

AN ARTIST'S CORNER

featuring

Jason Elliott



Jason Elliott earned his bachelor's degree in trombone performance from the University of California at Santa Barbara where he studied with Bill Booth of the Los Angeles Opera and Hollywood Bowl Orchestras. Previous teachers include Larry Zalkind, Andy Malloy, Dr. Bruce Tychinski, Sean Reusch, Toby Oft and Phil Keen. Jason is currently Principal Trombone of the Willamette Falls Symphony, 2nd Trombone in the Oregon Mahler Festival Orchestra, and enjoys an active freelance and teaching schedule. In addition to performing with the Willamette Falls Symphony, Jason simultaneously held the 2nd Trombone position in the Salem Symphony before its demise in 2017 and has performed with many Oregon and Washington based orchestras, brass, jazz, and indie music ensembles. Aside from performing, Jason also enjoys composing and arranging music for private projects. Jason is a member of the Rose City Trombones and the Portlandia Brass Ensemble. Prior to moving to Oregon in

2012, Jason enjoyed performing with the Ventura Jazz Orchestra, bass trombone with the West Coast Symphony (Santa Barbara Fiesta Festival Orchestra), and general freelance work across Southern California while in school at UCSB in addition to being a former member of the San Diego Civic Youth Orchestra prior to college.

Discography:

Ben Miller Band "Choke Cherry Tree"

Singley Fimbres Orkestra "Looking On The Level"

Rose City Trombones: <https://www.rosecitytrombones.com>

Portlandia Brass Ensemble: <http://www.portlandiabass.com>

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

I was 10 years old when I began playing trombone but my first instrument was piano thanks to my Grandma who was a classical pianist and church organist.

What equipment do you primarily use?

My primary instrument is a Weston Sprott edition New Yorker Series Antoine Courtois AC420BHW yellow brass tenor trombone paired with a standard silver plated Griego Alessi 5E.

What are some of the highlights of your career?

- Touring Beijing, China with the Rose City Trombones (Portland, OR based professional trombone choir) while my wife Kelley had the pleasure of conducting us.
- Performing in the Oregon Mahler Festival every year since its inception in 2015. Memorable performances include Mahler's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd symphonies.
- Premiering a new opera by living composer Christopher Corbell called "Viva's Holiday."
- Countless performances with Willamette Falls Symphony but most notably Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony, Bruckner's 7th Symphony, and Sibelius 2nd and 5th symphonies.
- Touring Australia and New Zealand with the San Diego Civic Youth Orchestra.

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

Alan Kaplan "Lonely Town"; "Valentina Igoshina Plays Chopin"; Willie Colón "Hecho En Puerto Rico"; Joseph Alessi "Trombonastics"; Bill Booth "Balancing Act"; Vienna State Opera (Deutsche Grammophon w/Carlos Kleiber conducting) "Der Rosenkavalier"; San Francisco Symphony "Mahler: Symphony No. 8"; Christian Lindberg "The Russian Trombone"; Jack Johnson "Brushfire Fairytales"; Bob Marley and the Wailers "Babylon By Bus"

What or who inspired you to play your instrument?

Joseph Alessi, Abbie Conant, Christian Lindberg, and Alain Trudel. I've grown an extensive list of jazz influences but these four trombonists were who initially inspired me to play trombone.

What are your favorite solos written for another instrument?

I don't know if anything in the entire horn repertoire is an acceptable answer but my wife is a horn player so I'm constantly blown away and jealous by the wide array of profound music written for horn. Most notably symphonic solos like the Mahler 9th Symphony horn solo in the final adagio movement, Brahms 1st Symphony horn solo in the finale, as well as countless other solos throughout the symphonic, operatic, and solo repertoire for horn. Last would be the Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1 in g minor and Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 in Bb minor.

What were your practice habits in high school, college, post-college, pro career?

In high school: Not recording myself as much as I should have, practicing for extreme hours, and not a whole lot of deliberate practice. **Recording every sound you make on your instrument is the only short cut I've found to improving quickly** so I wish I would have done a lot more recording in addition to ear training to improve intonation and my inner ear. I did however do a lot of singing which helped my playing tremendously. I found joining my high school men's choir helped my ensemble playing abilities because you don't have an instrument to depend on other than your inner ear. I found regular singing built confidence in my ability to hear high range notes of consequence before I had to play them like the high C on alto trombone at the beginning of Beethoven's 5th Symphony finale after taceting three movements or the high A in the Brahms 1 chorale after the horn solo in the fourth movement. I also found choral singing to improve my expectation of in-tune chords in addition to better understanding note functions within different chords.

In College: More deliberate focused practice 2-3 hours a day outside of 4-8 hours of ensemble playing responsibilities, 22 units of classes, studying, and a couple part-time jobs. Increased attention to detail knowing I needed to resolve issues quickly while fresh in the mornings so I wouldn't have to practice after a long day of ensembles. Recording every sound I made on my instrument or mouthpiece. Logging practice more consistently, taking more detailed notes from practicing or

after lessons in addition to collaborating with colleagues about how they were practicing or preparing for auditions.

Post-college/Pro-career: Extremely deliberate practice recording everything. I typically practice in 24 minute sessions like Christian Lindberg advocates. I put the horn down as soon as my mind wanders and I feel like I'm not able to focus at a high level. In general, 24 minutes doesn't feel rushed and helps me stay on task and focused on improving from beginning to end. A typical day may be two to three 24 minute practice sessions after a 24 minute morning warm-up/routine so anywhere from 1-2 hours outside of the day's playing responsibilities/engagements. Other practice habits include logging my practice in an extremely detailed manner, something I learned from Dr. Bruce Tychinski while at the University of Southern Mississippi. Other than that, lots of practice/play-alongs with world class recordings and not giving up on practice session goals even if I go over my scheduled practice time.

With whom did you study?

Primary Private Trombone Teachers In Chronological Order:

Phil Keen (while in H.S.), Sean Reusch (while in H.S.), Toby Oft (while in H.S. before he won the BSO job), Dr. Bruce Tychinski (at the University of Southern Mississippi), and Bill Booth (at the University of California, Santa Barbara).

Other teachers I've been blessed to study with for one-off lessons to improve my playing or while at seminars include:

Dr. Henry Henniger, Larry Zalkind, Andy Malloy, George Johnston, Joseph Alessi, Peter Ellefson, and Dr. John Whitaker.

Who are some of your musical heroes?

John Ferrillo, Christian Lindberg, Joseph Alessi, Abbie Conant, Alain Trudel, Dick Nash, Bill Tole, Alex Iles, Andy Martin, Alan Kaplan, Bill Reichenbach, Bob Sanders, Wycliffe Gordon, Bill Watrous, Conrad Herwig, Jack Teagarden, Lloyd Ulyate, Charlie Morillas, Andrea Rost, Véronique Gens, Kathleen Battle, Elisabeth Soderstrom, Frederica von Stade, Valentina Igoshina, Radek Baborak.

How much do you practice on a typical day?

On a typical day I will shoot for four 24 minute practice sessions after a 24 minute warm-up/routine session in the early morning. I transitioned to focused 24 minute sessions after learning this technique from Christian Lindberg. This time duration is

the only length of time I've found where I can stay focused on addressing goals and solving problems with the music I need to prepare for performances.

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

Yes, currently under construction: jasonelliott.strikingly.com

Please give some tips for freelancing.

Aside from basic professional skills, always give more value in your services than you take in payment and do your best to be a person people like to be around. There are also many things you can do that will not go unnoticed and separate you from the pack:

- Smile more. No matter how bad your day is going, always show up to gigs, teaching, or appointments with potential employers with a smile. This is not being fake. You have no idea how contagious choosing to show up with enthusiasm is to young students and even seasoned professionals. Bringing joy to everything you do and the people you work with is an incredibly undervalued skill.
- Go the extra mile to be more prepared than needed for every gig. You never know who will be at your gig or if a video/recording of your gig might help you land work down the line. In general ask yourself "how would the person I want to be do what I'm about to do?" Or if you're a Joseph Alessi disciple, ask yourself "WWJD?"
- Do not ask questions to conductors during rehearsals that can easily be answered on break in private.
- ALWAYS** put your book back in order after gigs, especially when subbing in big bands.
- Help promote other musicians' gigs even if you're not playing them or won't be able to attend.
- Help promote gigs you get hired to perform (you would not believe how many people don't do this).
- NEVER** speak ill of someone behind their back or engage in gossip, even if what you want to say may be true.
- Be creative and realize you will never get gigs waiting around for a call. Go out in your community, create opportunities for yourself and colleagues, and surround yourself with the best possible musicians you can.
- Success model leading people in your field.

Is anyone else in your family a musician?

Yes. My Dad is a guitarist (although his main bread and butter was being an Electrical Engineer for the Boeing aircraft company and expert surfboard craftsman) and my Mom plays guitar and writes songs although not professionally. I've always been jealous of people who have grown up with professional musician parents but I've been blessed to grow up with family who play and sing music 24/7 because it brings joy to their lives.

What is your favorite place(s) that you have performed?

Rotorua Energy Events Centre in Rotorua, New Zealand with the San Diego Civic Youth Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Robert Gilson and Boston Symphony Hall with the Murrieta Valley High School Wind Ensemble under the direction of Kenneth Mello. Both venues have stunning acoustics to die for.

What are you listening to currently?

Wycliffe Gordon "The Search", Joseph Alessi "Trombonastics" and Larry Zalkind "Baroque Music On Trombone".

Do you have a favorite genre of music?

Yes but it's a tie between Classical and Jazz.

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

French literature studying the "Fantastic" genre for developing my imagination which is a vital asset for any artist. Others include Psychology, Philosophy, Physics, and Human Physiology. All of which can profoundly affect how you approach playing your instrument whether mentally or physically in addition to helping you teach better.

What are you working on right now?

Practicing for the Los Angeles Philharmonic 2nd Trombone audition if I get invited.

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

I would be a Fire Fighter in Carlsbad, CA. Nothing cooler than getting paid to be around your best friends and make a difference in your community. Did I mention playing frisbee on the beach while on the clock?

Who are your favorite composers?

Richard Strauss, Giacomo Puccini, Gustav Mahler, Frederic Chopin, and Richard Wagner.

Do you like to teach? Why or why not?

I love teaching! Aside from it being extremely rewarding, I often learn more about my own playing while teaching than I do practicing because I have to simplify an explanation of how I'm able to do something. More importantly, I love helping others achieve musical and life success through lessons that can be learned while studying music.