

AN ARTIST'S CORNER

featuring

Jeremy Wilson



Trombonist Jeremy Wilson is acclaimed for the versatility and lyricism of his playing as well as his insight and commitment as a teacher. Currently Associate Professor of Trombone at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music, Wilson is something of a legend in trombone circles. On his first-ever audition attempt at the age of 25, he won a prestigious position with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and its sister organization, the orchestra of the Vienna State Opera. Just out of college, he honed his performance skills in Vienna as a member of one of the most renowned musical organizations in the world. At the time, he was the orchestras' only American full-time member, splitting his time between second trombone, first trombone, euphonium, and bass trumpet.

During his tenure in Vienna (2007-2012), Wilson performed hundreds of orchestral

concerts at home and in 28 countries around the globe under the batons of the world's leading conductors, including Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, Gustavo Dudamel, Valery Gergiev, Mariss Jansons, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Sir Simon Rattle, Christian Thielemann, and Franz Welser-Möst. At the Vienna State Opera, he played over 550 performances of 85 different operas and ballets, including five complete Wagner "Ring" cycles. He had the honor of performing with some of the greatest opera singers of our time, including Renée Fleming, Thomas Hampson, Jonas Kaufmann, and Anna Netrebko, and his artistry is documented on numerous recordings.

A native of Tennessee, Wilson returned to his home state in 2012 to fulfill his long time passion for teaching and devote more time to his young family. He accepted a full-time teaching position at Vanderbilt University but continued a busy performance schedule as well. During the 2013-14 arts season, he served as guest principal trombonist with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra and subbed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He also has performed on several occasions with the Saito Kinen Orchestra at the special invitation of Maestro Seiji Ozawa.

In addition to his versatility as an orchestral player, Wilson is highly sought as a soloist and chamber musician. The winner of numerous solo competitions, he has been featured in concerto performances and solo recitals in venues across the country. As a chamber artist, he has performed with a range of brass ensembles, including Tri-Star Brass, Maniacal 4, and the award-winning trombone quartet from the University of North Texas, and he is a regular member of the Blair Brass Quintet, composed of Vanderbilt faculty. With his keen affinity for jazz, Wilson also was a member of the University of North Texas's famed One O'Clock Lab Band, the University of Tennessee's award-winning ensemble Tennessee Trombonery, and the Knoxville Jazz Orchestra. He recently released his debut album titled *Perspectives*.

Highly respected as a dedicated teacher and clinician, Wilson has given masterclasses and lectures around the United States. He has been a featured guest artist at the International Trombone Festival, the American Trombone Workshop, and the Trombones de Costa Rica Festival. His students have been finalists for several domestic and international competitions and have participated in many prestigious summer festivals. Wilson currently serves on the Vanderbilt Faculty Senate, is faculty advisor for the Pi Delta chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, and is Music Director and Faculty Advisor of the Commodore Orchestra, a Vanderbilt campus orchestra comprised mainly of non-music majors. He recently received the Blair School's Faculty Excellence Award.

Wilson started studying music in the sixth grade, becoming a serious student of the trombone in high school. In college, he double-majored in music education and performance at the University of Tennessee, where he was a Presser Scholar, before getting a Master of Music at the University of North Texas, graduating in 2011. His teachers have included Don Hough, Vern Kagarice, Jan Kagarice, Tony Baker, and Tom Lundberg.

Wilson currently resides in Franklin, Tennessee, with his wife Kristi and their three children.

Jeremy plays Edward's Instruments and Griego Mouthpieces. His website is ieremwilsonmusic.com. His studio website for Vanderbilt University is vutrombonestudio.com.

Can you describe your incredible process, Body, Mind, Spirit?

The BODY MIND SPIRIT Method is both a philosophy and a process that is based on the idea that in order to be world-class as a musician you must have essential skills (BODY), knowledge (MIND), and passion (SPIRIT), and that the vast majority of problems for musicians arise because one or more of those three areas is underdeveloped, interfered with, or out of balance.

How did you discover this incredible process?

I put this all together based on a mixture of the teaching/guidance I received in college, my own professional performance and teaching experience, and a lot of pedagogical research.

When did you first put Body, Mind, Spirit into use?

It started for me when I was preparing for the Vienna Philharmonic audition. As I talk about in one of my videos, I found that I needed a process to help me move from one excerpt to another effectively and consistently.

What are the benefits that you have found from using Body, Mind, Spirit?

I enjoy making music more, I have more fun even in practice, I no longer battle debilitating performance anxiety, I have more consistent performances and better access to the work I've done in the practice room. My music is more meaningful and emotional than ever, but it's also more technically sound and accurate than ever before.

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

Started trombone at age 11. I sang a lot as a kid, but no other prior instrumental experience.

What equipment do you primarily use?

Primarily an Edwards T350-HB and a Griego 6.5 Deco mouthpiece

What are some of your favorite highlights of your career?

- Recording and releasing my solo album *Perspectives*
- Performing and recording an album with the Aries Quartet
- My first concert as a Wiener Philharmoniker, Mahler's 1st Symphony under the Georges Pretre
- My final concert in Carnegie Hall as a Wiener Philharmoniker, performing Wagner's *Ring Without Words* on bass trumpet under the baton of the piece's arranger/composer, Lorin Maazel
- Performing a concert of John Williams' music with the Nashville Symphony, conducted by the composer himself

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

- I fell in love with orchestral music by listening to James Horner's score to the movie *An American Tale: Fievel Goes West*
- I fell in love with trombone and its expressiveness listening to Christian Lindberg's *The Romantic Trombone*
- My desert island albums:
 - Chris Thile, *Not All Who Wander Are Lost*
 - Ola Gjeilo, *Ola Gjeilo*
 - Jacob Collier, *Djesse*
 - Wiener Philharmoniker, *Mahler Symphony 2 (Boulez)*
 - Andrew Peterson, *The Burning Edge of Dawn*

Who inspired you to play your instrument?

I had an older cousin who I thought was cool and played in band. That was basically my motivation. My teacher Tom Lundberg inspired me to stick with it.

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

Gliere, *Horn Concerto*
Barber, *Violin Concerto*
Dvorak, *Cello Concerto*
Rachmaninov, *Cello Sonata*
Poulenc, *Violin Sonata*
Artunian, *Trumpet Concerto*
Vaughan-Williams, *Tuba Concerto*
Schumann, *Fantasiestücke for Clarinet*

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

I practice a lot smarter, listening to my body, mind, and spirit rather than just pounding away at the same thing over and over. I plan, strategize, and try to use my time and energy more efficiently.

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

Fast articulation and low range.

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

Yes!! When I sing, there are the fewest amount of barriers between my concept and reality. It helps me to understand what it is I'm trying to sound like.

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

Perseverance, Perspective, Kindness, and Gratitude

What do you want your legacy to be?

I want to have spent my career increasing joy and beauty in the world, increasing understanding, and changing lives through music, and teaching as many people as possible how to do the same. I want to have been a devoted father, a loving husband, and a life-giving and loyal friend.

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

For me, the strongest motivation is to stay as head over heels in love with music as possible at all times. If I love what I'm doing, and I derive joy and meaning and energy from it, I will automatically be motivated to practice, perform, and move towards my career goals.

With whom did you study?

From most recent to earliest: Vern Kagarice, Jan Kagarice, Tony Baker, Don Hough, and Tom Lundberg

Who are some of your musical heroes?

Too many to name all of them. My dream team would be: Ian Bousfield, Radek Baborak, Anna Netrebko, Juan Diego Florez, Jonas Kaufmann, Jacob Collier, Chris Thile, Edgar Meyer, Bobby McFerrin, Pat Metheny

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

After watching *Mr. Holland's Opus* in 8th grade.

How much do you practice on a typical day?

Nowadays 90 minutes feels perfect for me.

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

jeremywilsonmusic.com

What are some of your favorite etude books?

I like Blazhevich, Bitsch, and Brad Edwards Lip Slur Melodies

Do you use any apps when you practice?

Tonal Energy sometimes, Forescore for my digital sheet music

What are some ways to improve one's rhythm?

To feel everything in addition to counting it. Understand it mathematically, yes, but you must feel it viscerally and be able to almost dance to it. If you understand how a rhythm works in "the groove" you will have great rhythm. If you have trouble with speeding up and slowing down, metronome practice with subdivisions!

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

To pay more attention to my physical, emotional, and spiritual health earlier in life, and to cultivate more friendships even if it meant practicing a little less.

What is your favorite place that you have traveled to?

Australia

Who are some of your heroes in life?

I know it's cliché, but Jesus, for real. My wife, my best friend Josh, Brene Brown, Tim Keller, CS Lewis, Andrew Peterson, Dallas Willard

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

I think music education degrees should be for people who are actually passionate about teaching in some way. I don't think music ed should be a "fallback" or "safety net".

Is anyone else in your family a musician?

My wife is a wonderful singer and songwriter, my son Eli plays piano, my son Grant plays drums, my mom is a pianist, and my dad sings beautifully

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

The Musikverein (Vienna), Carnegie Hall, Suntory Hall (Tokyo), Royal Albert Hall (London), The Concertgebouw (Amsterdam)

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

To develop patience. Range doesn't develop an octave at a time, it's typically a very slow stepladder process for both high and low range.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Still teaching at Vanderbilt, hopefully having released a few more solo and chamber albums, and crying because I'm about to have two kids in college!

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

Listening to music, boat rides on the lake, reading a book on my screened porch on a Fall or Spring day, hanging out with my family and friends.

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

Do your research. Really pop the hood and ask probing questions about the deeper things like teaching philosophy, student expectations, and studio culture.

What are you listening to currently?

Jacob Collier's *Djesse volume 3*

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

History, hands down. Understanding historical context is essential for musicians. As soon as a piece is composed, it is a snapshot in time that we get to re-enact when we perform the piece.

What are you working on right now?

James David's newly composed sonata, called *Secure. Contain. Protect*. I plan to premiere it this Fall. It's awesome!!

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

The BODY MIND SPIRIT Process! See my video playlist on YouTube

What advice can you give about mental wellness?

BMS!

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

Reading is like my 2nd job. I am currently reading Victor Wooten's *The Music Lesson*

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

I'd likely be a historian.

Who are your favorite composers?

My goose-bump composers are Mahler, Richard Strauss, and Mahler.

How could we make music education better?

By emphasizing artistic expression WAY earlier in the process. Currently, our system for brass instruments is almost exclusively focused on technique for the first several years, then we try to tack on expression and artistry.

Do you like to teach? Why or why not?

I love to teach!! It's what I feel I was born to do. Helping people make better music and reach their goals is incredibly fulfilling to me.

What are your favorite solos for your instrument?

Favorite solos for trombone:

Sulek, Sonata vox Gabrieli

Grondahl, Trombone Concerto

Casterede, Sonatina

Filas, Sonata at the end of the century

Ewazen, Sonata

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

Chop Wood Carry Water, Joshua Medcalf

The Brain That Changes Itself, Norman Doidge

The Inner Game of Music, Barry Green

Do you have any tips on forming a chamber group?

Clearly define roles for members of the group to avoid hurt feelings and misunderstandings later.

What advice can you share about physical wellness?

BMS!

What is your favorite food?

I'm simple. Pizza, Spaghetti Bolognese, Fried Chicken, Chicken and Dumplings!