

AN ARTIST'S CORNER

featuring

Amy Bowers



Amy Bowers is an active freelance musician in California and tenured member of Santa Rosa Symphony, beginning in 2002.

Ms. Bowers is a highly sought after orchestral musician performing with a variety of orchestras including Pacific Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra, Pasadena Symphony, among many others. Amy currently teaches at Orange County School of the Arts, Idyllwild Arts Summer Festival, and she maintains a large private studio with students throughout Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside Counties. Her students have gone on to prestigious music schools including Juilliard, San Francisco Conservatory, University of Southern California (USC), University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), among others. Amy graduated from USC with

an undergraduate and graduate degree in trombone performance, going on to be an adjunct professor from 2002-2016.

She has won many solo competitions including Pasadena Solo Competition, Sigma Alpha Iota Young Artist Competition, USC Concerto Competition, YMF Debut Orchestra Concerto Competition, and the Pasadena Young Artist Solo Competition. She has also been a featured soloist with the Colburn Zipper Orchestra, Idyllwild Wind Ensemble, Fullerton College Wind Ensemble, and was the recipient of the Robert Marsteller Outstanding Brass Player Award from the Thornton School of Music.

Amy has also performed with a wide variety of artists such as Andrea Bocelli, Kanye West, Seth McFarlane, Merv Griffin, Kenny G, Michael Feinstein, Marvin Hamlisch, David Foster, John Williams, and Katherine McPhee.

How old were you when you began playing your instrument? Did you start playing another instrument before your current one?

I was 13 when I started trombone. I played violin in 4th grade then flute from 5th-12th grade. I played trombone in high school marching band and flute in concert band. My sophomore year we all marched with baritones so that's when I started to play the euphonium. Once I went to college I stuck to trombone and euphonium.

What equipment do you primarily use?

I play a Bach 42. I've always loved the sound of the Bach trombone.

What are some of the highlights of your career?

Some of the highlights of my career have been playing with San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Los Angeles Opera, and Pacific Symphony. Also during college I went to a bunch of summer music festivals which allowed me to see parts of the world I never anticipated being able to see; including Japan, Germany, Spain, and Italy. I'd never been on a plane till I was 18 so getting to travel to Europe and Asia was amazing!

What or who inspired you to play your instrument?

I was kind of boy crazy so when I won a scholarship on flute I ended up using that money to take a few trombone lessons so I could sit next to the boy I liked in high school.

Discuss your early musical experiences. Why did you pursue music?

My main teacher was Terry Cravens at USC. I studied with him from 1996-2002 while I was in school. I also studied with Mike Hoffman, Byron Peebles, and Noreen Harris Baer. I took euphonium lessons from Alan Baer and Doug Tornquist 1994-1996 while I was at Cal State Long Beach.

I absolutely loved music from as early as I can remember. When I was in 4th grade a woodwind quintet came to my elementary school and I was mesmerized by the flute! I went home that day and told my Mom I wanted to play the flute.

How old were you when you decided that you were going to be a professional musician?

Band was always my most favorite subject. From early on, I knew I'd pursue music as a career. The only thing was I had no idea people made a living

playing their instruments so I decided to become a high school band director. It wasn't till my first year of college that I learned people made money playing! So after two years of being an education major I transferred to USC from CSULB and became a trombone major.

How much do you practice on a typical day?

On a typical day I practice around an hour. When I was in college I practiced as much as possible. Usually 3+ hours.

Do you have a website? If so, what is the address?

amydanielle90.wixsite.com/amybowerstrombone

Who are your main influences in your life (not just music!)?

I've been so lucky to have wonderful people support and influence me. Many of those people were my music teachers including Phil Mortensen, my high school band director; Terry Cravens and Mike Hoffman, my trombone teachers who I am so lucky to get to work with now as a professional. And of course, my Mom who always supported me and encouraged my love of music.

Please give some tips for freelancing.

Freelancing can be a tricky business. My tips are to always be prepared, show up early, and be someone people like to have around. If you have a good attitude and people like you, that will help you be successful. Being a great player is only a portion of being a successful freelancer. Also remember it takes time to become established.

Is anyone else in your family a musician?

I've always been envious of people who grew up with musicians in their family. I would have loved to have known all the things my students know at their age! I do feel incredibly grateful that I have had so much success starting my instrument so late.

What is your favorite place that you have performed?

I got to play the Brahms Requiem in the Berlin Philharmonie where the Berlin Philharmonic performs. That was just an incredible experience!

What advice would you give to someone interested in majoring in music in college?

My advice for students interested in majoring in music would be that if music is your ultimate passion and you are willing to put in your maximum effort I'd

say "Go For It!" I believe in pursuing your dreams. That's what I did and it was scary but things have turned out great and I feel so lucky to get to play trombone for a living. In my first lesson with Terry Cravens he asked me what I would do if I couldn't play the trombone. I sat for a few moments trying to think of something then replied that I didn't know. That's when he told me I should come to USC and study music. Being a musician isn't always easy but I couldn't imagine doing anything else.

Do you have any tips for preparing for auditions?

I'm working on a big project right now. I'm preparing to record the Concert and Contest Collection solos to put on Youtube. My dream is to have high quality recordings available to students so they can be inspired to learn solos and improve their playing. When preparing for auditions, the most important thing is to record yourself. It is the best tool and everyone has access to a smart phone that can record audio or video. Do this everyday! You will improve greatly!

Who are your favorite composers?

I love Brahms, Berlioz, Mahler, and Mozart. The Brahms Requiem and the Mozart Requiem are probably my favorite pieces of music. And what trombone player can resist Symphonie Fantastique or Mahler 2??????

Do you like to teach? Why or why not?

I love to teach. Being able to pass on my love of music to others is the best gift.

What are your favorite solos for your instrument?

Some of my favorite solos for trombone are Sinfonia by Pergolesi, the Grondahl Concerto, and Sonata in f minor by Telemann.

What advice would you give to young women interested in having a career in music?

To all the young ladies out there that want to play trombone, I encourage you to surround yourself with teachers and colleagues that support you. I feel so lucky to have been brought up in a progressive environment where I wasn't looked down upon for playing a "masculine" instrument. For those of you who know me well, I'm about as girly as one can be. I like pushing that boundary and watching it change. Over the past twenty years I've taught many students and I love seeing how many girls are picking up the trombone. I really think

times are changing and we will see more and more professional women trombonists as the years go on.