

AN ARTIST'S CORNER

featuring

Will Baker



Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, **Will Baker** is one of the most sought after young Bass Trombonists working today. He is the Principal Bass Trombonist of the Monterey Symphony and his musicianship has taken him all over the world, including stints with the San Francisco Symphony, Detroit Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Malaysian Philharmonic, and Burning Man 2018 with the ArtHaus Collective.

Before moving to Northern California, Will was the premier bass trombonist in the state of Iowa, performing as the tenured member of Orchestra Iowa from 2013-17 and the Des Moines Symphony since 2014-18. In 2016, while artist in residence with the Southeast Iowa Symphony (SEISO), Will commissioned and premiered a new bass trombone concerto by composer Robert Tindle titled At Sixty Miles An Hour. In 2018, Will premiered the Wind Ensemble arrangement with Travis Cross and the UCLA Wind Ensemble.

An Edwards Artist and Clinician, Will has presented recitals and masterclasses at universities in California, Iowa, and Missouri. He is a faculty member of Las Positas College and the Fredericksburg Brass Institute, and is a founding member of the Des Moines Low Brass Triumvirate (DMLBT).

To feed the other side of his soul, Will plays Trombone for the The Sam Cockrell Band (he can be heard on the SCB's 2015 release *Trying to Make a Living Playing my Guitar*), and loves to collaborate with singer/songwriter/trombonist Sean Pawling.

Will earned a Masters Degree in Bass Trombone performance at Northwestern University where he studied with Michael Mulcahy, Randall Hawes, Peter Ellefson, and Tim Higgins. He graduated Cum Laude from UCLA with a BA in music performance, studying Euphonium and Bass Trombone with Patrick Sheridan. It was Mr. Sheridan that inspired Will to forge a career in music, and for this Pat will always be one of his favorite people in the world.

Website – www.willbakermusic.com

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/willbakermusic22/>

Twitter - @willbakermusic Instagram - @willbakermusic

Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/WillBakerMusic> Patreon -

<https://www.patreon.com/Willbakermusic>

Mailing List - tinyurl.com/GetFluent2019 <http://www.edwards-instruments.com/>

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

I started playing trombone when I was 9, picked up Euphonium just before high school (13), and Bass Trombone during my first year of college (18).

What equipment do you primarily use?

Bass Bone - Edwards B502iY with a dual bore slide. I'm currently using a Schilke 60 w/ Remington Shank

Tenor Bone - Edwards T350HB

Euphonium - Hirsbrunner 476

What are some of the highlights of your career?

Commissioning and premiering Robert Tindle's "At 60 Miles an Hour" Bass Trombone Concerto in 2016, and performing the Wind Ensemble Premiere with UCLA in May 2018.

Playing 5 weeks with the Detroit Symphony in October 2017.

Playing 4 weeks with Malaysia Philharmonic in Spring 2018.

Playing a few Summer weeks with the San Francisco Symphony, including the soundtrack to Star Wars: A New Hope

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

This question is impossible because I like so many different kinds of music, but I will try! Order is random

Fat Freddy's Drop - Dr Boondigga & The Big BW Snarky Puppy - The World is Getting Smaller Vulfpeck - Fugue State

Lettuce - Fly

Griz - Good Will Prevail

Foster the People - Torches Randall Hawes - Melodrama CSO/Levine - The Planets Michael Jackson - Thriller

Sean Pawling - Eye for an Eiger

What or who inspired you to play your instrument?

I went to my sister's middle school Jazz Band concert when I was 8 or so. She was rocking out on the bass and I thought it was the coolest thing I had ever seen. After the show, I told her that I wanted to be in jazz band and asked if she had any advice on what instrument I should play. She said, "there are never enough trombone players, so if you get good, you might get into jazz band as a 6th grader!" I liked my chances, and she turned out to be correct!

What are your favorite solos written for another instrument?

Brahms Cello Sonata in E minor, Op. 38 Brahms Horn Trio

Shostakovich Piano Preludes Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 Sibelius Violin Concerto

With whom did you study?

In chronological order: Pat Crossen, Don Kennelly, Doug Tornquist, Bill Booth, Pat Sheridan, Jim Miller, Michael Mulcahy, Randall Hawes, Pete Ellefson, Tim Higgins, Jeremy Moeller, Paul Welcomer, John Engelkes, Kyle Covington. All of them have had something valuable to teach me, and I still have so much to learn. **I take lessons whenever possible.**

Who are some of your musical heroes?

My main teachers: Michael Mulcahy, Randall Hawes, Tim Higgins, Pete Ellefson, Pat Sheridan. They are all wonderful musicians but also well rounded and inspiring husbands, fathers, colleagues. Additionally, I'm a bit obsessed with Jim Markey and Stefan Schulz. I finally got to meet, play for, and hear Jim at the 2018 Pokorney seminar, and it was literally a dream come true.

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

Sophomore year in college. I'll never forget my lesson with Pat Sheridan when he said, "Will, you can continue to do what you are doing and you will be the best euphonium player at UCLA. Yay! Congratulations! However, that doesn't mean anything once you graduate. Or, you could work your butt off, and you could play music for the rest of your life. You can be a pro." I was completely floored. I never seriously considered becoming a professional musician. I didn't think it was possible. I will spend the rest of my life thanking Pat for believing in me, and *giving me permission to believe in myself*.

How much do you practice on a typical day?

This varies. I get at least an hour in every day, but most days its more like 2-3.

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

<http://willbakermusic.com/>

What are some of your favorite etude books?

Everything by Brad Edwards Cimera 55 phrasing studies

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

My dad and my brother. Both outstanding men and fathers. My Dad taught me that "It doesn't take any talent to hustle," and my brother showed me that it is possible to achieve your dreams by becoming a major league baseball player.

How do you suggest balancing life with music?

I think we are all still trying to sort that out. I use practices like meditation and journaling to develop my sense of self separate from my music career. These things help be thankful for what I have, help me see myself more clearly, and help me imagine what I want to be and why. When you have those things, balance is a little bit easier. With that said, I find it very challenging to imagine my life without music. Playing music with other people is my favorite thing to do. My favorite days always involve some sort of playing (chamber, orchestral, or jam).

Please give some tips for freelancing.

Show up early, be prepared, be a great person to be around, and LISTEN LIKE YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.

Is anyone else in your family a musician?

My dad plays guitar and sings lead in a band of his friends called the Alter Boys. He is an incredibly natural musician with little formal training and a GREAT ear. My sister has an incredibly beautiful singing voice, and is easily the most talented musician in the family, I'm always trying to figure out ways to get her to sing more. My brother is a casual guitar player, but he is the most famous musician in the family. Google image search "John Baker, Guitar, Cubs" and see what I mean.

What is your favorite place that you have performed?

A tie between Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, and Blackrock City, Nevada.

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

Be the first person in the music building every day and create a daily routine that challenges you. Get your personal work done before ensembles. Also, with the rise of the internet, there are literally millions and millions of musical jobs out there, waiting to be made up. With over 4 billion people online, and over 3 billion more joining us in the next few years, it is highly likely that you can provide value for a small chunk of people.

What are you listening to currently?

Vulfpeck, and whatever music I am preparing for upcoming gigs

Do you have a favorite genre of music?

Funk with Horns

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

I took loads of AP classes in high school, which gave me the luxury of passing out of most of the non music classes. My favorite class was Astrology 5, Life in the Universe. Learning about the building blocks for life and imagining the size of the universe is a great way to make trombone or musical problems feel insignificant.

What are you working on right now?

I'm preparing for another performance of the Tindle Bass Trombone Concerto with the Contra Costa Wind Symphony on March 10th. I've also started an online teaching project called #GetFluent2019 where I take my

favorite moments from my favorite music and turn them into fundamental exercises by writing them out in all 12 keys. People can sign up to get the FREE sequences delivered to their inbox weekly by visiting tinyurl.com/GetFluent2019

Please list some of your favorite websites for musicians.

<https://www.trombone101.com/> - for beginner resources and artist interviews
<https://www.lastrowmusic.com/> - for audition postings and brass news
<http://www.joedixonstudio.com/downloads.html> - for key studies
<http://willbakermusic.com/downloads/> - for over 40 free downloadable practice resources, easily scalable to your ability level and musical interests

Do you have any tips for preparing for auditions?

Crawl under a rock and practice. -Dennis Nulty-
He is basically saying, make your prep your #1 priority. If you create a system to prepare for the audition, and stick to the system for the duration of your plan, you will feel confident and ready to do your best when it is needed.

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

Personal Trainer

Who are your favorite composers?

Mahler, Strauss, Brahms, Shostakovich, Wagner

Do you like to teach? Why or why not?

I love teaching. I get a huge boost from teaching my students to have a growth mindset. I've gotten so much joy out of starting low brass days with the DMLBT in Iowa, and teaching at FredBrass is always a highlight in the summer. My love of teaching is a huge reason I started my GetFluent2019 project. Free resources, once per week, based on my favorite moments from my favorite music. I'm trying to reach as many people as possible.

What are your favorite solos for your instrument?

Robert Tindle - "At 60 Miles an Hour" Bass Trombone Concerto David Biedenbender - Liquid Architecture
Jerome Naulais - Etoile des Profondeurs

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

Gallwey - The Inner Game of Tennis Pressfield - The War of Art
Olson - The Slight Edge

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

I would spend more time playing scales and arpeggios, WAY MORE TIME playing things by ear, and I would record my self for at least 15 minutes a day.