

AN ARTIST'S CORNER

featuring

Carol Jarvis



Carol Jarvis is one of the most in-demand session musicians in the UK. A multi-award-winning trombonist, keyboard player, arranger and orchestrator, Carol works almost exclusively in all fields of the profession. She has toured, recorded and written extensively with stars such as Sting, Queen, Seal, Rod Stewart, Amy Winehouse, MUSE, Jess Glynn, Harry Connick Jr, Ellie Goulding, Michael Bublé, Bon Jovi and Taylor Swift, but also freelances as guest principal trombone with internationally renowned ensembles such as the London Symphony Orchestra and all of the BBC Orchestras. Regular film and TV session work fills a lot of Carol's diary and she can also often be found performing in London's West End shows. She is a professor of trombone at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she gained a 1st- class degree, and also at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music in London where she has been teaching for the past 16 years. Carol is in demand for her teaching methods across the globe and has given masterclasses

and recitals throughout the world, including Switzerland, France, Austria, Japan, Mexico and Peru. Carol is a past President of the British Trombone Society and has been the President of the International Trombone Festival since 2017.

Carol is often invited to adjudicate on international music competition panels, assess at prestigious music conservatoires and to join international panels for job interviews including for the Helsinki Jazz Orchestra, Royal College of Music in London and Graz Jazz Institute in Austria.

As well as performing and teaching, Carol has written orchestral arrangements for a whole host of different artists and genres. Most notably for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and Grammy award-winning stars such as Corinne Bailey Rae and multi-Platinum-selling pop star Seal. Her orchestrations and arrangements have been performed all over the world and featured on Mercury Prize winning albums at the top of the UK and US billboard charts, been recorded at the famous Capitol Studios in Hollywood and also played during the Academy Awards ceremony.

Carol is a Rath Trombones endorsed artist.

www.caroljarvis.com

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

I started on the trombone aged 11. I tried a few instruments before that, including classical guitar!

What equipment do you primarily use?

I am a Rath trombones endorsed artist, and I have an R1 and R4F, both of which I absolutely love! And I have been playing Doug Elliot mouthpieces for decades as well.

What are some of your favorite highlights of your career?

Probably the pop tours I've done, all over the world. I toured with Seal for six years around the world, playing trombone, keys and backing vocals, which I loved. Another highlight has got to be touring and recording with Sting. What a musician!

Who inspired you to play your instrument?

I am not sure where I'd seen a trombone being played, but apparently I asked my parents what the instrument was with "the slidey arm thing". They played me some recordings of trombones in different styles and that was it, I was hooked!

What are some of your favorite solos written for another instrument?

My brother is a cellist, and I grew up listening to him learning all the cello repertoire and luckily it's the same register as the trombone, so attempting to play some of his solo repertoire was lovely. You can't beat the Bach cello suites.

Do you have any tips on becoming better at transcribing?

There are no short cuts - just keep doing it! It's such a brilliant skill to have. I got quicker at it under pressure. I remember one time on a TV set doing a soundcheck, and Seal knew another of the guests, and they decided to sing a duet, and I had 1 hour to find a recording, transcribe it, arrange it, print parts, before being live on TV!

How have your practice habits changed over the years?

I think playing all the time, rehearsing and gigging, I've almost forgotten how to practice? Unless I head away on holiday, I kind of always feel warmed-up and ready to go!

As a young player, what did you struggle most with your playing?

At the conservatoire I studied at, I was in every group there was, and I struggled with swapping styles a bit. I accidentally sometimes slurred notes in classical repertoire as if I was in a Big Band. It was always really subtle, but my teachers always used to say "stop!"

Do you like to sing when you practice? Why or why not?

Always when I'm practising, teaching, in the shower! It's incredibly important to have a good ear as a musician. Listening, listening, listening. Students so often don't listen to enough music or go to enough concerts, but actually you can often learn more from that than in your lesson.

What qualities do you think are important for being successful in life?

Kindness, generosity, confidence

What do you want your legacy to be?

That I was just a nice person.

How do you stay motivated when you get frustrated or down? Do you have any tips to help stay motivated?

I have always had a million projects on the go at once. I have reminders set in my calendar every single day for months ahead! I sometimes wish I didn't have such an imagination and creative brain, as it's quite tiring, but if there's one thing I have been grateful of during the pandemic, it's being versatile and adaptable. Work out what your hobby is, away from music, and see if that could actually be a sideline business! Music has always been and always will be my hobby, and I feel so lucky to make a living out of my hobby. But I also began voiceover work 3 years ago, which keeps me busy in my studio when I'm not out gigging. That was a saviour when the pandemic hit. I've also always enjoyed learning new tech and have slowly built a decent recording studio over the years, and I've been recording trombone on tv adverts/movie and game soundtracks from my home studio for almost 20 years now!

With whom did you study?

John Iveson
Chris Houlding
Andy Berryman

Who are some of your musical heroes?

Classical-Trombone-player-wise: Joe Alessi & Jorgen van Rijen
Composer-wise: Mahler, Mozart & Beethoven
Jazz-wise: Frank Rosolino, JJ Johnson, Gordon Campbell, Dick Nash

What qualities do you think are important in a student?

To be a sponge!

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

The music centre I went to at an early age, didn't have any trombone players, so I was put in brass bands, orchestras, big bands, musicianship groups, improvisation groups, all right from the start. I had to teach myself bass clef, tenor clef and alto clef, in the rehearsals, as my trombone lessons weren't frequent enough to keep up! My first trombone teacher was touring with the likes of the Spice Girls, and he often got me to dep for him on various rehearsals and recording sessions, so I was picking up professional work from the age of about 16. I always found the trombone easy, and

when I came to choose whether to pursue music or drama, I just didn't want to put the trombone away and regret it. I got offers of places at every conservatoire in the UK when I auditioned, and I began getting professional work in major symphony orchestras right from my 1st year studying. By the time I graduated, I already had a full-time freelance career! I feel extremely lucky that this has been my path!

Do you remember when you decided that you were going to be a professional musician?

I think it just landed in my lap, but I don't think I really thought about it until my final year at music conservatoire. I had a few trials for orchestral jobs and realized that I was enjoying it all so much, that I may as well just carry on!

How much do you practice on a typical day?

Varies so much. I don't have a typical day! If I'm out rehearsing/gigging, then I just rely on a good warm-up. If I've got a day at home, I may take a day off, or I may do 3 hours playing. It varies!

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

www.caroljarvis.com

What are some of your favorite etude books?

Loving Brad Edward's books at the moment - but I literally have hundreds, and I like just opening a new book and sight reading something new all the time.

Do you use any apps when you practice?

Just metronome apps

What are some ways to improve one's rhythm?

Slow it down. Do the math to work it out. Get the metronome on and just sing it.

What is your favorite place that you have traveled to?

Iceland and India

Who are some of your heroes in life?

It might be a bit controversial, but Lance Armstrong. He gave me a lot of hope when I went through my health battles

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

My mum and dad. 52 years married!

How do you suggest balancing life with being a musician?

Try to take some days off. Non-musicians have their weekends to do other things. Us musicians are usually entertaining those people then! So try to find time out. It's so easy to work work work because music is so much fun!

Please give some tips for freelancing.

Treat people how you would want to be treated. Turn up early.

What are some of your favorite places that you have performed?

Deep underground in a mine in Germany and on the helipad of one of the world's biggest super yachts in St Tropez

Do you have any suggestions for working on one's range?

It's all about air speed. Don't press on the chops. It's the support that'll help with stamina up there.

What are you most proud of in your life?

Winning a nine and half year long fight with cancer

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I hope I am still healthy and doing what I'm doing, because I'm enjoying life so much. I really should work on ambitions!

What are your favorite things to do that make you happy?

Exploring in my Campervan with no agenda

Do you practice visualizing yourself performing?

Yes. Always. I try to get students to visualise being in a big hall. Projecting, and imagining the acoustics

Do you have a favorite genre of music?

No, I couldn't never choose. That's why I still freelance in all genres too!

What projects are you working on right now?

I have almost finished recording my new album, which is pop/funk/electronic based. Releasing in the Spring I think!

Do you have any tips for preparing for auditions?

Learn everything so well that you don't need the music. Know your excerpts too! I was once asked to play some excerpts from memory in an audition - thankfully I knew all the ones they asked!

Do you ever get anxious for a performance? What advice would you give for dealing with nerves?

Yes. Usually when I've not got much to play to keep me busy! Just slow your breathing down and enjoy the music around you.

What life lessons have you learned through music?

Diligence. Team work. Sense of achievement. Ambition. Pride. Discipline. Passion. Perseverance.

Do you promote the idea of learning licks and patterns in all keys to become better at improvising?

Absolutely

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

If I didn't play the trombone, I would've loved to have been a drummer. But if I wasn't in music, it would be voiceover or radio/tv presenting, which I've done quite a bit of.

Do you like to teach? Why or why not?

Yes, I teach at 2 conservatoires in the UK, and it's so wonderful when students 'click' and can suddenly do something, like lip trills, or how to make a big leap in the music suddenly easy.

What are your favorite solos for your instrument?

I love Bolero! It's my favourite register on the trombone to play, but those nerves start the moment the snare drum starts the piece - even if I'm not the one having to play the solo!

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

I would have just practiced more!

What is your favorite food?

Indian, Thai, Italian, Fish&Chips, Roast Dinner, and cake. Lots of cake.