

AN ARTIST'S CORNER

featuring

Timothy Higgins



Timothy Higgins was appointed to the position of Principal Trombone of the San Francisco Symphony by Michael Tilson Thomas in 2008. He was previously the acting Second Trombonist with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC. Mr. Higgins, a Houston native, has a Bachelor's degree in Music Performance from Northwestern University and has performed with the Milwaukee Symphony, Virginia Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Music of the Baroque, Grand Teton Music Festival, Sun Valley Summer Symphony, Washington National Opera, and Baltimore Symphony. His principal teachers have been Michael Mulcahy (Chicago Symphony), Michael Warny (Houston Grand Opera), and Royce Landon (Des Moines, Iowa). He has participated in music festivals with the Roundtop Music Festival, the National Repertory Orchestra, and the Tanglewood Music Center.

Along with a busy orchestra career, Timothy Higgins is a sought after arranger of music. He was the sole arranger the National Brass Ensemble's *Gabrieli* recording, as well as two Verdi overtures conducted by Ricardo Muti. Additionally, Higgins has arranged music for CT3 Trombone Quartet, National Brass Quintet, Bay Brass, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Brass Ensemble. His arrangements have been performed by the Washington Symphonic Brass, the Bay Brass, the San Francisco Symphony

brass section, the Chicago Symphony brass section, and the Northwestern University Brass Ensemble. Timothy Higgins has also composed works for brass instruments for solo and chamber settings. His arrangements and original compositions are available through his publishing company, 415Music.

As a teacher, Timothy has been a faculty member of the Pokorny Seminar since 2012, and is currently on faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Northwestern University. He has also led masterclasses in Japan, China, Canada and the United States, including classes at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, the New World Symphony, and the Juilliard School of Music.

In 2005, Timothy won the Robert Marsteller Solo trombone competition, as well as the ITA Trombone Quartet competition with CT3. While attending the Tanglewood Music Center, Mr. Higgins was awarded the Grace B. Upton Award for Outstanding Fellow. In 2013, Timothy released his solo CD, Stage Left, which can be found on [here](#).

Tim Higgins Website: <http://www.415-music.com>

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

My first instrument was piano at age 10. All of my siblings played piano growing up, and I was very excited to be able to start playing piano by the time it got around to me. I began playing trombone at age 12 when I signed up for the band program in 6th grade.

What equipment do you primarily use?

I primarily use a yellow bell Bach 42 with a lightweight nickel slide. My mouthpiece is basically at Bach 5g with a slightly wider rim.

What are your favorite solos written for another instrument?

Samuel Barber Violin Concerto

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

My practice habits in high school were abysmal! I would basically pick up etude books and try to read through them without ever working on challenging passages. The only real benefit was developing my sight reading skills.

In college, my practice habits were marginally better. I would average about 2 hours of individual practice each day. Sometimes I would reach 3 hours, and rarely I would get in 4 hours of practice. However, I was *constantly* in the practice room mentally. I was imagining myself in the practice room all day,

including working on intonation/rhythm/phrasing/etc. My time in college was *consumed* with being a musician. I barely made time for anything else. If it wasn't for the endless hours of mental practice, I wouldn't be able to perform with the high level musicians in the SFS.

With whom did you study?

In high school, I was very fortunate to take lessons with Michael Warny (at that time, he was teaching at the University of Houston). In college, I studied primarily with Michael Mulcahy, but had lots of instruction from Randy Hawes and Gail Williams.

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

I realized I wanted to be a professional musician during my sophomore year in high school. However, I questioned that choice through my junior year in college. It was daunting to invest in such a risky career, and I was terrified I wouldn't be able to make ends meet.

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

www.415-music.com

This is where I publish my arrangements and compositions, as well as post upcoming performances.

What are some of your favorite etude books?

Gerard Pichaureau Special Legato

Robert Marsteller Basic Routines

Blazevich Etudes

Kopprasch Etudes

Doms Etudes

Snedecor Low Etudes for Tuba

Please give some tips for freelancing.

If you are interested in freelancing in a particular town, contact the big players in town (in the orchestra and/or on the freelance circuit). Tell them who you are and that you would like to play for them *with the intention of getting work in*

town. It is alright to be upfront and honest. In fact, most people appreciate that honesty/directness.

If you get called to play with a group, get your music ahead of time from the library and look it over. Be the most familiar with the piece of music out of all the musicians. Show up early. Warmup politely. Bring a pencil and all the mutes you need. Say thank you. Keep your mouth shut (you're not there to give your opinion!). Do your best to make everyone around you sound great. Say thank you. Be a positive energy for everyone during rehearsals and concerts. Say thank you. During rehearsal or concert breaks, don't wander off; the section may want to talk to you or work on something. If I haven't mentioned it, say thank you.

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

Do whatever you want, just make sure you are great at at least one of those two majors. (Also, no one wants to listen to an apathetic performer, and no one wants to study with a checked-out teacher.)

Is anyone else in your family a musician?

Not in my immediate family, but my great aunt was an organist. Her uncle was the librarian/string bassist/tubist with the Chicago Symphony from 1932-1956. His name was Fred Boos.

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

Go to concerts. Listen to as much live music as possible. Gather advice/information from as many different sources as you can. Be a sponge. The practice room is your laboratory. Experiment with everything you have heard in concerts and from teachers. Be obsessed!

What are you listening to currently?

Dan Carlen's Hardcore History. Currently, World War I.

Do you have any tips for preparing for auditions?

Play everything with a beautiful sound, great intonation, and clear/accurate rhythm. The audition with the most detail will win the job. It's not about who doesn't miss a note.

Who are your favorite composers?

Brahms, Mahler, Aarvo Part, Schumann

How could we make music education better?

Fund it and make it mandatory.

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

The Inner Game of Tennis