

AN ARTIST'S CORNER

featuring

Dr. Martin McCain



"He commands technical facility as a bass trombonist...executes the material on both discs with conviction...his attack is agile and his sound robust..." Textura Magazine (Canada)

Bass trombonist and Global Music Award Gold Medal Winner **Martin McCain** enjoys a career that spans an impressive scope of genres. A third-generation musician, he maintains a versatile performance schedule as a soloist, recording artist, chamber, orchestral, jazz/commercial musician and educator. According to the International Trombone Association Journal, his playing has been described as "solid and masterful". McCain is in high demand as a performer and clinician throughout North America, South America, Europe and Asia. His performances and arrangements have been broadcast on Austin, Knoxville, Tucson, Chicago, Toronto and Hong Kong's radio stations in addition to NPR's "Performance Today". Martin has appeared as a guest artist at the International Trombone Festival, Great American Brass Band Festival, Zagreb Brass Festival, Brazilian Trombone Festival and American Trombone Workshop. He is the leader of the award-winning jazz trombone ensemble, JazzBonez and a member of the highly-acclaimed Minor 4th Trombone Quartet. Martin

regularly performs in recital programs both as a soloist and as the McCain Duo with his wife, pianist Artina McCain. As an orchestral musician, Martin holds the position of Principal Bass Trombone for the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra and is also a member of the PRIZM Chamber Orchestra. McCain regularly performs with the IRIS Orchestra, San Antonio Symphony, Austin Symphony and Memphis Symphony Orchestra in addition to several summer festival orchestras. He has performed with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Amarillo Symphony, Charleston Symphony Orchestra and many regional orchestras. As a jazz/commercial musician, he performs with the NOW Jazz Orchestra, Gabriel Santiago Orchestra, Memphis Jazz Orchestra and several national touring ensembles.

Martin was a prize - winner twice in both the International Trombone Association's Donald Yaxley Solo Bass Trombone Competition and Kai Winding Jazz Trombone Ensemble Competition and twice in both of the American Trombone Workshop's National Bass Trombone Solo Competition and Jazz Trombone Ensemble Competition. He has been a featured soloist with the Croatian Army Wind Band, United States Army Concert Band "Pershing's Own" and the United States Army Brass Quintet. In addition to being heard on various recordings on the Summit Records, Naxos and Equilibrium labels, Martin has released three solo CDs *Trombone Czar: Russian Treasures Recorded Live!* (2012), *Shades* (2014) and *Trombone Czar: The Extended Version* (2015). Other recording credits include numerous movie and videogame soundtracks in addition to commercial jingles. He is a four-time winner of the Global Music Awards and was featured as their "Emerging Artist" in an edition of *Billboard* magazine.

Martin is an Associate Professor of Music and Artist/Teacher of Trombone at Texas State University where he directs the Trombone Choir and Jazz Trombone Ensembles. Under his leadership, the Trombone Choir and Jazz Trombone Ensembles have been invited to perform at the International Trombone Festival, American Trombone Workshop, Big 12 Trombone Conference and Texas Music Educators Association Convention on numerous occasions and have released two commercial recordings. Dr. McCain's students have also been extremely successful in solo and ensemble competitions including the International Trombone Association competitions, the American Trombone Workshop competitions and the Big 12 Trombone Solo Competitions. In recognition of his teaching, he has received several citations including the 2016 Presidential Distinction Award for Excellence in Teaching and the 2013 Dean Nominee for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching. His students have been accepted into some of the nation's most prestigious graduate programs such as the Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, Yale University, Northwestern University, Manhattan School of Music and the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. He is also the founder/director of the Texas State Trombone Symposium. In addition to his duties at Texas State, Martin spends the summer on the faculty for the Austin Chamber Music Festival, Interharmony International Music Festival (Italy), Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, PRIZM International Chamber Music Festival, SliderAsia Music Festival (Hong Kong) and the English Brass Academy (Croatia).

Martin McCain is a performing artist for Michael Rath Trombones, Reunion Blues Gig Bags and plays on the "McCain" signature mouthpiece series manufactured by Pickett Brass. He is also an affiliate of AirTurn and The GigEasy.

For more information, please visit www.martinmccain.com
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Twitter: mccaintrombone YouTube: bassman781

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

I began playing the trombone (tenor) when I was 11 and switched to bass trombone my freshman year of college. My band career began on the baritone at age 10 and I also took piano lessons when I was 7.

What are some of the highlights of your career?

It's really hard to answer that question! I've been very blessed to have the opportunity to perform all over the world with amazing ensembles whether it is in an orchestra or jazz section, a soloist or as a chamber musician. I don't take those opportunities for granted.

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

I've always loved performing vocal music on trombone. One that sticks out to me right now is Robert Schumann's *Diechterliebe*. The story is pretty depressing but the music is wonderful.

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

When I was younger, crazy complex rhythms was a struggle. Once I got to college, playing in jazz band definitely helped that. I always thanked Bob Mintzer for teaching me how to count! He had Dave Taylor in mind when composing for bass trombone in his band so if you can play those parts, you can read anything!

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

Absolutely! Even though I'm a very terrible singer..haha! There are a few reasons I like this approach. 1) I believe if you can hear the pitch, chances are you will have better success playing the pitch. 2) Singing is another form of a flow study. It is a great way to get the air moving. 3) It is a smart way to practice away from the instrument for a brass player so you aren't beating up your chops.

With whom did you study?

When I started trombone in the 6th grade, I took lessons from Loy Hetrick in Indianapolis, IN. When my family relocated to Memphis, I studied with Greg Luscombe from 7th – 12 grade. He is the principal trombonist of the Memphis

Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Marta Hofacre was my undergraduate trombone professor at the University of Southern Mississippi and Dr. Nathaniel Brickens was my graduate school professor at the University of Texas at Austin. I also took several lessons for a few years with Charlie Vernon, Doug Yeo, Randy Hawes and John Rojak.

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

It was a combination of things that took place my freshman year of high school. First, I became a member of the Memphis Youth Symphony and the repertoire that we performed in that first year alone was amazing: Shostakovich's 5th Symphony, Kalinnikov's 1st Symphony just to name a few. Second, I attended an honor band at what would be my future undergraduate school and walked away from that weekend blown away with the ensembles and hearing a trombone choir for the first time. Third, was attending the Interlochen Arts Camp. This was my first summer music festival and being around such a high caliber of peers was life changing. After this, I was hooked.

How much do you practice on a typical day?

It varies but normally 3 hours. This also includes listening sessions whether it is a project in which I'm about to partake or a recording of my own practice session.

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

Yes, www.martinmccain.com.

What are some of your favorite etude books?

Charlie Vernon's Singing Approach, Bordogni/Rochut Melodius Etudes, Kopprasch/Fote, Grigoriev/Hawes, all of Brad Edwards' books.

Do you use any apps when you practice?

Tonal Energy and Drumbeats+

What are some ways to improve one's rhythm?

As I said earlier, playing in a jazz ensemble is a great way to get better at rhythm.

Please give some tips for freelancing.

Be nice to everyone. Be open to performing different styles of music. If you hear others gossiping, don't chime in. Answer emails, phone calls and texts in a timely fashion. Be on time (which is early in my opinion). Keep an organized calendar. Say thank you! Socialize after the gig and rehearsals.

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

Students should follow whatever their passion is. Personally, I think the musical expectations should be high regardless of the major. If you want to be a great music educator, you need to be a great musician first. I feel that music education students need to know how to play in various ensembles. They might have to direct a jazz band or might want to program an orchestra transcription for band. Performance majors also need to know how to teach. Chances are teaching will become a part of their income. I mean, I have three performance degrees and my main gig is teaching!

Is anyone else in your family a musician?

My grandfather is a recently retired concert organist. I grew up seeing him travel all over the world as the chief demonstrator for the Allen Organ Company. He was a very disciplined musician when it came to practicing. It was great having that as a model when I was growing up!

Do you have any tips for memorizing a piece of music?

I have taken a lot of ideas on this topic from my wife who is an amazing pianist and these have been very helpful. Besides playing the music a lot, being comfortable with the chord structure. Sing the phrase as well as say the note names as you sing along with a recording. A lot of mental practice and score studying (not just the solo but the piano and orchestra score).

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

Take your music classes seriously. If you are struggling in subjects such as theory or history, don't be afraid to ask for help. Be a curious student. Practice. Go to concerts on and off campus. Consider taking some business courses.

What are you listening to currently?

In My Feelings by Drake...I mean who isn't listening to that?! Haha

Do you have a favorite genre of music?

When I'm not listening to classical or jazz music, my favorite is R&B.

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

Business courses! Some of the best advice I ever got in college was from Dr. Jay Dean who was the Director of Orchestra Activities at the University of Southern Mississippi. I was always amazed at the marketing for the USM Orchestra. Each year we would have amazing artists come solo with us. One year was Yo-Yo Ma, another was Itzhak Perlman. During my sophomore year, I was a work-study student in the orchestra office. While working, Dr. Dean casually told me that if I wanted to be a performer, I needed to know how to market myself. The end of the semester, I added the marketing minor to my performance degree and that was one of the best decisions that I ever made.

What are you working on right now?

I'm currently working on repertoire for a duo recital with my wife at the University of Tennessee in a few weeks.

Do you have any tips for preparing for auditions?

Record yourself regularly. Listen to professional recordings. Play for other people A LOT! This goes for any type of audition: orchestra, military bands, jazz, etc. Although the end goal is to win a job, you can get sub work if you place well in auditions.

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

I would probably open up my own BBQ food truck. If I'm free, I'm usually smoking meat!

Who are your favorite composers?

David Wilborn is one of my favorite composers and a dear friend. I've commissioned some things from him and his trombone choir repertoire is fun to perform. Not to mention he is a trombonist and pianist so he really knows how to write for the instruments! I also enjoy Anthony Barfield's music. As for non-trombonists I like Brahms, Bruckner, and Herbie Hancock just to name a few.

Do you like to teach? Why or why not?

Absolutely! I love helping people and teaching is a way that I can do that through music. It's so great seeing your students succeed whether it is winning a competition, receiving an assistantship, achieving a certain skill, getting a job or just graduating!

What are your favorite solos for your instrument?

All of Eric Ewazen and Daniel Schnyder's music. I'm digging Vertiges by Marc Lys right now.

What are some of your favorite books that are helpful for musicians?

Beyond Talent – Angela Beeching
Saavy Musician – David Cutler
Saavy Music Teacher – David Cutler
The Entrepreneurial Muse – Jeffrey Nytch

Do you have any tips on forming a chamber group?

Form a group with individuals that you enjoy to collaborate with. Check your egos at the door. If your ensemble wants to be serious, delegate different responsibilities for each member so it's not just one member doing all of the work.