

# AN ARTIST'S CORNER

*featuring*

## James Nova



In the Fall of 2009, James Nova joined the Grammy award winning Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra as its Second/Utility Trombone. Before joining the PSO, Jim served eight seasons as the AssistantvPrincipal/Second Trombonist of the Utah Symphony Orchestra.

Jim began playing the trombone at age nine in his home state of Connecticut. As a child he received his early musical exposure and training from his father, Anesti Nova. During high school, Jim studied with his first private trombone teacher, Assistant Principal/Second

Trombonist of the Hartford Symphony George Sanders.

After graduating high school Jim attended the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia where he received his Bachelor's Degree studying with the Philadelphia Orchestra's then Principal Trombonist Glenn Dodson. Jim then moved to Boston to pursue a Master's Degree on a full scholarship at the New England Conservatory of Music, studying with then Boston Symphony Orchestra trombonist, Norman Bolter. In addition to his college education, James attended the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan and was also a member of the Tanglewood Music Center Fellowship Orchestra for three summers. After finishing his Master's Degree, he freelanced in Boston for several years, substituting on a regular basis with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops Orchestra, making several recordings and television broadcasts with both groups as both principal and second trombone. In 2001, Jim moved to Salt Lake City to join the Utah Symphony Orchestra.

From 2003 to 2007 he enjoyed playing at the Grand Teton Music Festival, and played and taught at the Brevard Music Center in the summer of 2013. He is also the former second trombonist of the Pacific Symphony Orchestra in Orange County, California, former principal of the Rhode Island Philharmonic, former principal of the Vermont Symphony, and former assistant principal of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra.

Jim's debut solo recording *Albanian Rhapsody* is a debut in both performance and composition for the father and son team, composer Anesti Nova and trombonist James Nova. All but one piece in this world premiere collection of compositions is for solo trombone and either string or chamber orchestra.

The music is ethnically charged, deriving much influence and flavor from Jim and Anesti's strong Albanian background. It is at times tragic, languid and yet uplifting as it chronicles (with the trombone as storyteller) the journey of the Nova family through hardships and eventual triumph over adversity.

In March of 2012, Jim made his solo debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, performing the Henri Tomasi Trombone concerto as well as his own arrangement of the famous Tommy Dorsey jazz ballad, I'm Getting Sentimental Over You which is the material on which Tomasi based his trombone concerto.

Since 2012, Jim has found a new passion using recording technology to explore multitrack recording, also known as "overdubbing" (or as he calls it, "Novadubbing"), and created numerous stunning recordings of challenging new transcriptions and arrangements he's done of a variety of exciting repertoire for trombone choir. These employ a number of trombones: contrabass, bass, tenor, small tenor, alto and even soprano trombones! To hear these, go to [soundcloud.com/jimnova](https://soundcloud.com/jimnova) where his recordings have enjoyed over 600,000 listens!

In 2017, Jim performed world premiere orchestrations by Anthony DiLorenzo of the Theme from the Green Hornet and I'm Gettin' Sentimental Over You. These performances were with the Three Rivers Young Peoples Orchestras and later that year, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra with Jim as soloist.

Most recently, this past December Jim has released a new overdub album for trombone choir, A Fall from Light to Dark. Through the chosen moments of John Williams' masterful scores, this album musically chronicles the rise and descent of Anakin Skywalker as he transforms into Darth Vader. Truly a one-man show, this album's transcriptions, playing, recording, editing, mixing and mastering were all done by Jim Nova!

Jim has had a lifelong love of John Williams' film scores since his Dad took him and his brother to see The Empire Strikes Back in the theater. Throughout his career he has performed and recorded with John Williams on several occasions, with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, the Boston Pops as well as the Utah Symphony.

When Jim is not on stage at Heinz Hall with the Pittsburgh Symphony, he can be found at Duquesne University where he's Brass Coordinator and Adjunct Trombone Faculty and also the Brass Coach of the Three Rivers Young Peoples Orchestras.

Jim is an S.E. Shires Artist and performs on Greg Black Mouthpieces.

Visit Jim's newly revamped website, [jimnova.com](http://jimnova.com), or soundcloud site, [soundcloud.com/jimnova](https://soundcloud.com/jimnova), for more info.

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

Age 9. Trombone was my first instrument.

**What equipment do you primarily use?**

I use several instruments, especially for my overdub recordings. My main horn is my large bore tenor. Here's my "squadron."

Miraphone Model 63 Soprano Trombone

Shires Alto Trombone - A7YLW - A85/95

Shires Tenor Trombone – 7YLW 8" – T25NLW

Shires Tenor Trombone - TII 7YM A5 - Axial Flow- TB47L

Shires Bass Trombone - BII 7YM - Axial Flow - B62L

Kanstul Model 1690 F/C/Db/A Contra Bass Trombone

7 custom Greg Black custom mouthpieces (1 soprano, 2 alto, 2 tenor, 1 bass, 1 contrabass)

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

Performing the Mozart Requiem in the Musikverein in Vienna, Austria with the Pittsburgh Symphony and my family in attendance!

Any of my recordings and performances with John Williams.

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

Score to Empire Strikes Back

Score to Raiders of the Lost Ark

Score to Superman

Solti/CSO Mahler 5<sup>th</sup> symphony

Honeck/PSO Heldenleben

Boston Pops Williams/Spielberg project

Boston Pops Summon the Heroes

Bernstein/CSO Shostakovitch 7<sup>th</sup> symphony

Muti/Philadelphia Orchestra Respighi Roman Trilogy

Bolter Anew at Home

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

My main teachers were:

George Sanders (Assoc. Principal Trombone, Hartford Symphony Orchestra): 1989-1992

Glenn Dodson (Former Principal Trombone, Philadelphia Orchestra): 1992-1996

Norman Bolter (Second Trombone, Boston Symphony Orchestra): 1996-1998

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

John Williams, Glenn Dodson, Norman Bolter, Joe Alessi

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

Right after my Mom died. A few months before, she and my Dad had just bought me my first real professional horn: A Bach 42. In the aftermath, I realized music wasn't something I did, but something I WAS.

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

A few very focused hours depending on what the PSO schedule is.

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

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

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

The killer B's! -  
Bozza, Bordogni, Bitsch, Boutry, Busser, Blazhevich...

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

My Dad. He taught me to always "Make the impossible, possible!" As a kid I always rolled my eyes when he'd talk like that, but as I get older, he gets smarter...

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

See my ten "stranded on a desert island and could only have 10 albums" answer above...

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

Always be totally prepared.

Be friendly but generally keep quiet.

Realize that sometimes people are just hammers looking for a nail, through no fault of your own.

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

They're both incredibly hard and rewarding and should be treated as such.

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

My Dad is an accordion player and composer.

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

You should ONLY go into music because the "Sun rises and sets" by it...

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

Movie scores to decide what's going on my next overdub album... ;-)

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

Planning my next overdub album...stay tuned!

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

Record yourself all the time!

Play for as many people as you can, not just brass players.

There is no such thing as "over prepared."

When in the heat of the audition, stay focused on what you WANT it to sound like, not what you DON'T WANT it to sound like...

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

That's easy...race car driver! (FYI I'm an instructor at the Pittsburgh International Raceway...)

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

So many...to name a few:

John Williams, Mahler, Shostakovitch, Bach, Bartok, Richard Strauss, Wagner

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

I love teaching! It's fascinating to watch someone unlock their potential with your help. Also, I learn so much teaching. That's an amazing paradox to me. But as with anything rewarding, it take a lot of patience and hard work!