

NoteWorthy

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IWBC



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From the President

My grandmother used to tell me when I was a kid that “the older you get, the faster time will fly by.” I hate to agree, but it seems she was right. Can you believe that it is already summer? Well, the good news is that our conference is getting closer, and that is always an exciting time for us as we anticipate our next gathering (see below for the latest news from Joan Watson). In this issue, you’ll find a lot of great news and articles including “The Truth about Tension,” by occupational therapist Susan Thompson. Two of our members pay tribute to former solo cornetist of the Women’s Air Force Band, Martye Awkerman, who passed away in June of 2008. As always, our NoteWorthy News section is jam packed with news and activities of so many of our members. You all are so busy making lasting and important contributions to our music world! As we continue to plan the 2010 conference, please consider supporting us with not only a donation, but with your ideas and suggestions (please email me at

GAREUPHYAK@aol.com). Without your continued membership and support, the IWBC would not exist. Feel free to visit our Web site at <http://www.iwbc-online.org>. I want to give my continued thanks to Susan Slaughter for her vision and continued leadership of the IWBC. In addition, a special thank you to Susan Rider and Laurie Penpraze for creating such wonderful newsletters. On behalf of the IWBC Board of Directors, I wish you all a great summer and look forward to seeing you in 2010 in Toronto.

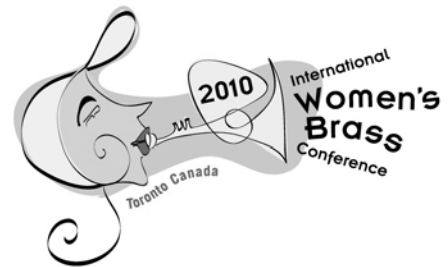
Gail Robertson
IWBC President

2010 IWBC Conference Update

One year to the next exciting IWBC Conference in Toronto, Ontario, Canada! Hosts for this conference are Joan Watson, Principal Horn of the Canadian Opera Company and founding member of True North Brass Quintet, and jazz trumpeter Denny Christianson, Head of the Department of Music at Humber College Lakeshore.

The conference will “surprise and delight” all attendees. Each day will begin with yoga classes and breathing exercises specific to each instrument and need, whether it’s calming, focusing, or energizing.

For this conference, we will focus on four distinct groups. For those who work with the youth, we will concentrate on starting youngsters on brass instruments and working to keep a school band balanced with enough brass. University players will get advice on practicing, enjoying music



making, seeing progress, as well as business and mentoring advice on becoming a professional musician. Professional soloists and brass ensembles will come from around the world to dazzle and inspire us. Finally, adult amateurs

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Martye Awkerman

NoteWorthy

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

IWBC Web site Address

www.iwbc-online.org

2010 IWBC Conference Web Site Address

www.iwbctoronto2010.com

2010 IWBC Conference Facebook Group

IWBC Toronto 2010

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Directory Password

Current password: 070106iwbc

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Membership Dues

An envelope for membership dues is included in this issue of the newsletter. Please use it to send your dues for July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. Thank you for your continued support of the IWBC!

Subscriptions

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Correction

In the winter 2008 newsletter, we printed an article titled "Thoughts from the North: Horn Playing and the Inevitable Aging" by Frøydis Ree Wekre. This article previously appeared in *The Horn Player*, *Hornposten*, and *Horn Call*. Through a misunderstanding, the IWBC Newsletter thought it had permission from Ms. Wekre to re-print this article. However, the newsletter was informed at a later date that the article had been re-printed without her confirmed permission. We regret that this situation occurred, and would like to thank Ms. Wekre for the contribution of her thoughtful and insightful article.

Susan Rider, co-editor

Jeanie Lee retires from Morehead State University

As trombonist Jeanie Lee retires from Morehead State University, we would like to thank her for her service to the IWBC. Jeanie has been an important asset and supporter of the IWBC through her impeccable work. She served as co-editor of the newsletter from 2004-06, and will continue in her role as membership coordinator.

Jeanie has been Professor of Trombone at Morehead State for 9 years. Previous to this, she was principal trombone of the Midland/Odesa Symphony and Anchorage Opera, among other positions. She completed her education at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan.

Of this new phase in her life, Jeanie says, "I've been making a living as a musician and teacher for about 23 years now. I find myself taking an early retirement to completely change my lifestyle, to live aboard a sailboat, and travel wherever the winds may take me. When I think of the new path that my life is taking, it just makes sense to me. I LOVE my job as a trombone professor and a performing musician. Why am I willing to leave it all? I've always told my students that I don't care what they decide to do with their lives as long as they do it with passion and commit themselves to being the absolute best that they can be. So I have

poured my heart into being the absolute best teacher and performer that I can be. And now I want the new challenge of acquiring new knowledge (I sometimes felt like I was getting a new degree as I studied sailing, navigation, first aid, and all the other new topics as I prepared for living aboard a boat), of living life in a minimal way (down-sizing your belongings from a two-story house to a 43' sailboat feels like a rejuvenation), slowing down the pace (the boat has a maximum speed of about 6 mph), being able to reconnect with my husband Scott (in a much deeper way than we ever could living our separate careers) and simply enjoying life to the fullest (traveling to remote places and enjoying the different cultures). In short, I want commit to this new life with the same passion that I hope I bring to everything that I do."

*Jeanie, we wish you and Scott safe travels
and grand adventures!*

Laurie Penpraze and Susan Rider, co-editors

2010 IWBC Conference Update continued from page 1

will get the opportunity to play and perform in brass ensembles each morning and be coached by visiting guest artists.

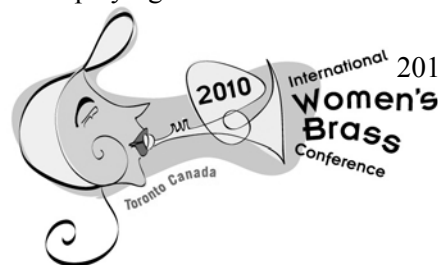
Of course, the solo competition is being held June 13-16. We will be opening this event up to local high school programs, so they can witness these talented competitors in action.

I am also pleased to announce that a professional from the Artists' Health Centre (a Toronto based organization that deals with artists' health issues) will be available to speak about injuries and other playing related health issues particular to women.

The final concert will feature the fabulous Hannaford Street Silver Band in a celebratory concert called "Brass Belles." The official Web site address for the 2010 Conference is www.iwbctoronto2010.com. You can also look for us on the Facebook group "IWBC Toronto 2010." Included on the Web site will be a blog and featured interviews with guest artists. There will be complete information to get everyone's adrenaline flowing and to get a jump on the most exciting IWBC conference yet. We hope to see you in Toronto next June 16-20 to experience a time to connect and enjoy brass playing at its finest.

Joan Watson

2010 IWBC Conference co-host



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The Truth about Tension

By Susan Thompson, OTR
Occupational Therapist

In therapy, there is a saying that “tone in the nose creates tone in the toes.” “Tone” in this sense is not a musical tone, but muscle tone, or muscle tension. It is proven through EMG studies (studies of the muscle activity) that tension in one part of the body, no matter how remote it may seem, creates increased tension in other parts of the body. Tension then, can be pervasive, and to a brass player may be counterproductive.

Getting a good breath before we play, establishing an efficient embouchure, and hearing and playing a phrase is all part of the fundamental brass playing process. Any non-relevant aspects to playing (such as tension) can detract our energies and impact our playing negatively, decreasing our overall performance. Tension diverts our energies to less effective muscle patterns and saps us of what could otherwise be used for higher performance. Who can create a beautiful nuance in a musical line if we are struggling to simply get a good breath?

With tension, it is difficult to get a good breath because our intercostals, neck and abdomen muscles can become constricted. Tension anywhere in our body can rob us of efficiency. The physiological result can even creep into our psychological mindset and not allow us to free our mind for musical thought. Tension can be like a weed that grows and spreads without our being aware and can impact our playing in a profound way.

What is tension?

Tension is simply a prolonged and sustained muscle contraction. Skeletal muscles have two primary functions: to stabilize and to mobilize (move). A muscle cannot stabilize and move at the same time. It must do one or the other. Therefore when a muscle has tension, it cannot be used for movement (for example if a hand is grasping and holding a large item, the fingers cannot move in a fast and refined manner).

Normally, our body has muscles for moving and others for stability. Our postural muscles are usually used for stabilizing. They are highly efficient at stabilizing for prolonged periods of time without consuming a lot of energy. Arms, legs, hands, fingers, and lips are usually used for moving. Tension results when we recruit too many moving muscles in an effort to stabilize them.

Mobility on Stability

Another common statement in therapy is that we build “mobility on stability”. We can only perform refined, precise skills (mobility) on a stable base. Imagine trying to thread a needle while sitting on a large inflated ball without your feet on the floor. Threading the needle is difficult, isn't it? Now imagine threading the needle while sitting in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. The task becomes much easier because you have a stable central base. The same is true of the embouchure. We create stability by anchoring the corners of the mouth. This allows us to have refined movement at the center of the embouchure. We even need stability when holding our instrument to perform fast technical passages with ease. In fact, the theory of mobility on stability is true for all motor skills.

Why do some players struggle with tension?

It has been my experience that most instructors tend to believe that ten-

sion is brought on by poor fundamentals or that the student strives so hard for perfection that the entire body tenses. In some cases, this might be true. However, there is another obvious, but often overlooked reason for tension: **the struggle to hold the horn in the most efficient manner possible.**

When the horn is too big or unwieldy, a person tends to recruit additional muscles to help stabilize and control the instrument. Often, the muscles used are the moving muscles. These can be over-worked in an attempt to hold the instrument in a controlled manner. When this happens, the result is often tension.

When a person is faced with a physical task that is not well matched for their body type and ability, they will typically develop compensatory muscle patterns. These muscles use more energy, and are less effective and efficient. In the short run, these patterns allow us to overcome the weight of the instrument and get the job done. But in the long run, these patterns undermine brass playing fundamentals.

Women vs. Men

For some, especially women low brass players, simply holding the instrument is an athletic feat. Because of women's particular body structure, it is often more difficult for them to hold a brass instrument compared to men. Consider that most women are smaller in stature, have less upper body strength and a lower center of gravity.

Studies show that women typically have 30% less upper body strength than men. Because brass instruments are primarily held with the upper body, women must exert at least 30% more energy towards simply holding the instrument than men.

Further, women also have a lower center of gravity (COG). Women's COG is towards their hips, whereas men's COG is more at the center of the chest. COG is used to counter balance a weight. In most instances, the brass instrument itself has a high COG. As a result, a man can use their higher COG to counterbalance the COG of the brass instrument, making it much less work for them to

hold the instrument. Women, on the other hand, do not have this distinct biomechanical leverage. Because of this, women expend more energy holding the instrument. Finally, the ratio of body weight to instrument weight is higher for women than for men. For example, a 125lb woman holding a 20lb instrument is holding an instrument that is 16% of her body weight. A 175lb man holding the same instrument is only holding 11% of his body weight.

The female euphonium player in Example A is approximately five feet tall and weighs 115lbs. Her arm length is short and her hands are small. Her instrument weighs about 15lbs, which is more than ten percent of her body weight. Because the COG of the instrument is higher than her own, she does not have an effective counter to balance out the instrument's weight. She must twist her body in order to reach the fourth valve and turn her head in an awkward posture to find the mouthpiece. Because the euphonium leans forward and away from the body, she must counter nearly the entire weight of the euphonium by holding it with her left arm.

Because this euphonium player is faced with many aspects that are not a good fit for her body size and make up, tension occurs. This may help her to hold the instrument for prolonged periods and to overcome the biomechanical aspects that are difficult. However, the tension is counter-productive to playing freely.

Note that her right shoulder is raised. This causes tension to flow upwards into her right neck muscle and ultimately into her face and embouchure. Her left arm is also tense due to the struggle to hold the instrument as its weight falls away from the body.

After years of playing in this postural pattern, this person will create a significant muscle imbalance in her body, with right upper quadrant tightness combined with left shoulder scapular weakness from the constant pull and stretch on her left arm. This imbalance can reverberate throughout her body, creating gait (walking) pattern changes and potential hip, neck, lower back and foot pain.

Unfortunately, the older we get, the more prominent these changes can be and the more impact they can have. So not only is reduced tension good for playing, but it is also good for longevity and pain free living.

A simple comparison is made in Example B of a man holding the same instrument. It is easy to see that he has much less to overcome. He has adequate arm length, upper body strength and leverage to hold the instrument with ease. Because the instrument size ratio is much more suitable, he is less likely to recruit tension.

Strategies to Reduce Tension

Rather than focusing on strategies that a player can develop on her own to reduce tension (mental monitoring, changing embouchures, more practice etc.), it is sometimes more effective and easier to change external factors to trigger a change in muscle patterns or habits. This is especially true when addressing tension that is a manifestation of struggling to hold the instrument.



Example A—Female Euphonium Player



Example B—Male Euphonium Player



Example C
—Fourth Valve Extension



Example D—Improved Position and Support



Example E—The Contact Points: bottom bow of instrument on the cushion, left arm around the instrument, and face on mouthpiece.

Some common therapeutic and effective strategies are:

- Keep it close.
- Keep it comfortable.
- Implement three-point stabilization.
- Use the correct muscles for the proper tasks.

By addressing any one of these strategies, one can reduce the work load of holding the instrument, lower tension and improve the overall potential for musical expression.

Keep it close (minimize COG differences)

One easy strategy is to move the instrument closer to the body. This can lower the effective weight of the instrument and make it easier to hold. It also reduces stress on the neck, arms and back. If the instrument is held far away from the body, one is struggling with a longer lever arm and the effective weight of the instrument is increased. By keeping the instrument close, we reduce the work load.

Keep it comfortable

Why not make holding the instrument as comfortable as possible? We tend to think that an instrument is held only one way. For many of us that one way is uncomfortable. Try creating a better fit by using stands, pillows, extensions, cushions, pegs, non-slip rubber matting and even a different instrument configuration (like a front action instrument rather than top action), to get as comfortable as possible. Comfort results in reduced tension, so experiment to find the most comfortable and effortless playing position. Examples C and D, above, demonstrate modifications made to the euphonium for the previously pictured female euphonium player to hold her instrument in a more comfortable, accommodating fashion.

She is using:

- A firm pillow with non-slip covering to support the instrument
- A more upright euphonium position, to reduce the load on the left arm
- A fourth valve extension to reduce the reach around the instrument

Note that her previously tense muscle patterns are greatly reduced. Because of these modifications, she is more relaxed, able to breathe better and play at a more refined level.

Three point stabilization

Three contact points are required to adequately stabilize an item or instrument. Occupational therapists make finger splints to stabilize a finger joint. A good finger splint has three contact points – two in front of the joint and one behind. This triangle of contact points thoroughly stabilizes the joint. The same holds true for holding an instrument. An attempt at holding an instrument with only two points of contact will most likely re-

sult in increased tension. Example E illustrates a person holding the instrument with three contact points.

Use the correct muscles for proper tasks

After making modifications so that holding the instrument is more feasible, assess which muscles are doing what tasks. Make sure that old patterns do not creep back in as a matter of habit. The stabilizing muscles such as abdominals, back extensors and shoulder should be activated but not over-working. Be sure to limit shoulder hiking, neck tension, and leg tension. If the instrument is being comfortably held, these muscles should not be over-engaged. The moving muscles such as the fingers and the center the embouchure should be lithe and relaxed. Moving muscles should be moving and stabilizing muscles should be stabilizing!

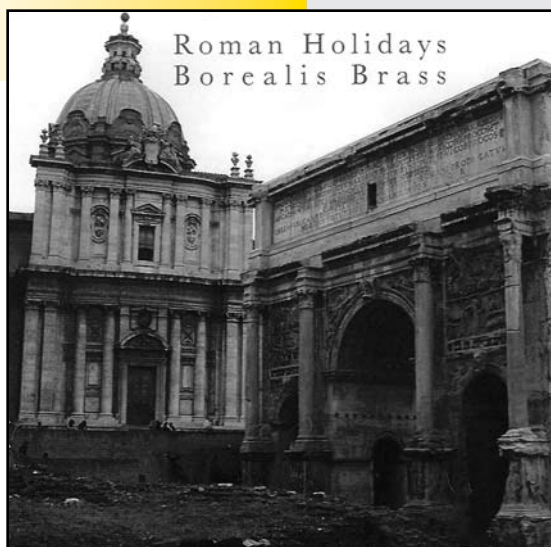
Conclusion

Tension is a common nemesis among brass players. The reasons for tension are often blamed on poor fundamentals. However, it can be brought on by a much overlooked and simple reason such as struggling to hold the instrument. By properly understanding and assessing the demands placed on the body to hold the instrument, small modifications can reap big benefits. Tension can be eliminated or greatly reduced by modifying how the instrument is held and making it a “better fit.”

Remember: Keep it Close, Keep it Comfortable and Play Freely!

Susan Thompson, OTR is an occupational therapist and a musician. As an occupational therapist she works with children and adults with disabilities. As a musician she is a euphonium and bass trombone player. She has played in the Dallas Wind Symphony, Florida Wind Band and the Brass Band of Central Florida.

NOTE- WORTHY NEWS



Roman Holidays Features Women Composers

In 2009, the Borealis Brass released their first CD recording featuring music exclusively by women composers. The CD, entitled *Roman Holidays* includes works by Emma Lou Diemer, Sheri Throop, Alessandra Bellino, Adriana Figueroa, Ludmilla Yurina, Elizabeth Raum, Sheri Marcia Damon, Gwyneth Walker, and Laura Caviani. It was recorded in Charles Davis Concert Hall at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, except for one live recorded work from the group's appearance at the 2006 IWBC Conference in Normal, Illinois. Core members of the Borealis Brass include Dr. James Bicigo (trombone), Dr. Karen Gustafson (trumpet), and Jane Aspnes (horn), all faculty members at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The ensemble adds additional instruments as they are needed for specific works. Borealis Brass was formed in 1994 to present performances of brass literature and commission new works. To date, they have commissioned over forty new works from composers ranging from the Americas, Australia, and Europe. To order this CD and for more information about the group, please visit: <http://www.borealisbrass.com>.

Emma Lou Diemer's *Time Pieces* for trumpet and organ or other keyboard, written for Colby and Carson Cooman, has just been published by Zimbel Press/Subito Music. Additionally, two pieces for brass trio, *Fanfare* and *Variations on Antioch* (both published by Tap Music), have been recorded on the **Borealis Brass** album *Roman Holidays* (see earlier Borealis Brass news item). Ms. Diemer's official Web site: <http://www.emmaloudiemermusic.com>.

Trumpet soloist **Alison Balsom** presented a master class at the North Carolina School for the Arts on February 20, 2009. Students of both Judith Saxton (NCSA) and Kevin Bowen (Wake Forest University) performed for Ms. Balsom during the class. Many of her comments focused on maximizing a performer's musical message and being able to connect with an audience. She also advocated the methods of James Stamp to develop a consistent way to perform. Ms. Balsom demonstrated her musicianship and attention to detail throughout the class. This year, Ms. Balsom became the first British woman to win Female Artist of the Year at the Classical Brit Awards.

The Brass Chamber Music Workshop in Arcata, California will be held in two one-week sessions: July 19-25 and July 26- August 1. The goal of the workshop is learning how to work together and refine a variety of music through the development of chamber music skills. Each evening, every group performs in front of all the other participants, all of whom sit on stage. Because of many of the lasting friendships that have developed, some people have attended the workshop for over 25 years. Check out <http://www.humboldt.edu/~extended/special/brass/index.html> for more information.

10-year-old **Natalie Dungey**, was 2009's first place winner in the Junior Division at the National Trumpet Competition held at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia in March. This talented trumpet player was in fourth grade at the time of the competition, and competed against players up to five years her senior. Natalie currently lives in Seattle, Washington.

Claire Hellweg, Co-Principal Horn of the Guanajuato Symphony Orchestra and Horn Instructor at the University Of Guanajuato School Of Music, recently returned from six weeks of studying with Frøydis Ree Wekre in Oslo, Norway with the support of the Marshall Fund grant from The Norway-America Association. She will return to continue her studies, focusing on pieces written for Wekre by Norwegian composers, in the winter of 2010 with an award from the American-Scandinavian Foundation.

Indiana University Southeast is having a **Regional Brass Band Invitational** on Saturday, June 27 from 1- 6 p.m. Athena Brass Band, conducted by Anita Cocker-Hunt, will be the featured band. Also performing will be Commonwealth Brass Band, Derby City Brass Band, and the Brass Band of Central Illinois. For information see <http://www.ius.edu/music>.

Carol Jantsch, Principal Tuba of the Philadelphia Orchestra and faculty member at the Curtis Institute of Music, just released her first solo tuba CD recording, *CASCADES*. Works on the CD in-

Ken Shifrin in Bratislava and Prague

Trombonist Ken Shifrin was a guest of the Slovakian Academy of Music in Bratislava and the Prague Conservatory of Music. For his recital in Bratislava, he was joined by trombonists Mike Hall (Old Dominion University) and Brano Belorid (Slovakian Philharmonic). He also presented a lecture on the historical background of the solo baroque trombone, and conducted a master class with students of Professor Albert Hrubovcak. In Prague, Dr. Shifrin was joined by Pavel Cermak (Principal Trombone, Czech Radio Symphony) during his recital, which featured works for the alto trombone. He also gave a seminar on his recent discoveries of solo baroque trombone repertoire. Additionally, Dr. Shifrin's group 'Posaune Voce Trio' gave a series of concerts in upper Bohemia during the spring of 2009. For further details, please contact Nigel Pennington at kvalita@aol.com.

clude Astor Piazzolla's *Suite for Two Guitars*, Allen Vizzuti's *Cascades*, and Dmitri Shostokovich's *Adagio*. Other works by Chiayu, Milhaud, Penderecki, and Khachaturian also appear on the recording. The disc is available at <http://www.caroljantsch.com>.

The **10th Maryland Early Brass Festival** was held at Goucher College in Baltimore Maryland on February 21, 2009. Presenters and performers at this year's festival included Paul Hopkins (natural horn), Elisa Koehler (cornetto), Kentucky Baroque Trumpets, and the U.S. Army Old Guard and Fife Drum Corps. This annual free event for the public was sponsored by Goucher College's Elizabeth B. and David Allen Robertson Lectureship Fund. The director the Maryland Early Brass Festival is Elisa Koehler, a faculty member at Goucher College. For more information go to: <http://www.goucher.edu/earlybrass>.

Rob Roy McGregor organized the **La Crescenta Brass Bash** which was held on February 7, 2009 at La Crescenta Presbyterian Church. The event was sponsored by the Crescenta Valley Arts Council and it featured members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic brass section performing with local students. The concert was such a success that it will become a bi-annual event, alternating with the **Baroque Bash**.

The **Monarch Brass Quintet** will be performing on July 18, 2009 for the Delta Omicron National Convention at 8:00 pm at the Holiday Inn Airport Hotel and Convention Center in Erlanger, Kentucky. Members to perform at the conference include: **Dr. Amy Gilreath**, Professor of Trumpet, Illinois State University; **Jeannie Little**, Professor of Trombone, Louisiana State University; **Velvet Brown**, Professor of Tuba and Euphonium, Pennsylvania (Penn) State University; **Laurel Ohlson**, Associate Principal Horn, National Symphony Orchestra; **Susan Slaughter**, Principal Trumpet, Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.

The **National Jazz Workshop** is scheduled for July 19-24, 2009. This comprehensive and inexpensive workshop is designed for students and educators and is based on the spirit and traditions of

NOTE-WORTHY NEWS



Ken Shifrin (L.) and Pavel Cermak

the Stan Kenton jazz workshops that revolutionized jazz education in the United States. Students may focus on performance, arranging, or music technology. Faculty, sponsors and performing artists include The Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra (featuring the music of Johnny Hodges), The Navy Commodores, Buffet/Crampon, The Jazz Educators Network (JEN), The U.S. Army Blues, Pete Barenbregge from Alfred Publishing/Belwin Jazz, arrangers Alan Baylock and Bryan Kidd, The Capitol Bones, and Courtois trombones. The National Jazz Workshop 2009 will be hosted by Dr. Robert Larson, Director of Jazz Studies at Shenandoah University and directed by Matthew Niess. Visit <http://www.Nationaljazzworkshop.org> for more information.

Cindy Scaruffi-Klispie has completed the book *Twenty Orchestral Studies for Trumpet*. It is designed to assist the musician to overcome specific technical and stylistic difficulties in the trumpet parts of frequently performed orchestral works. Also, she has arranged the *Alleluia* from the *Exsultate Jubilate* of W.A. Mozart for brass quintet (Bb and C trumpet parts included). For more information on the availability of these resources, please contact Ms. Scaruffi-Klispie at klispie@hotmail.com.

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

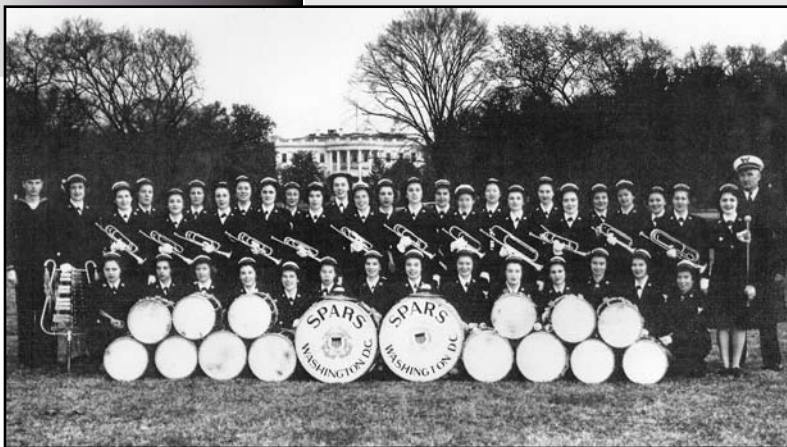
NOTE- WORTHY NEWS

Women of U.S. Coast Guard SPAR Band Remembered

A new study by Joanna Hersey and Jill Sullivan of the women of the **United States Coast Guard SPAR Band** was published in the April 2009 *Journal of Historical Research in Music*. This band was formed during World War II to raise money for the war effort and entertain the troops. The research for this study on the band's membership and its responsibilities for the duration of the war used a number of different sources to include interviews, letters, an autobiography, concert programs, a radio transcript, one recording, photographs, email correspondence, newspaper articles, and miscellaneous

personal artifacts. The SPAR Band (SPAR stands for *Semper Paratus*, the motto of the U.S. Coast Guard, which translated means 'always ready') was formed in 1943, and normally had a brass section of four trumpets, four horns, four trombones, two euphoniums, and one or two tubas. The women's band was unique in that its members were given musician's ratings (equivalent to military rankings) and they were the only women's band during the war to perform a weekly radio broadcast. These performers reported that prior to the war their previous performance experience was solely from their school bands. The SPAR band was terminated in 1946 at the close of the war, and all of the

members dismissed from service. It is reported that these women's military band service was often the highlight of their lives, and after the war it opened doors to other performance opportunities.



**United States Coast Guard
SPAR Band**

Silicon Valley Brass Band debuted in the fall of 2008 as part of the music department at Mission College in Santa Clara, California with Tony Clements as conductor. Please visit <http://www.siliconvalleybrassband.org> for more information.

Dr. Faye Ellen Silverman, a faculty member of Mannes College The New School for Music and Eugene Lang College The New School for Liberal Arts, was composer-in-residence at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania from March 27-March 30, 2009. Dr. Silverman lectured on her music for classes and met privately with students during this residency. On March 29, tubist Dr. Daniel Burdick performed the world premiere of *Edinboro Sonata* with the composer, Dr. Faye-Ellen Silverman, at the piano. This work was commissioned by the Edinboro University Chamber Players. *Edinboro Sonata* will be published by Seesaw/Subitio. Stories for Our Time, Dr. Silverman's new work for trumpet and piano (to be published soon by Seesaw/Subitio) was premiered in New

York City. Silverman was in Lithuania during the middle of May, sponsored by the American Embassy in Lithuania. In addition to giving lectures, she had the world premieres of *The Wings of Night* for chorus and orchestra, and *Processional* for classical guitar.

In the winter of 2009, composer **Joelle Wallach** was the guest artist at the Helene Wurlitzer Foundation of New Mexico in Taos. During this time she was completing her work *Runes and Ritual* for the James Piano Quartet, and also a new orchestral overture for a consortium of six orchestras spearheaded by the Napa Valley, Champaign/Urbana, and Rockford Symphony Orchestras. In March, Ms. Wallach was featured at the 9th Annual Women Composers Festival of Hartford where several of her choral works were performed (including three world premieres). She has also given lectures on several musical topics ranging from The Gershwin Brothers, Maurice Ravel, and Rodgers and Hammerstein in the New York City area. Ms. Wallach's work *In a Dark Time* (for horn and piano) was commissioned for and premiered at the 2006 IWBC Conference. For further information, please visit: <http://www.joellewallach.com>.

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

CD Review: Manhattan Stories, Faye-Ellen Silverman

Albany Records U.S., 2009 (Troy1055)

Translations (2004)

Bruno Eicher, violin/Kari Jane Docter, cello

Dialogue (1976)

Ann Ellsworth, horn/ Andrew Bove, tuba

Dialogue Continued

Ann Ellsworth, horn/ Lisa Albrecht, trombone/Andrew Bove, tuba

Taming the Furies (2003)

Mary Barto, flute

Protected Sleep (2006)

David Jolley, horn/ Michael Lipsey, marimba

Love Songs (1997)

Poetry by Sara Teasdale

Jeanne Corinne Goffi-Fynn, soprano/Mary Barto, flute

Left Behind (2006)

Poetry by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Jo Williamson, mezzo-soprano/Ann Ellsworth, horn

Manhattan Stories is an inspiring collection of pieces. Manhattan, the composer explains, is where many of her friends live and where the works on this recording originate. Each piece stands alone, yet there is a common thread which ties these works together by means of Silverman's fluid melodies, colorful instrumental and vocal combinations, and the language of the spirit coming through the music.

Translations, for violin and cello, was commissioned by Philip A. De Simone. It celebrates the life of a friend of his, using references to the Jewish tradition through the use of harmonic minor scale fragments, and "translates" melodic material through the use of variation. Bruno Eicher, violin, and Kari Jane Docter, cello, play the hauntingly beautiful melodic lines with rich, pure sounds that invoke the sense of the ancient, of remembering.

Dialogue is a duet for horn and tuba. An opening section is characterized by running eighth notes and trills, followed by a more rhythmic section. Bove and Ellsworth effectively perform this virtuosic piece which truly sounds like a conversation that is sometimes pointed and dissonant, and sometimes cooperative, if not totally harmonious.

When Susan Slaughter commissioned *Dialogue Continued* for the Monarch Brass Quintet's performance at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, she asked for a piece for horn, trombone and tuba, so that the trumpets could have a rest. The work is in five short movements which give each instrument a chance to display technical expertise. Contrary motion, interweaving lines, and melodic lines over sustained tones serve to give this piece the character of a diverging and converging conversation. Trombonist Lisa Albrecht joins the horn and tuba with technical and lyrical prowess. The three achieve a fine, in-tune blend.

Taming the Furies depicts the descent of Orpheus into the Underworld, as he convinces the Furies to release his beloved Eurydice. Rich with tone painting, the piece depicts the mythological story with descending lines (the journey to the Underworld), trills (bird calls), sharp interjections (the Furies' responses), and finally, repose. Mary Barto's rich flute sound is convincing and colorful.

The marimba is an instrument which blends beautifully with the middle-to-lower brass instruments, and in *Protected Sleep* this

is evident. Written for horn and marimba, it is a lullaby based on the Sephardic song "Durme, durme," the Ladino text of which means *Sleep, sleep my beloved damsel; sleep, sleep with out anxiety or pain*. Both the marimba and horn parts are virtuosic, and both performers navigate the technical passages with ease. The beauty of the piece lies in Jolley's rendering of the melody with richness of tone and expression, while Lipsey balances and accents cleanly.

Love Songs is written for soprano and flute, in a setting of the poetry of American Sara Teasdale (1884-1933). It is said of Teasdale, who was born in St. Louis and is buried there, that she was not able to express the passion she set forth in her poetry in real life. In this setting, the ranges of Teasdale's emotions are brought forth in the angular and lyrical melodies. This work consists of four poems with two flute interludes. Mary Barto's sound compliments the clear, agile voice of Jeanne Corinne Goffi-Fynn. The second interlude, for alto flute, is hauntingly beautiful.

The final selection, *Left Behind*, is another setting of songs, this one on two poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay. Scored for soprano and horn, it was inspired by a piece by Ann Ellsworth and Jo Williamson called *Left, Right*, about Ms. Ellsworth's experience of staying home while her husband went to Iraq. *Left Behind*, as the composer states, "can refer to those left behind in war, or those left behind by death or merely by the end of a relationship. The feelings are universal." In the introduction, the soprano begins by humming, and is joined by the horn which soon descends into the low register. The horn then introduces the first poem, "The Dream." Intensity grows, as does the range in both parts, to depict the rising angst and deep despair of the text. A horn interlude follows, exploring a wide range. It is expertly played by Ellsworth. The piece ends with the second poem, "Sonnet II,"

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Remembering Martha Jean Awkerman (1928-2008)

Editor's note: Two IWBC members, Jan Duga and Susan Fleet, wanted to individually pay tribute to Martha "Martye" Jean Awkerman, a member of the Women's Air Force Band. Both offer some personal experiences as well as information about Martye's career.

From Jan Duga

(Member, United States Air Force Band, Washington, DC)

I first met Martye Awkerman at the 1993 International Womens' Brass Conference in St. Louis. I was performing as a tuba soloist and also with a Joint-Service Brass and Percussion ensemble. Martye, an accomplished trumpet player and former cornet soloist and dance band leader served with the Women's Air Force (WAF) Band in San Antonio, Texas from 1954-1961. The band toured all over the United States and Puerto Rico. I was not aware of the WAF Band until I met Martye. At the time, I was already a 10-year member of The United States Air Force Band without a clue about the history that preceded me.

Martye studied music with band director J. Richard Burkholder, graduating from Mount Union (PA) High School in 1946. She received a scholarship to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. While at the conservatory, she performed as a soloist on the Young Artist Series, which traveled to different colleges. She was a member of Sigma Alpha Iota Music International Fraternity for Women and was given the Sword of Honor award for outstanding musicianship.

After graduation, she remained at the conservatory as a teacher of trumpet until 1951. Martha then joined the George Hormel Band. They traveled the United States as an all-girl promotional group and did coast-to-coast radio broadcasts on ABC and NBC radio until 1953. She spent time with the USO Band, in New York, NY through 1954. She then formed her own girl combo, which was flown by the Air Force, playing at different military bases in Alaska. Martye returned to Mt. Union to teach and pursue post-graduate studies at Penn State University.

In 1993, she told me of her goal to perform as a member of the United States Air Force Band in Washington, DC. She never had that opportunity since at the time the USAF Band was not open to women musicians. A few years later, I saw an archived out-processing document listing the WAF Band members' goals for when the group disbanded in the early 1960s. Some wanted to be flight hostesses, while others wished to start families, etc. Martye's entry said, "to play in the USAF Band in Washington, DC." Seeing that in writing was very profound. Here I was (with the other women who had served as members of the USAF Band since 1973) living Martye's dream.

After her service with the WAF Band, she spent 22 years with the Long Beach (CA) Municipal Band. She was their first woman member. Her recognized musical achievements were evidenced by her involvement in the popular TV programs *What's My Line*, *The Johnny Carson Show* and *the Today Show*. She played with the Barnum and Bailey Circus Band, and many musical theater shows including *West Side Story*, *Damn Yankees*, *Redhead*, and *42nd Street*.

Over the years Martye worked with musicians from the former Big Bands, including Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Harry James, Jack Teagarden, Ray Anthony, Benny Goodman, Xavier Cugat and Glenn Miller.

“ Her enthusiasm for learning and teaching was contagious and far-reaching. ”

She also played with various bands that accompanied the singers Sarah Vaughn, Della Reese, Charo, Lennon Sisters, Nat King Cole and Ethyl Merman.

Martye was a great letter writer and would keep in touch by phone. I was able to visit her after she moved back to Carlisle, PA. We shared stories, talked at length about music and music-making and laughed a lot. Martye always had a lot of questions regarding my career with the band, and was a constant source of support, encouragement and strength. Her enthusiasm for learning and teaching was contagious and far-reaching. She set a high bar with her solo cornet and trumpet playing (even stumping a few of my colleagues who thought the recordings they were listening to of *La Virgen De La Macarena* and *Willow Echoes* were being played by male trumpet players).

When Martye passed away last year, a few dozen family members, former WAF Band members and friends gathered for a simple ceremony and interment in her hometown of Mt. Union, PA. I felt honored to present an American flag to her family at her funeral.

Martye left an indelible mark as a pioneer for women brass players and as a musical icon. Her stellar contributions helped pave the way for women to finally receive the opportunity to join the USAF Band. I hope to continue to honor her legacy. In the Air Force we call it "Being faithful to a proud heritage." I think her life speaks volumes for all women brass players who set their sights high and persevere in attaining their musical goals.



**“This guy wanted to marry me. He said, ‘It’s me or the horn.’
I said, ‘Well, it ain’t you, babe.’”**—Martye Awkerman,
quoted in *Swing Shift, “All-Girl” Bands of the 1940s*, by Sherrie Tucker

From Susan Fleet
(Trumpeter, Novelist, and Music Historian) www.susanfleet.com

When I met Martye at the first IWBC conference in 1993, she was no longer playing trumpet professionally, but her passion for music remained as keen as ever. A warm engaging woman with an infectious smile, Martye had boundless enthusiasm for swapping stories, sharing memories of her career with all she met. Many became friends, as I did, and we will miss her greatly.

Born in 1928 in Mount Union, PA, Martye took up the trumpet at age nine, carrying on the family musical tradition. Her mother, Rhoda, was a church organist for 45 years, and her father, Marshall, played piccolo and flute in the Marine Corps. Her trumpet teacher was

“Many became friends, as I did,
and we will miss her greatly.”

J. Richard Burkholder, whom she later credited with much of her success. As a high school senior, Martye won a seat in the Pennsylvania All-State Band. The conductor that year was Dr. Frank Simon, former cornet soloist with the John Phillip Sousa Band. Impressed by Martye's talent, Simon recommended her for a full scholarship to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music where he then taught. In addition to her lessons with Simon, she also studied with Henry Wohlge-muth, principal trumpet of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

After her graduation in 1951, she joined the Hormel Girls Orchestra, financed by George Hormel, owner of the Hormel Meat Packing Company. For six years she traveled the United States, playing performances that were taped for twice weekly broadcasts on ABC and NBC radio. When the group disbanded, Martye formed an all-female Dixieland quintet and played USO tours, six weeks in Alaska, followed by a 20-week tour of Korea, the South Pacific and Europe. She then returned to Mount Union, Pennsylvania. While taking courses at Penn State, she learned of the Women's Air Force (WAF) band, auditioned and won a seat in the band.

“I was the cornet soloist for six years,” she later said. “We played for the Kentucky Derby ball and President Kennedy's inauguration.” Her greatest ambition was to play in the United States Air Force Band based in Washington, D.C., but at that time the band was not open to women. When the WAF band deactivated in 1961, Martye auditioned for the Long Beach (CA) Band and became the first woman to play in the all-male ensemble. Some of these gentlemen had played in the John Phillip Sousa band. During her 22 years with the Long Beach Band, she also gave trumpet lessons and played with an all-woman band that appeared on various West Coast television shows. But after a tense trip home on a foggy highway one night after a New Years Eve gig in 1983, she decided to retire. In 1991 the Mount Union (PA) Schools honored Martye as a Distinguished Alumna for her achievements in music. During her long career, she worked with many distinguished artists, appeared on television shows (see Duga) and played under conductors Frank Simon, Eugene Ormandy, circus band director Merle Evens, and WAF band director Marybelle J. Nissly,

Martye loved living in California, but she also enjoyed traveling. On a trip to Washington, D.C., she photographed the gravestones of John Phil-

lip Sousa and famed cornet soloist Herbert L. Clarke at the Congressional Cemetery, and visited the Women's Service Memorial. In her letters to me she said her happiest memories were of the 1993 IWBC Conference and a 1997 reunion of the WAF band. During our 15 year correspondence, we often swapped audio tapes. I am indebted to her for tapes of the Hormel Girls, Maiden Voyage and DIVA, which I used in my Women in Music classes at Berklee College of Music. She also sent me tapes of her solo performances at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music that were, to say the least, very impressive.

In 2007, in failing health, Martye returned to Pennsylvania to be closer to her brother, Charles Awkerman. She died June 9, 2008. Martye's WAF Band and Long Beach Band papers are held in the University of Illinois Archives.

My thanks to Sherrie Tucker, Jan Z Duga and Marie Speziale for helping me compile this final salute to a wonderful friend and a terrific trumpet player.

Photo credit

Martye in her WAF uniform with trumpet, courtesy of Sherrie Tucker

Sources

1. Opening quote: *Swing Shift, "All-Girl" Bands of the 1940s*, by Sherrie Tucker.
2. Fleet-Awkerman correspondence and papers compiled by Martye's brother for her Distinguished Alumna Award, 1991. News article re: USO Tour in Alaska, no date or publication given. “Martye Awkerman reflects on musical ‘roots’ in Mount Union,” Toni Hancock, *Huntingdon Daily News*, 1989.
3. “Faithful to a proud heritage,” Jan Z. Duga, *Air Force Print News*, 8/29/2008.

CD Review continued from page 11

with the soprano singing wide leaps and the horn in a virtuosic display. There is no release from the burning memories of the writer's beloved, and the piece ends quietly.

Ms. Silverman's music is poignant. Sometimes it offers the listener breathing room, release; other times it presses on the emotions. The listener is invited to let the imagination oscillate from abstract feelings to distinct emotions, to experience the musical organization as well as freedom within that organization, and to bask awhile in the richness of the sounds

and words. And it is a pleasure to hear musicians who color their sounds in a way which richly expresses the music.

Reviewed by Jo Dee Davis,
Professor of Trombone,
University of Missouri,
Kansas City Conservatory

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

Spotlight on...Langston Fitzgerald



Professional Position: Professor of Trumpet, Penn State University; Baltimore Symphony (retired)
Hometown: Washington, DC Metropolitan area

Education: B.M.E, Howard University; M.M. and D.M.A. Catholic University of America

Biggest Influence(s): My mother, father, and the rest of my family. Also, my many teachers to include John Stephens, William J. Penn, Lloyd Geisler, Wynton Marsalis, and John Faddis.

Most Memorable Musical Moment(s): Musicians Against Nuclear Arms Concert with Leonard Bernstein in Washington, DC in 1984; Conversing with Maurice Andre "en Francaise" while traveling from Tokyo to Osaka in 1986; Performing the Haydn trumpet concerto with the Baltimore Choral Arts Society in France in July 2007.

Favorite Piece(s) of Music: I particularly love music of the Baroque and performing on the piccolo trumpet. In addition to performing solo trumpet music, I enjoy performing orchestral music by the "greats"—Beethoven, Mahler, Strauss, Berlioz, and Wagner, to name a few.

Self Portrait: Sensitive, perceptive, intuitive, 'happy-go-lucky,' 'down-to-earth,' fun-loving, honest, and nonjudgmental;

extremely spiritual, yet not necessarily religious.

Greatest Accomplishment(s): My 33 years with the Baltimore Symphony (to include numerous recordings, domestic and international tours, performing under many noteworthy conductors); performing and conducting at the 2005 ITG Conference in Bangkok, Thailand.

Words of Wisdom: Play flow studies, think musical line and tone production, perform with passion and practice. Pay attention to the details! Play in the present, not in the future or past. Your diligence will eventually pay huge dividends, no matter what the goal. I believe that all people should be treated with the utmost respect.

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