

# AN ARTIST'S CORNER

*featuring*

## Megumi Kanda



**Megumi Kanda**, Principal Trombone of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra is a native of Tokyo, Japan. Megumi began to play the trombone at age ten and continued her studies at the prestigious Toho High School of Music, where she studied with Sumio Miwa, trombonist in the NHK Symphony. At age fifteen, she became the youngest player ever to be named as one of the top ten trombonists at the Japanese Wind and Percussion Competition. Two years later she won the Grand Prize in the National Competition for Solo Trombone and won best soloist prize upon graduation from the Toho High School of Music.

Megumi came to the United States in 1994, and received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music where she studied with James DeSano, former Principal Trombone of the Cleveland Orchestra. Prior to joining the Milwaukee Symphony in 2002, she previously served as a member of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, faculty member of the Eastman School of Music Community Education Division, and Principal Trombonist

of the Albany Symphony Orchestra.

In April 2006, Megumi was recognized by the Arion Foundation in Tokyo, Japan as one of the most influential Japanese classical artists. She has also received a Certificate of Commendation from the Consul General of Japan at Chicago in recognition for distinguished service contributing to the friendship between the United States and Japan. Megumi was named a 2017 Woman of Influence in the category of education by the Milwaukee Business Journal.

Megumi has performed in recital and as a soloist across the United States, Europe and Asia, including with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Pershing's Own Army Band, the US Army Field Band, and the Prague Chamber Orchestra. Works dedicated to her include Geoffrey Gordon's Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra, premiered with the Milwaukee Symphony in 2011, and Amy Mills' Red

Dragonfly for trombone and piano, premiered at the 2013 International Trombone Festival. She has also enjoyed a long collaboration with composer/pianist Bruce Stark, performing premieres of his works at the 2013 and 2017 International Trombone Festivals.

Megumi's first book, *The One Hundred*, a collection of orchestral trombone excerpts with accompanying commentary, was published in August 2015 and is a resource widely used by aspiring young trombonists around the world.

As a JVC/Victor Entertainment artist, Megumi has recorded three solo albums: Amazing Grace, Gloria, and Mona Lisa. She also can be heard on Magnifique Live, a live recording of Megumi and other JVC artists in the August 2005 performance at Takemitsu Hall in Tokyo's Opera City.

Megumi is proud to be a Greenhoe clinician and perform on a Greenhoe trombone.

An avid gardener, Megumi was chosen to participate in the 2013 Garden Tour in Shorewood, WI. She also enjoys going to Milwaukee Brewers games and taking walks with her husband Dietrich Hemann and sons Hans, Max and Lukas.

Megumi Kanda's Book, *The Old 100*, is at [www.encoremupub.com](http://www.encoremupub.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 and had already started piano.

***What equipment do you primarily use?***

I play on a Greenhoe custom tenor and a Latsch alto.

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

I've been Principal Trombone of the Milwaukee Symphony for 16 years and have been a soloist with our orchestra several times. I've appeared in recitals in a lot of places around the world. I have 3 solo albums, and I feel fortunate to have been able to complete my excerpt book *[The One Hundred](#)*.

***What are your favorite solos written for another instrument?***

Bach's Goldberg Variations and Cello Suites. I am also a big fan of many of the Brahms Symphony horn solos, but maybe I'm just required to say that since I'm married to a horn player.

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

I practiced way TOO MUCH in high school and college, and wound up injuring myself as a result. My recovery required me to rethink my whole approach to playing and preparation, and led to my playing and practice becoming much more efficient and healthy.

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

In high school my teacher was Sumio Miwa, formerly of the NHK Symphony. In college at the Cleveland Institute of Music my teacher was Jim DeSano, former principal of the Cleveland Orchestra.

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

Sorry to be a trombone dork, but Christian Lindberg is so wonderful, particularly his ability to turn a phrase. So inspiring! Yo Yo Ma, whose music making seems to be so effortless and natural.

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

I grew up in a house filled with music at all times. My mother is a very fine pianist and she was always singing or playing the piano or blasting some classical or gospel CDs. My grade school music teacher really inspired me and made me realize my love for music.

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

I was pretty young. I think by junior high school I had made my mind up that this was what I wanted to do.

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

The website for The One Hundred can be found at: [www.encoremupub.com](http://www.encoremupub.com)

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

Marsteller's Daily Routine, Henri Couillaud 12 Melodic Etudes, Blazhevich Clef Studies, and Langey – Carl Fischer Tutor Book for Trombone.

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

My faith and my family keep me humble and thankful every day.

***How do you suggest balancing life with music?***

Keep and insist on an identity and sense of self worth that isn't totally tied to how well you perform. That's a tall order because of the intense focus needed to achieve the highest levels and the praise that comes with performing well.

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

An ideal freelancer is someone who, obviously besides playing well, is always prepared, always on time, and always pleasant. Someone who contributes but doesn't stick out. And a person who is honest and sincere.

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

Being an education major is really the smart direction for most students. It doesn't inhibit your opportunity to be an amazing performer, and you also have another awesome possible musical career path with an education degree.

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

My husband and I are both members of the Milwaukee Symphony. Our kids all play piano and another instrument.

***What is your favorite place that you have performed?***

Takemitsu Hall in Tokyo. One of many beautiful concert halls in Japan.

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

Is having a career in music something you can't (or desperately don't want to) live without? Without an unusual level of drive and focus, it will be an uphill climb.

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

Usually things that we'll be playing in the orchestra soon that I don't know. The Ligeti Violin Concerto was recent. For a break from orchestral music, I've been listening to Palestrina lately.

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

I am preparing for a couple recitals, one in Madison, and one in Japan. Also I'm editing some as yet unpublished etudes of Arthur Pryor.

***Please list some of your favorite websites for musicians.***

Tromboneexcerpts.org is really handy. A great resource for learning the trombone orchestral repertoire.

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

Lots! Too many to list here, but insist on consistent excellence from yourself. Do things like recording yourself and playing for friends and colleagues to take honest stock of how and what you're doing.

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

I would have been a doctor. At this point in my life, though, I'd probably open a flower shop.

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

Brahms, Stravinsky, and Mahler

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

Yes! I have a wonderful studio of high school students and young professionals, as well as some college kids who come for lessons in the summer. I love sharing what I have learned throughout my own journey and helping them achieve their best.

***What are your favorite solos for your instrument?***

Sulek Sonata, David Concertino, Grondahl, Larsson Concertino and the works of a couple of my composer friends, Bruce Stark and Amy Riebs Mills.

***If you could go back in time, how would you practice differently when you were in high school?***

I would tell myself that practicing the trombone for six or eight hours each day is a terrible idea! Have a goal for each practice session, think about how to achieve it, and then try to take a step or two closer to your goal. Break up your practice sessions, and breathe!