

# AN ARTIST'S CORNER

*featuring*

## Brian Hecht



**Brian Hecht**, a native of Dallas, Texas, joined the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra as Bass Trombone in September 2013. Prior to joining the Atlanta Symphony, Mr. Hecht held the position of bass trombone with the United States Navy Band in Washington, DC.

Brian has enriched his career by performing with other major orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra (under the baton of Simon Rattle), San Francisco Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic, Washington National Opera, Lyric Opera of Baltimore, and the Kennedy Center Ballet.

He has been a featured soloist with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, U.S. Navy Band, U.S. "Pershing's Own" Army Band, Kennesaw State University Wind Ensemble, University of Texas Trombone Choir, University of Georgia Trombone Choir, University of Central Arkansas Trombone Choir, Texas State University Trombone Choir, Penn State Trombone Choir and the Georgia Brass Band. He can be heard on several of the U.S. Navy Band's CD's and DVD's as well as the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's CD's "Vaughan Williams: Dona Nobis Pacem" and "Christopher Theofanidis' Creation/Creator".

He has been the recipient of numerous performance awards including first prize at the Zellme Minnesota Orchestra Trombone Competition, Edwards Big 12 Bass Trombone Solo Competition, and the ATW's National Trombone Quartet Competition. In addition, he was a finalist in three major international competitions including the ITA's Edward Kleinhammer Competition, the Donald Yaxley Competition, and the International Trombone Quartet Competition all in 2009.

Brian received his Master of Music degree from Northwestern University, where he studied with Michael Mulcahy, Charles Vernon, and Peter Ellefson. He earned his Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Texas at Austin, where he studied with Dr. Nathaniel Brickens. Other influential teachers include Jon Bohls of the Dallas Metroplex area and Charles Villarrubia at UT-Austin.

Brian has been on faculty at the Southeast Trombone Symposium in 2014, 2015 and 2016. Most recently he was a Featured Artist at the Jinbao International Music Festival in Tianjin, China and will be presenting a solo recital and several other solo performances at the upcoming International Trombone Festival in Iowa City this summer.

He plays S. E. Shires Bass Trombones exclusively.  
Brian Hecht's Website - [www.brianhecht.com](http://www.brianhecht.com)

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

11 years old. Tenor Trombone first, switched to bass Junior year of undergrad at UT Austin.

***What equipment do you primarily use?***

S.E. Shires "Lone Star" model bass trombone with Greg Black 0G mouthpieces.

***What are some of the highlights of your career?***

Oh man, tough question! Do you want a book or a short answer? I'll go with a short one for time sake ;) It's hard to say over the course of my career what really stands out above the rest because there are so so many experiences that I've loved so much. Every time I've subbed with a major orchestra, every time I've played a recital, every time I've soloed with a group, every concert with the Atlanta Symphony has all been one giant dream come true. I feel so fortunate to have the career that I do that it's nearly impossible to pick out the highlights. It's a young, new career that's just starting to bud so everything is a highlight for me. I'll have to get back to you on this one in about 20 years :)

***If you were stranded on a desert island and could only have 10 albums, what would they be?***

1. Radiohead- Kid A
2. Beatles- Magical Mystery Tour

3. Atlanta Symphony Orchestra- Vaughan-Williams Symphony 4
4. New Zealand Symphony Orchestra/Inkinen- Sibelius 2
5. San Francisco Symphony/MTT- Mahler 2
6. Zac Brown Band- Greatest Hits So Far
7. Texas Renegade- 3AM
8. Burn a mix CD containing songs from Randall Hawes and Charles Vernon solo CD's
9. Nickel Creek- Why Should the Fire Die
10. Mischa Maisky- 6 Bach Cello Suites

***What or who inspired you to play your instrument?***

Initially I joined band because my big brother had picked up the cello and the trumpet and I so desperately wanted to be like him. Later, I was inspired by Charles Vernon, Michael Mulcahy, Randall Hawes, and Ben van Dijk to name a few of the many people who inspired me.

***With whom did you study?***

Jon Bohls in middle/high school, Dr. Nathaniel Brickers at The University of Texas at Austin, and Michael Mulcahy, Charles Vernon, Pete Ellefson at Northwestern University.

***Who are some of your musical heroes?***

All those listed in the above question.

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

I always enjoyed band in high school and the experience of being in a very good marching band. We won the Texas 4A All-State Marching Band Competition my freshman year. Kind of just kept it going after that. I was going to major in Biology and go the Pre-Med route in college but I ended up working my butt off and making All-State my senior year of high school, that turned my focus big time towards music and made me realize 1) that I love it and 2) I might actually be good enough to make a living with it...maybe...

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

End of my senior year of high school, so I guess 17.

***How much do you practice on a typical day?***

2-3 hours

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

[www.brianhecht.com](http://www.brianhecht.com)

***What are some of your favorite etude books?***

Mulcahy Bordogni Etudes, Kopprasch Selected Studies ed. Fote, Brad Edwards Lip Slurs books (all of them).

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

My Dad is probably the number one biggest and main influence in my life. For that matter, my family pretty much takes the top ten spots for top influences. I've learned so much from all of them and wouldn't be the person I am today or have the career I do if it weren't for all of them.

***Please give some tips for freelancing.***

Keep your ears open and your mouth shut. Be nice to people and try to avoid gossip. Say yes to everything at first, even the low paying gigs. There is a great value to networking and building a reputation in a city.

***What are your feelings about students majoring in music education versus music performance?***

I think a student should listen to their heart on that matter. If they truly want to perform for a living then go performance all the way, if you want to teach then go music ed. If you're unsure, go music ed, there's more avenues for success in that direction.

***Is anyone else in your family a musician?***

I had a great aunt that was an opera singer and a cousin that's pretty good at the piano. Other than that, not really.

***What is your favorite place that you have performed?***

Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Japan with the PMF Orchestra in 2008 and 2009. It was the best festival I've ever had the opportunity to participate in. They assemble an orchestra of players from all over the world to come together and make music as a singular unit under some of the world's finest conductors. The final concert of the season was in Tokyo at Suntory Hall and every single member of the PMF Orchestra played their hearts out. Truly one of the most magical concerts I've ever experienced. Also, the audience in Japan absolutely loves classical music and they make you feel like you just put on the best concert they've ever heard.

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

Ask yourself, how bad do you want a life in music, not as a hobby, but as a profession? Are you ready to give it everything you've got? If the answer is maybe/no, then pick an easier major. In order to succeed in the music world, you have to LOVE music and be ready to dedicate your life to it, let it weave into every fiber of your being.

***What are you listening to currently?***

CD's from my desert island list above, haha, that question got me in the mood. As I type this, it's Texas Renegade's "Good Day to Start".

***Do you have a favorite genre of music?***

No, I'm open to all music as long as it sounds good to me :)

***What are you working on right now?***

I'm practicing for my duo recital with Nathan Zgonc at Florida State Trombone Day on March 24th, material for my ITF recital and solo performances, and stuff for my lesson with Michael Mulcahy in a few weeks.

***Please list some of your favorite websites for musicians.***

IMSLP.org

TromboneExcerpts.org

Musicalchairs.info

www.seshires.com

***Do you have any tips for preparing for auditions?***

Soooo many tips, geez, where to begin? I've been taking auditions for 10 years now and have learned quite bit along the way. More so from my failures than my successes. I covered many of these in a podcast I did with the Brass Junkies a while back that was a lot of fun.

A few things I can leave for you here:

Start by making a listening list and a spiral bound audition book. Carry both of these with you every single day for 2 months leading up to the audition. Don't forget about your fundamentals! Regardless what I am working on, I always dedicate an hour every day to fundamentals before I start working on anything else. Visualize the audition day and you playing the most gorgeous round you can possibly imagine. Imagine your success and focus on what it will take to get there. Then practice harder and more than you think anyone else is willing to practice. It may be a slow start, but you will get better at auditioning if you keep it up. Lastly, take as many auditions as you can to get used to what it is like. The fewer uncertainties you have, the less nervous you will be.

***If you couldn't have a career in music, what would you do instead?***

Probably a doctor like my dad. Or work for NASA in some capacity. I love driving out to the middle of nowhere and stargazing. I've always been so intrigued by the science in the stars.

***Who are your favorite composers?***

Mahler, Sibelius, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff

*What are your favorite solos for your instrument?*

John Williams Tuba Concerto (stolen, does that count?), Ewazen Concerto, Franz Strauss Nocturno (also stolen)

*If you could go back in time, how would you practice differently?*

I'd spend more time on fundamentals with a clear idea in mind of what I want to accomplish with each one and how the progress in each area of fundamentals will be applied in solo and ensemble performance. Also more time buzzing in the beginning and just practicing in general. I maybe practiced 2-3 days a week in high school and only about 30-60 mins on those days.