

AN ARTIST'S CORNER

featuring

Domingo Pagliuca



Domingo Pagliuca is a Latin Grammy Award-winning trombonist who was born in Venezuela and graduated with honors from the University of Miami with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music in Instrumental Performance. His versatility as an instrumentalist in different musical genres has led him to be one of the most in-demand musicians in Venezuela and Latin America for recording sessions and musical productions in the commercial field. Currently, Domingo plays with the world-renowned Boston Brass, is a Yamaha Artist, serves as Principal Trombone of the Palm Beach Symphony Orchestra (PBS) and Principal Trombone of the Florida Grand Opera Orchestra (FGO).

Inspired by his father, and under his tutelage, Domingo began his musical studies at an early age at the José Angel Lamas School of Music in Caracas. Upon completing high school, Domingo went on to study with Maestro Keith Brown for two years at Indiana University.

Returning to Venezuela at the age of 18, Domingo made his solo debut with the Venezuela Symphony Orchestra at the Teresa Carreño Theater.

In 1988, Domingo received a full scholarship to complete his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music at the University of Miami. In 1989, Domingo was the first trombonist to win the U of M. "Concerto Competition". In 1992, Domingo received the "Performer of the Year" diploma and in 1995, after finishing his master's degree, received the diploma of Honor and Excellence awarded by the Graduate School of the University of Miami.

As a trombone soloist, Domingo has performed multiple times nationally and internationally accompanied by symphonic orchestras. These include the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela, Orquesta Sinfónica de Colombia, Central Ohio Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica de Carabobo (Vzla), performing the trombone concertos by Nino Rota, F. David, Rimsky Korsakov, F. Graffe, and LE. Larsson. In October 2015 he performed the J. Beckel Concerto for Trombone and Band at Kansas State University.

From 1995-2008, Domingo was Associate Principal Trombone with the Venezuela Symphony Orchestra. When not performing, Domingo was a passionate educator in charge of the National Trombone Academy of Venezuela, as well as a professor at the Simón Bolívar music conservatory, the National Experimental

University of the Arts (UNEARTE), and chamber music coach of the SISTEMA (an orchestral musical program of the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra).

Domingo has toured throughout the United States, Latin America, and Europe with Latin Grammy-winner artists Franco De Vita, Juan Luis Guerra & 4.40, Gilberto Santa Rosa, Rubén Blades, Luis Enrique, Raphael, and Oscar D'Leon.

In July 2013, Domingo joined world-renown BOSTON BRASS. As part of this Yamaha Performing Group, he conducts master classes and performs to audiences all over the world. In June 2019, Domingo released his first solo album, entitled "Eternal Gratitude", which won a Latin Grammy Award in the category of Best Classical Music Album, produced by the famous musician and pedagogue Maestro Sam Pilafian.

www.domingopagliuca.com

Congratulations on receiving a Grammy Award! Can you please talk about the process of being nominated all the way through winning a Grammy Award?

Well, the process is a roller coaster of emotions. And it starts from the moment the CD is being submitted to the Academy. I didn't have any expectations since the CD was never intended to be part or submitted to any award from the beginning. My friend Vladimir Quintero who was also the mixing engineer for the CD asked me to authorize him to submit the record, and we did. When the CD is being submitted you need to choose a category where it belongs to, in our case we didn't know where to put it, so we chose two. You have to send, the physical recording, a copy of the CD mastering, credits and streaming platforms to let the academy members access your recording. There is a committee that revises, listens and categorize a CD if they feel it belongs in another category. They decided Eternal Gratitude belonged to the Classical Album category. Once it is submitted, it goes through the Latin Grammys committee and they choose all the submitted CDs that will make the first pre-nominating list. Nobody knows what CDs go through until the pre-nominating list is out. This list containing all the albums chosen by the committee go through an internal voting within the academy members to choose who they think deserve the votes. The five most voted CDs on each category get to be nominated. I could believe I was within the pre-nominating list which had 100 albums just in the Classical category. I already felt like a winner.

2 months after, the Grammy announced the nominees for each category. My friend called me again the morning of the announcement. Finding out I was within the 5 nominees for the Latin Grammys in the Best Classical album of the Year was an unexpected, unbelievable, and indescribable surprise. I could not believe it. I was a winner already at that moment. Being nominated is a huge honor as well as a privilege

since that is something you earn for the rest of your list. You are being nominated for the biggest award in the music business. Once the nominations are out to the public, another voting round take place. The academy members listen again or get to listen to all nominees in all the categories and cast their votes. After that, we all had to wait for the Award ceremony. When they announced the winner for the Best Classical Album of the year naming Eternal Gratitude, it was such a moment of joy, fulfillment, pride, gratitude, and at the same time sadness since, I couldn't share that moment physically with Sam Pilafian, my friend and producer. I was tense moments prior to going live at the ceremony, but I looked up to the sky, from my Livingroom window, talked to Sam and thanked him for such an amazing journey and adventure going through this Grammy experience that just seconds before going live, I was calmed, just waiting for the announcement. It has been an amazing journey. So grateful to my beloved dear friend Sam for all this awesome experience.

How did you go about selecting all of the music for your cd, Eternal Gratitude?

I wanted to play a repertoire that I felt identified with. When Sam asked me what I wanted to record, I told him that I wanted it to be a different trombone cd. I didn't want to record the traditional repertoire. Wanted it to be a representation of who I am. What I liked. Different styles. Wanted to present the trombone as a lyrical yet beautiful instrument where people can really listen to it out of the regular environment and ensembles where it is normally heard.

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

I was 14 years old when I started playing the trombone. I originally started playing the violin when I was 7 years old and then started playing the trumpet when I was 9 years old but, I was really bad at the trumpet. I played the violin until I was 15 years old.

What equipment do you primarily use?

I currently play on a Yamaha YSL-882OR

What are some of your favorite highlights of your career?

I have to say, travelling around the world making music has been one of the most enjoyable and interesting things in my career. I have had the chance to play with amazing world renowned artists on tour all over the world, great orchestras, where I

have had the chance to meet incredible musicians and friends. I also have had the opportunity to play as a soloist in different countries. I have given master classes all over, and in the past few years have played worldwide with Boston Brass.

Music has given me such joy, and I am still feeling that I have never worked a day in my life because music is my passion, is not my job. Music has given me the chance to play with my heroes, sharing the stage with them. Being there, playing all together and listening to that sound on the stage, has made me feel like I am in heaven. There are some unforgettable and special moments that make me realize how lucky and blessed I have been in my life.

What are some of your favorite and most influential albums that you have heard?

There are so many... One of the first ones that hit me was a minus one that my former teacher Keith Brown recorded. When I listened to him playing it, it was magical. I hadn't even started to play the trombone yet. Star Wars, the first original recording (London Symphony) Joseph Alessi's (all of his recordings), Christian Lindberg, Ralph Sauer, Michel Becquet, (one of his LPs, that my dad owned when I was little).

Also, on the other side, Queen, Van Halen, Maynard Ferguson, Doc Severinsen, Latin music... I change the dial very frequently...

Who inspired you to play your instrument?

My dad was the first person who inspired me to play the trombone. He used to be a trombone player and had one of the most beautiful sounds I have ever heard. Then, my first formal teacher Keith Brown (My dad was my first teacher). Then, my biggest inspiration on the trombone, Joseph Alessi and of course, I also had all Christian Lindberg's Cds which were a great inspiration. Ralph Sauer's playing and sound were also a concept that I had in my mind.

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

A few....

Bach Cello suites, Chopin piano preludes and nocturnes, Paganini Violin Caprices, Bach Violin Sonatas... the list goes on and on...

Do you have any tips on becoming better at transcribing?

Listening to music as much as you can. Get involved in what you are listening to. Be an active listener instead of a passive listener. Ear training is key. Get a keyboard if you are able to. Even if it is a cheap one.

How have your practice habits changed from when you were a beginner until now?

They have changed a lot. Your musical personality changes and develops while you get more musically mature. When you are a beginner you need guidance and a solid concept of how to play, what sound you want, how your sound is supposed to be like and all the technical aspects of playing your instrument. The more you grow and become aware of the different things you should be doing, the more you start focusing and setting goals to get immediate results. Now, there is always a purpose or goal to achieve for each practice session. Also, your ears grow as you start to develop musician's ears. Focus, discipline, purpose and passion are key ingredients for a productive and effective practice session.

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

Definitely the high register and dealing with upper body tension. I wasn't relaxed when playing and of course, it took me a while to get the high notes.

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

I love singing when I practice. If I can't sing out loud, I will sing inside my head. To me, singing is the most important aspect of playing a musical instrument. It is not about playing the notes, it's the HOW you play the notes that makes the difference. Every time you play you should be telling a story. You must musically touch your audience's heart. Your goal is to make your audience have a musical experience every time you are on the stage.

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

Be genuine, be a good person, be prepared, give yourself 200 % (100% is not enough) on what you do. Be smart and play with your heart every time.

What do you want your legacy to be?

Be remembered as somebody who always gave a hand to whoever needed it. Somebody that never was afraid to go after his dreams. Somebody that was genuine and a true friend. Somebody that passionately loved music as a way of life.

How do you stay motivated? Do you have any tips to help stay motivated?

I stay motivated by trying to be better every day. By searching for that "missing link", "that" knowledge, those skills and growth that will make us better. By wanting more every single day. By always trying to be as musical as I can be, which will be better than the previous time. My tips would be: set your goals (as many as you can) and go after them. Don't give up. You will encounter barriers and obstacles, which will make you fall. Make those negative experiences into positive ones. Learn from your mistakes. Live one day at a time.

Do you meditate? If so, what benefits do you get from meditating?

I don't but I am always thinking on what I could do better. Is that urge to becoming better in every aspect of your personal and professional life.

With whom did you study?

Started studying with my dad, Angelo Pagliuca. Then studied with Keith Brown at Indiana University. Later on with Charles Campbell at the University of Miami and while at U.M. took every chance I got to receive lessons with Gil Johnson, who was the trumpet teacher at the time.

Who are some of your musical heroes?

Joseph Alessi, Christian Lindberg, Michael Sachs, Michel Becquet, Ralph Sauer, Keith Brown, Sam Pilafian, Jorgen van Rijen.

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

I remember one of my first musical experiences was being part of the youth orchestra of Venezuela, playing the violin. It felt great but at the same time it was scary. Having get the parts musically ready for each rehearsal. Having to play with my stand partner alone

when the conductor would have us play stand-by stand throughout the whole orchestra sections. I guess that helped in the long run to always be prepared for rehearsals.

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

I always knew I was going to be a musician. I guess by having my dad as a role model, and he being a professional musician. To me, that was a great career to go in to. He took me to the symphony rehearsals, recording sessions, concerts and every gig he had, so music was a part of my life already. When I switched to the trombone, and felt that I finally got the right instrument, it was then that I was sure I was going to be in the music world.

How much do you practice on a typical day?

It depends on the day and how I feel. Also, if I am home or traveling. It could be 2 hours, maybe more. I practice in sessions. On normal conditions, sets of 25 minutes and breaks. The point is to be always fresh and focused during practicing time, as well as to have the same sound throughout the practicing sessions of the day. Breaks are as important as playing times.

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

Yes, I do. www.domingopagliuca.com

What are some of your favorite etude books?

Rochut Vol 1, Arban's, Kopprasch Vol 1, Slama, Lafosse Vade Mecum, Blazevich Clef Studies, and many others. I try to be as diversified as I can.

Do you use any apps when you practice?

Yes, I do. I mostly use Tonal Energy. It has everything you need for practicing purposes. A great metronome where you can subdivide and change rhythm patterns and the tuner is very precise. Also use iReal Pro, which is a great app to work on improvisation.

What are some ways to improve one's rhythm?

The use of a metronome is extremely important during practicing time. Subdivision is key to have a good rhythm. To me, the best way to practice and to play is having a subdivided tempo in the metronome. Singing beat-box will also improve the inner rhythm. We have to always play with rhythm in our heads. Like if we were playing along with drums.

If you could go back in time and give yourself any advice, what would it be?

I would definitely pay more attention to piano lessons, and would spend more time practicing the piano. I regret not being able to piano the piano.

What is your favorite place that you have traveled to?

I don't have a favorite one. I have a few. I would have to say Japan, Italy, Spain, Singapore just to mention some. Lol

Who are some of your heroes in life?

My dad, Sam Pilafian, Joseph Alessi, Michael Sachs, Gil Johnson, Arturo Sandoval, Wycliffe Gordon.

How old were you when you first began transcribing solos?

I would say around 22 years old.

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

My dad, Joseph Alessi, my teacher Keith Brown and Sam Pilafian. And as a dreamer, Elon Musk.

How do you suggest balancing life with music?

Everything has its own time. Organize yourself and set your priorities. Give yourself 200% in whatever you are doing. If it is family time, give yourself completely to family time. Same thing with the other activities you ever choose doing.

Please give some tips for freelancing.

Always be prepared. Never make anyone wait for you (by not being musically prepared or physically on time). Be nice to others. Have an open ear to figuring out how to blend in, how to sound when playing by yourself (recording studio situation) or when playing with others. Dress properly. First impressions are very important for the contractor and for others. If you respect yourself, others will respect who you are.

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

Everyone has their own goals and vocations. There are people that passionately love teaching more than being on stage in a professional situation. Music performance requires lots of control and nerve handling so it's not easy for everyone. Music education requires dedication, passion and patience. Not everyone is fit for that either. I just would say that, whatever direction you decide to go in, do it with passion and dedication.

Is anyone else in your family a musician?

Yes. My dad, and one of my brothers.

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

Thailand, Singapore, Italy, Japan, the Midwest Clinic (Chicago), there are so many places, that's it is hard to name them all...

What are your favorite etude books and solos written for your instrument, as well as etudes/solos/albums not originally written for your instrument?

Mentioned in another question

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

The use of proper air. It's very important to have the air going all the time. Play scales. Practice a lot without articulation. Only articulate the first note and then just use air and slide. If we can get all the notes with air and slide, the foundation for the register will be already in place. Have a Relaxed embouchure and have your ears checking every aspect

of your playing. Fundamentals are a key factor. If you don't have fundamentals, you are going to be working harder and bad habits might come along.

What are you most proud of in your life?

Being who I am. Always trying to be a better person, dad, artist, friend and most of all, better human being.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Working my tail off and pursuing my goals.

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

Playing the trombone. Being with my family and feeling the love around us. Making music. Enjoying life. Being alive. Doing recording sessions.

Do you practice visualizing yourself performing?

Yes. All the time.

Do you prefer to learn solos by ear or by transcribing or both? Why?

Both. You need to feel what happens in both scenarios when playing the solos. The idea is to be able to improvise at any given time.

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

Take it seriously. BE focused in what you want. Learn as many styles as you can and play in every ensemble you get the chance to play in. Be responsible and be that someone that everyone would feel comfortable playing with and hanging with.

What are you listening to currently?

Everything. I listen to all kind of music. It depends on what mood I am in. I don't get hooked on listening to one thing in particular.

Do you have a favorite genre of music?

Classical, Latin, Rock and Pop.

What non-music courses in college helped you with being a musician?

Psychology, Music History.

What are you working on right now?

Fundamentals, etudes, some orchestral excerpts, doing recording sessions and recording myself while I practice.

Please list some of your favorite websites for musicians.

IMSLP.com, all the mouthpiece makers sites, orchestras pages, musical equipment sites, etc. I normally search around the web on topics or information that I am looking for in that moment.

Do you have any tips for preparing for auditions?

Listen to the excerpts you need to prepare carefully. Listen as many recordings you can so you have a clear idea on how they are supposed to sound like. Pay attention to every detail and style. Once you have a clear concept, get to your instrument and prepare each excerpt with patience and focus. Make sure you listen actively. Record yourself as often as you can and have an honest opinion while you check your recorded practicing.

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

I have learned to deal with that. Breathing is key to control your anxiety and nerves. Once we are in control of our breathing technique, we will be able to calm down easily and stay in control. Of course, always have your music well prepared before that moment. That would also help...

To become a great musician, what are things that you think a young musician should focus on when they practice?

Ear training. Learn how to listen. You will be as good as your ears are. The more you hear, the better you'll become. Listen to your favorite players, develop your musical personality and then search for that concept you have created in your mind. Work on your fundamentals. Work on your "tool box". If you have the tools, you will know what to do when playing.

What advice can you give about mental wellness?

Be yourself, be kind to others, live life and give yourself 200% to what you passionately love to do.

Do you like to read? What are you currently reading?

I am not much of a reader. I read things that I need to read or have to read, but reading is not a passion of mine.

What life lessons have you learned through music?

Nothing comes by itself; you have to earn things. You have to work hard for the things you want. You must have discipline and be perseverant if you want to achieve goals and most importantly, do your best to learn something new every day.

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

I do and I would also recommend to listen to as many solos as you can. Play along with them. Learn your scales. Spend time learning them and understanding them.

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

I don't see myself doing anything else than music, but If I had to make a choice, when I was a kid, I wanted to be a pilot. I love flying and love airplanes. Maybe I would consider preparing and studying to become one.

Who are your favorite composers?

Puccini, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Chopin, R Strauss, Bruckner and the list could go on and on. I could listen to Romantic composers at any time.

How could we make music education better?

Emphasizing on teaching kids how to listen to music. Focusing more on music appreciation. If they learn how to listen, and we get them to develop an active listener concept, they will understand more how to fit in musically in an ensemble and how to practice their instrument. Most of them don't have an idea of how to practice or what to practice.

Do you like to teach? Why or why not?

I do. I love teaching. I love music and to me, having the opportunity to teach someone, share concepts, be a guidance, make someone musically better, change someone's life in a positive way are the best rewards we can have as educators.

What are your favorite solos for your instrument?

I love the trombone. I love playing all kind of styles. I have many favorites. If it is a trombone concerto I could name Nino Rota's, Grondahl, among many, love the Romanzas, (Jorgensen Romance one of my favorites), Jean-Michel Defaye repertoire is amazing, Blue Bells, etc. There are so many pieces. My goal is always singing through the trombone when making music. That's my main goal. Of course, going back to my point of view, it depends on the mood I am in. I love music and love playing every style according to the moment or situation I am in.

Do you have any tips on forming a chamber group?

Get friends that are interested in the same things you are. Friends that are willing to get together and would commit to taking the time to sit, rehearse and play together.

What is your favorite food?

Sushi, Italian, Venezuelan traditional food to name a few. I love a juicy stake and of course any type of meat.