpet (again with the Youth Orchestra of the Americas) at the 5th International Festival of Sacred Music and Art at St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican.



IWBC Board of Directors member **Maureen Horgan** commissioned composer, Douglas O'Grady, to write a work for trombone and digital electronic media. Entitled *Moe's Bit o'Blues*, it is a jazz-influenced work in three movements. She gave the premiere on April 24, 2008 at the Sound Sculptures II concert at Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville, Georgia, where both Maureen and Douglas are members of

the faculty. Her first commission was a work entitled *Passage* for trombone quartet by Perry Goldstein. In January of 2008, Maureen was a guest artist at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, where she performed a short recital of new works. She also gave a master class called "Working with the composer" at the University of South Carolina in Columbia in March 2008.

The **40th International Horn Symposium** was held in Denver, Colorado in July of 2008. IWBC members **Lisa Ford, Susan McCullough, Jennifer Montone, and Gail Williams** were featured at the symposium.

IWBC members **Chris Jaudes, Mike Tunnell, and Judith Saxton** performed at the **International Trumpet Guild Conference** in Banff, Alberta, Canada in June of 2008. Additionally, prominent female musicians **Karen Donnelly, Ingrid Jensen, Manon LaFrance, and Joan Watson** (hornist with True North Brass) performed at the conference. Trombonist **Wycliffe Gordon**, a 2006 IWBC Conference featured jazz artist, performed as well.



Jan
Kagarice



Natalie Mannix has accepted the position of Assistant Professor of Trombone at Towson University in Maryland. She is currently principal trombone of the Delaware Symphony and was a member of the United States Navy Band in Washington, DC for nine years. Her other performing credits

include the Navy Band Brass Quintet; freelancing with the National Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Kennedy Center and Washington Opera Orchestras; multiple solo appearances at the United States Army Band Eastern Trombone Workshop in Virginia; and master classes and recitals at numerous universities across the country. She recently presented an educational chamber music clinic at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago. Natalie has also performed with the Joint Services Brass and Percussion Ensemble at the International Women's Brass Conference. Originally from Huntington Woods, Michigan,

Send your NoteWorthy News items to Laurie Penpraze (rudaslokys@yahoo.com) or Susan Rider (smrider@verizon.net)

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she received her D.M.A. from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, her M.M. from the Juilliard School of Music in New York City, and her B.M.A. from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Donna Parkes now holds the principal trombone position with the Louisville Orchestra. Most recently, she performed with the San Francisco Symphony and was a member of the Virginia Symphony. Donna is also on the Board of Directors for the IWBC.



Raquel Rodriguez joined the Synergy Brass Quintet in August 2008 as their new trumpeter. Prior to joining the quintet, she was Assistant Professor of Trumpet and Brass Coordinator at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. Raquel performed as a member of the award winning Fountain City Brass Band from 2006-08. Raquel's advocacy of the brass band movement in North America has garnered her both group and individual awards at the NABBA, the U.S. Open Brass Band Championships, and the National Trumpet Competition. Additionally, she has performed with many regional orchestras in Texas, the Sunflower Festival Orchestra, and the Kansas City Symphony. Raquel is a Conn-Selmer artist.



Originally from Canada, **Michiko Singh** continues to perform as second horn with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, a position she has held since 2000. This season, the HSO plans to tour Maui, Kauai, and Lana'i. Among her many accomplishments, she has held positions with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Des Moines Metro Opera Orchestra, and the Vancouver, Memphis, and Hartford Symphony Orchestras. In 2003, she won first prize in the horn division of the IWBC Solo Competition. During the summer of 2008, she was one of 20 artists-in-residence at **Music by the Sea at Bamfield British Columbia** (www.musicbythesea.ca), an international music festival which was started in 2007.

Spotlight on... Jan Duga



Professional Position: Superintendent and tubist, The United States Air Force Band, Washington, DC

Hometown: Bexley, Ohio

Education: M.M. Arizona State University; B.M.E. The Ohio State University

Biggest Influence(s): My parents, Jules and Cyril Duga; Mike Jenks, my high school band director; my tuba teachers, Robert LeBlanc and Ray Nutaitis; Colonel Arnold D. Gabriel, Conductor Emeritus of The

USAF Band, and my first boss; numerous colleagues and a multitude of tuba students.

Most Memorable Musical Moment(s): Performing as a member of the Columbus Ohio Youth Orchestra for the dedication of the World Trade Centers in NYC in 1974; Making great music and positively affecting audiences in all 50 states and in several foreign countries, including a performance in Red Square in Moscow for the 50th anniversary of V-E Day.

Favorite Piece(s) of Music: Ottorino Respighi's *Pines of Rome*; Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* runs a close second.

Self Portrait: I'm a musician first, and the tuba is the means through which I make my music.

Greatest Accomplishment(s): In my 25-year career with the Air Force Band, being the first and still only female tuba player to hold a position with any of the Washington, DC based premier service bands.

Words of Advice or Wisdom: Show respect to others. Always conduct yourself in a manner that is above reproach, even if no one else is watching. Persevere—never give up just because “it’s too hard to do” or “it’s not my day.” Your diligence will eventually pay huge dividends, no matter what the goal.

Thoughts from the North: Horn Playing and the Inevitable Aging

By Frøydis Ree Wekre

I have to admit it—as I am getting older I am always looking more eagerly for the new voodoo of horn playing, stuff that will make my performance better; my tone more centered, stable and brilliant; my low range more rich sounding; my high range easier; my staccato more effortless (where can I find that one?); my intonation impeccable and my rhythm completely perfect (this would be wonderful).

What else? Oh yes, a light weight horn which is easy to hold, combined with the some extra weight on the valves and on the mouthpiece to avoid cracking up in fortissimo; the new stick arrangement to hold the horn up while playing so my arms can stay relaxed all the time, combined with frequent visits to the health club to strengthen my arms; a little practice device that encourages less pressure on the upper lip, another one which will give me the super power embouchure. And last, plenty of stuff for enhancing my breath capacity and speed of air, and thus the projection.

My mother used to say (when confronted with the wishes for new clothes from her teenage daughter) “youth decorates itself!” Only now am I beginning to understand fully what she meant. The costs of fixing the hair and of getting more cover-up-and-take-the attention-away-kind-of-clothes-and-accessories seem to be increasing with age, and for good reason.

As a brass player at this point of my life I wonder why I still have the urge to perform, and therefore to practice? When I first started in the Oslo Philharmonic at the age of 20, my older colleagues were incredibly generous in moving down from their seats to let me progress rapidly from fourth horn (which was written in my contract, but I never played it, except in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony) to third, and soon to the first, and the hottest seat. I thought this had to do with their age (they were around 45), and that this was a logical development in every horn player's life. After 40, not to mention 45, you must expect not to play as well, and therefore please get out of the hot seats, the sooner the better. Make life easier on yourself, don't practice on weekends, and take it as it comes. Let the young people sweat!

Is, or was this the European attitude? Was it a Scandinavian one? Somehow, this kind of attitude never did sink in for me. Maybe I spent too much time in North America. Over there, where there is no obligatory retirement age, I met so many unbelievably inspiring colleagues of advanced age. Tuba player Arnold Jacobs, at age 74, fixed up my breathing when I myself was already 40 years old; that gave me another 20 years of progress right there. Bud Herseth produced excellent solo trumpet playing in the Chicago Symphony way up in his seventies. Stephen Maxym, principal bassoon in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra for 40 years, celebrated his 75th birthday performing the Ligeti *Bagatellen* in Banff, Canada, after three weeks of intense teaching. And so forth and so forth.

It is not uncommon to discuss the differences between the lives of the brass and the string players. I think it could be compared with buying or renting a house for the rest of your life. When you buy a house (or decide to become a string player) you have to invest a lot in the beginning. There is a lot of money (hours and hours of practice) for the interest and the principal of the loans. As time goes by, the monthly costs of living in this house (playing this string instrument) normally will decrease. Maybe



Frøydis Ree Wekre

you even get to the point where you are close to debt free (the point where you can go away for a week or two without your instrument and still be OK on it when you come back. . .).

When you decide to become a brass player (or rent a place to live) the initial investment is not as large as that of the string players (or the house buyers). If you practice more than four intense hours a day you might get bruised up and destroyed, instead of becoming a better player. However, the rent always goes up with time! Try going away without your instrument for a couple of weeks and come back to whichever solo. Not just your self confidence might be at risk, but your job as well. This might be a key to understanding my old colleagues. They practiced what they always had done before, not more, and maybe not less, but they felt less and less comfortable being exposed on the job.

Another factor, I think, is the art of breathing. They followed the old rule by which I was also brought up: Breathe with your stomach, and never raise your shoulders. If you are wrong, and you do have a somewhat large torso from nature, and maybe you are male as well, then this rule might not be a hindrance for a good many years. But, one day it will feel different. Your ribs have stiffened up; you seem to never have enough air; those conduc-

“Get smarter at practicing, and do more of it rather than less as the years go by. That is according to experience if you really want to stay in your best playing shape.”

tors always want more volume; and the next thing you know, your self confidence is decreasing.

I already mentioned tuba player and breathing guru Arnold Jacobs from Chicago. It was really eye opening and liberating for me to hear this authority recommend taking and spending such large quantities of air that it might lead to the shoulders being raised. This kind of breathing might very well break somebody's old rule. However, for people with a small torso from nature, for women, and for people from 40 years and up, who all want to keep at it in their chosen profession, this is simply a smart way to get the most out of one's physical capacity.

Being already in the advice department, I might also mention the other physical factor which has helped me to last longer: the conscious use of support. For the most part, support is encouraged strongly by brass players in Europe. In opposition to this, the general rule in Chicago is: Stay loose, relax in the stomach area, and let the air do the job by itself, use only “song and wind!” The old middle European school of support leads to unnecessary tension and sometimes even cramps.

For me, this controversy between Europe and the USA was very confusing. It did not get better being involved in a pedagogical study in Norway where nine teachers at college/university level were asked to explain their philosophy on breathing (they were three flute teachers, three horn teachers, and three vocal teachers). One of the questions concerning this was “How do you explain the term ‘support?’” The answers were surprisingly different. Here are some quotes:

Flutes

Support is like an inner force that strikes outwards.

The support is constant by exhaling.

The support goes out and down, and it is flexible and active.

Singing

The stomach goes outwards by inhaling and inwards by exhaling.

The support is a muscular work which goes into function in order to secure the best possible quality of the sound.

This muscular activity is very complex and depends on posture and breathing.

Horn

I speak as little as possible about support; it is not necessary to use it.

I use support to avoid a scratchy sound. It feels like pushing on a balloon, and tension varies with different tasks.

Support happens low in the body. The stomach goes outwards and the tension is always the same.

Fortunately, Mr. Maxym, the bassoon player, cleared up the issue for me. Depending upon what kind of sound one wants, and what kind of muscular help one's embouchure needs, the use of flexible support can be a life (and music) saving trick. The fact that the larger muscles in the body can help the smaller ones may translate into a kind of co-operation between a certain muscular action in the lower abdominal area and the muscular activity around the mouthpiece in the face. A prime example of an occasion where this kind of help could come in handy—at least for some of us—would be the soft solo in the first horn part in the first movement of Shostakovich Symphony No. 5.

The best one is probably to get smarter at practicing, and (I am sorry to report) do more of it rather than less as the years go by. That is according to my experience if you really want to stay in your best playing shape! Maybe other horn players from my generation who are still performing have different experiences or additional advice?

Frøydis Ree Wekre is considered one of the premier hornists in the world. She performed as a member of the Oslo Philharmonic from 1965-1990. Frøydis is currently Professor of Horn and Chamber Music at the Norwegian State Academy of Music. She has also traveled the world as a soloist, chamber musician, baroque horn player, and clinician. In 2006, she was honored as a Pioneer at the IWBC Conference at Illinois State University in Normal.

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+In Memory of Rhea Jacobs and Fred Brown

The IWBC would like to recognize long time St. Louis Holiday Brass Concert volunteer workers, Rhea Jacobs and Fred Brown, who recently passed away. In recognition of their support of the IWBC, Loretto Kleykamp has donated \$500 in memory of Rhea, and Susan Slaughter has given \$500 for both Rhea and Fred's contributions to our organization. In this year's St. Louis Holiday Brass concert program, both of these individuals were recognized in writing by the following statement: "In loving memory of Fred Brown and Rhea Jacobs, friends and valued volunteers of the IWBC."

From the IWBC: We would like to gratefully acknowledge and thank all of you for your continued support of this important organization.

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