

# AN ARTIST'S CORNER

*featuring*

## Dr. Bruce Tychinski



**Bruce Tychinski** is Associate Professor of Trombone at the University of Delaware where he teaches applied lessons, trombone pedagogy and literature, directs the trombone choir and UD Slides jazz trombone ensemble, and hosts an annual Trombone Day event. Dr. Tychinski is a member of the Washington Trombone Ensemble, the Nittany Trombone Quartet, principal trombonist of the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra and second trombonist of the Lancaster Symphony. He is also co-founder of the First State Middle School Trombone Choir, an ensemble comprised of middle school trombonists from northern Delaware. During his career, Dr. Tychinski has performed with orchestras, chamber groups, and jazz ensembles throughout the United States and also with many well-known popular artists including Rosemary Clooney, the Four Tops, Little Anthony and the Imperials, the Drifters, Leslie Gore, Lou Christie and Connie Francis. In recent years, he has appeared at the International Trombone Festival, the International Tuba and Euphonium Conference, International Horn Symposium, American Trombone Workshop, and the International Festival of Composers, Conductors, and Collaborators. Dr. Tychinski spearheaded the Stamp Trombone Commission Consortium that resulted in the composition *Divertimento for Trombone and Band* by Jack Stamp which he premiered at the 2013 Eastern Trombone Workshop with the United States Army Band. In October 2017, he released his first solo CD, *Interplay: New Music for Trombone and Band* available through CD Baby.

Dr. Tychinski holds Bachelor and Master of Music in Trombone Performance degrees from Penn State University and the Doctor of Musical Arts in Trombone Performance degree from the University of Kansas. Prior to his appointment at the University of Delaware, Dr. Tychinski taught at the University of Southern Mississippi, St. Norbert College and the University of Northern Iowa.

University of Delaware Trombone Studio - <http://udtromboneday.wixsite.com/trombone>

Bruce Tychinski's cd, *Interplay* - <https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/brucetychinski>

## ***How old were you when you began playing your instrument?***

I was 10 years old. My twin brother began drums at the same time. I started on trombone because there weren't many other kids playing that and I liked the tone and how the slide made smears sounds.

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

I am an S.E. Shires performing artist. My primary instrument is a Shires custom with a dual bore .547-.562 nickel slide, 3 long leadpipe, Ralph Sauer edition screw bell, and yellow brass tuning slide. My mouthpiece is a gold plated Griego Alessi 5E.

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

I've been fortunate to have done a lot of playing in a variety of styles. Some real high points for me have been:

- #1 on my list has been to have had a very successful 19 year college teaching career (so far!), seeing my students grow as musicians, and helping them have experiences with guest artists, performing at festivals, and having them play on my recordings with me.
- Commissioning a new concerto by composer Jack Stamp and getting to premiere it at the Eastern Trombone Workshop with the US Army Band.
- Recording my own solo CD last year (Interplay: New Music for Trombone and Band)
- Performing for over 30 years with some of my best friends in the Nittany Trombone Quartet and recording a CD with that group.
- Being a member of the Washington Trombone Ensemble and performing at multiple American Trombone Workshops and the International Trombone Festival.

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

My first teacher was in my hometown – Jim Pross. He was much older and had such a love for music and the trombone and it really inspired me. I studied with him from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In high school I studied with David Priester, who was also my high school and director. He was an amazing musician and played both trombone and euphonium very well. In college I studied with Mark Lusk at Penn State during my bachelor's and master's degrees and with Max Bonecutter and David Vining at the University of Kansas during my doctorate.

Each of those college teachers brought different aspects to my playing and teaching. I quote all of them in my teaching and recognized them in my CD liner notes. I wouldn't have been this successful without their dedication to me.

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

All through grade school through high school, I took lessons year round while many of my peers took the summer off. Beginning in 7<sup>th</sup> grade I began playing in a summer German band for youths. We marched in parades and gave concerts dressed in traditional German costumes. The leader also had a small group and I was asked to join that group in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and it was the first ensemble where I started getting paid for gigs. In high school, I had success in honor band auditions and played in All-State Orchestra as a junior and All-State Band as a senior (in Pennsylvania). I also started teaching beginning brass players at the Salvation Army and helping my friends prepare their music for auditions for honor bands. I realized then that I really enjoyed teaching and was pretty good at it.

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

I love to play from Rochut Book 1. In my teaching I use Bleger 31 Studies for articulation and Brad Edwards' Clef Studies is fantastic for learning your clefs. I really love the Concone etudes, which are a bit simpler than Bordogni and can be used for a variety of things. Unfortunately, some of my favorite editions have gone out of print. One of my students, Rachel Schwab, is currently working on a new collection of these in 3 books. Each book will have 30 etudes and focus on mid, low, and high ranges. They'll also have SmartMusic accompaniments and play-along mp3s. Watch for this!

***What are some of your favorite albums?***

The King's Singers – Watching the White Wheat  
San Francisco Symphony (Blomstedt) – Hindemith Symphonic Metamorphosis  
Sting – The Dream of the Blue Turtles  
Chicago – Greatest Hits  
Empire Brass – Class Brass  
Philadelphia Brass Ensemble – Festival of Carols in Brass  
Ella Fitzgerald – The Great American Songbook  
Diana Krall - When I Look in Your Eyes  
Carl Fontana – The Great Fontana

Tutti's Trombones

Joe Alessi – New York Legends

Frank Sinatra with Count Basie Orchestra – Live at the Sands

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

Well I think anyone who pursues music is passionate about it and needs to be very dedicated. Sometimes students will say I want to perform, but I am going to get an ed degree to fall back on. That isn't really going to work out for most people. If you have a passion for teaching, then you should teach. If you are passionate about teaching and music, you should pursue music education. If you are passionate about performing, then dedicate yourself to that. There just aren't enough hours as a college student to do both well unless you are willing to do both degrees and spend an extra year or two in your undergraduate degree. Sometimes students are passionate about music and something else – think creatively about your education. The BA Music degree combined with a second major (maybe business, or computer science, or English...) can lead you into a career in a different aspect of music. Whatever you choose, you need to be ready to dedicate yourself 100% because while there are jobs out there, they are there for the people who prove they want it every day as a student.

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

I have an identical twin brother, Brian, who is a percussionist. We went to different colleges and while I pursued music performance, he received both music ed and music performance degrees. He is doing what he loves – teaching high school band near Pittsburgh, PA. Other than us, there are no musicians in our family tree (which makes us freaks at the reunion!) My wife, Heidi Lucas, is a horn professor at a university in Pennsylvania and we get to perform together a lot in regional orchestras.

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

First of all, start your search early – junior year if possible. Visit the universities that you are interested in and have a lesson with those teachers. That teacher is going to be your primary musical influence for the next 4 years and you want to feel good about the working relationship you will have with them and also what the environment of their studio is like. That isn't something you can learn from a brochure, a website, a CD, or an admissions campus tour. I have a

whole page about this on our studio website. Check it out at:  
<http://udtromboneday.wixsite.com/trombone>

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

I just finished a performance of a trio by John Stevens called Triangles for horn, trombone, and tuba at the US Army Tuba-Euphonium Workshop in Washington DC. I don't have a solo recital or performance coming up soon, but I have some pretty meaty orchestra programs. Next week I have a pops concert with a ton of music from Broadway shows. Then in the weeks ahead I have orchestra programs with Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from West Side Story and Tchaikovsky 6. So, I am working on those things. I am also playing in a quartet for our Trombone Day along with Ralph Sauer, Ron Barron, and Mark Lusk. We'll be playing an arrangement of mine that I took from the King's Singers album I mentioned earlier. It is a tune called Migildi Magildi.

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

You need to do run-throughs in front of actual humans. Organize a group of your friends before honor band auditions and play for each other and make written comments for each other. You'll be amazed at the interesting things your friend the clarinetist, flute player, or violinist will hear. Musicians on other instruments will hear things differently than brass players and make you look at things from another perspective. Secondly, divide up all of your music into smaller chunks (literally – make copies and cut your music into pieces or make a list of things to play on note cards). Spread these pieces face down on the floor or in a folder and play each chunk in random order. When you do this, you teach yourself your piece like a puzzle in which you can identify and perform each chunk separately. Then in performance, when you have a problem in one spot, that section will soon be over and you'll get a fresh start in the next chunk. Don't carry the mistake with you! Lastly, don't try to perform perfectly. MAKE MUSIC – TELL A STORY! If you do that, even with a few clams, it will be a meaningful experience for the listener and you. Have you ever asked yourself, "how will I react if I make a mistake?" That is already poor planning. Very few people play absolutely perfectly in a live performance or audition. Instead, ask yourself, "How will I react when that first mistake happens?" Will you brush it off or will it drag you down? Sometimes I am relieved to make one in the first few bars because then I don't have the added pressure of trying to have the perfect program.

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

I really enjoy computer programming and have taken classes in several programming languages. I don't have time to do this just for fun, but I think it is another way for me to use both the logical and creative sides of my brain.

***Do you like to teach? Why or why not?***

I love teaching! While I work very hard and enjoy being a performer, I believe my real calling is in sharing my knowledge and experience with students. Seeing them have that special musical moment or making a technical breakthrough; sharing their nervousness before their first recital; feeling their electric smile when they win a competition; experiencing a concert by a world-class artist with them for the first time. That is why I teach. Helping a person one-on-one in a lesson and having that incredible musical moment when all of the technique and music theory and practice hours click? It might not be looked upon the same way by society as a scientific breakthrough, but believe me – it matters. That student will never be the same and neither will I!

***What are your favorite solos for your instrument?***

A few of my favorites are:

- Ropartz – Piece in Eb Minor
- Pryor – La Petite Suzanne
- Weber – Romance
- Bourgeois – Trombone Concerto
- Creston – Fantasy
- Loeillet – Sonata in F Major (alto) – originally for flute
- Leopold Mozart – Concerto for alto
- Koetsier – Allegro Maestoso (bass)