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The Brass Herald

Jens Lindemann

International Canadian



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Jens Lindemann in conversation with Philip Biggs

PB Jens, welcome back to *The Brass Herald*.

JL Philip, it's always a pleasure to talk to you. Your passion for brass is obvious and your commitment to doing so many things behind the scenes is celebrated by all who know you.

PB It seems a long time since Chicago, where we last met.

JL Yes, at the Midwest Band conference last year. It's the nature of what we do to meet in locations around the world from Thailand to Banff to England to New York. All of these fleeting moments between friends are cherished in my travelling lifestyle.

PB Before we start with the interview, I have to say what a great time I had in Banff, where you hosted the ITG Conference in 2008. That was one great week of brass Jens. Thank you from a very grateful attendee.

JL I burned through my speed dial calling in all sorts of favours. One of my favourite memories was a private lunch I organized with my heroes, Doc Severinsen, Fred Mills, Maurice Murphy, Allen Vizzutti, David Hickman and Mark Gould. The stories? Enough to write several books! I was particularly proud of the "Night of Principals" where every major Canadian orchestral trumpeter performed on stage together...that may never happen again. Of course, there was also the final concert, which ranged from the insane, brilliant energy of the Mnozil Brass to the king of sublime in Guido Basso's flugelhorn. Ole Edvard Antonsen, Sergei Nakariakov, Sean Jones...the list just doesn't stop although I do think it was clever to also feature Wycliffe Gordon on trombone. There is no one like Wycliffe to humble 1,000 trumpet players.

PB The organisation must have taken years and it all ran so seamlessly.



Jens Lindemann.

JL That was a two-year labour of love. Everyone who hosts an ITG or other major international event knows that every free moment is consumed working behind the scenes. For me the Banff Centre was an amazing conference spot and the team there that worked with me was critical to the success of the conference. It's not for the faint of heart, but for anyone out there considering doing such an event, I can assure you that the life memories far outweigh any potential challenges.

PB That was the first and only time I met Fred Mills. His passing robbed the brass world of one of our iconic figures. I know you were very close to Mr Mills over a long period. His passing must have been particularly sad for you.

JL A sense of deep loss is still the only way to describe it. I received the news just

after playing a concerto where the final orchestral work was the 1812 overture with canons and fireworks. It seemed like such a fitting tribute to a great musician. Having grown up listening to such an iconic group, it was an honour to join Canadian Brass when Fred left

and will always be one of the greatest experiences I have ever had in my life. I still remember being twelve years old and hearing piccolo trumpet for the first time on a Canadian Brass LP. Fred and I met on many occasions afterward in numerous locations around the world and always had meaningful dinners and visits together... those are the wonderful memories that I will always carry with me.

PB I - along with millions of others worldwide - watched you on TV at the Olympic ceremony. That was great for brass playing globally and must have been a great experience for you.

JL That was another life memory Philip... it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Playing in front of three billion people on both Opening and Closing ceremonies was mindboggling. I'm also very proud of the fact that my solo feature happened to be playing over a big band on a tune known as the 'Hockey Night in Canada' theme song. That melody is more famous than the national anthem in Canada and the original lead part was recorded by the late, great Arnie Chycoski. Holding the last high F a full beat after the band cut off was a total tribute to him and I told the conductor in advance that I would do it. Anyone who has ever listened to the Boss Brass big band knows what I'm talking about. I was also very fortunate to have a ticket to the gold medal hockey match (ten rows back on the game winning blueline!) between Canada and the United States. When that game went into overtime, I called the contractor and said: "I don't care what time it is, I will be late for the soundcheck!"

PB Coming right up to date, I believe you just travelled to Korea for a Concert for Peace which commemorated the 60th anniversary of the Korean War.

JL Yes, a performance with orchestra for 10,000 people and live national television playing a new concerto that I just premiered a few months ago by Allan Gilliland called *Dreaming of the Masters III*. It's a tribute to numerous trumpet styles ranging from big band to blues to flugel ballad to virtuoso cornet to salsa. I received many emails after that performance and was reminded of the power that music has in a solemn setting. As performers, we are so fortunate to be able to bring people joy through the arts. Regardless of country or culture, music is a universal language.

PB Jens, please tell Herald readers about *The All Star Brass* which you have formed. It's quite a line-up, I believe.



Jens Lindemann in concert.

JL The All-Star Brass was born out of a concept that developed after hearing the string quartet recordings of Isaac Stern, Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman and Yo Yo Ma. I decided that I wanted to form a collective of the greatest brass soloists in the world who all had independent careers, but wanted to get together for the synergy of playing live chamber music. The challenge was to co-ordinate everyone's insane schedules, rehearse for three days and then record a live concert for posterity trying to feature only compositions and arrangements that had never been done before. The first two years of this collective have been Ryan Anthony (trumpet), Martin Hackleman (horn), Keith Dyrda (trombone), Patrick Sheridan (tuba) and Wycliffe Gordon (trombone) as featured soloist...all very well-known names and celebrated performers. We are just about to release our live CD from 2009 and launch the website. 2010 was recorded live this summer with Sam Pilafian producing. Wow! As long as there is an All-Star Brass recording, there will be Sam Pilafian. He is the best producer for brass that I have ever worked with...period!

PB I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for a splendid article on the Brass Band of Battle Creek in the last issue of *The Brass Herald*. You have been a member of this famous band for a number of years?

JL Yes...what a band! Twice a year and in only three days, this group puts on a world class concert and they can play anything! The really amazing part was going on tour a few years ago in Florida and watching the band gel over a week and five performances...absolutely



Jens Lindemann performing at Disneyland.



Jens Lindemann with his wife Jennifer.

stunning is the only way to describe it. There is nothing in the world like the Brass Band of Battle Creek and that's why we all return whenever possible to play in the group. I think the most important element to the ensemble is the genuine esprit de corps and that is picked up on by audiences.

PB I know your teaching is very important to you. You are currently Professor of High Distinction at the University of California, Los Angeles.

JL Teaching is one of the greatest things that a performing musician can ever do and we owe it to the next generation to pass on our knowledge. I have a studio of students who I'm very proud of. A few years ago, we won the National Trumpet Competition Ensemble category in Virginia and I have students who have graduated to everything from orchestras to military bands to college professors to being first call freelancers in Los Angeles to touring with top pop groups. I promote the idea of creating an independent curriculum based entirely on what a student wants to get out of their university experience. I go at their pace, not mine. Different players have different visions of life and career and it's my job to help them discover themselves through the process of working together. We are all just part of an educational continuum in their lives and the gratification of watching them find

their way often makes me feel like a parent.

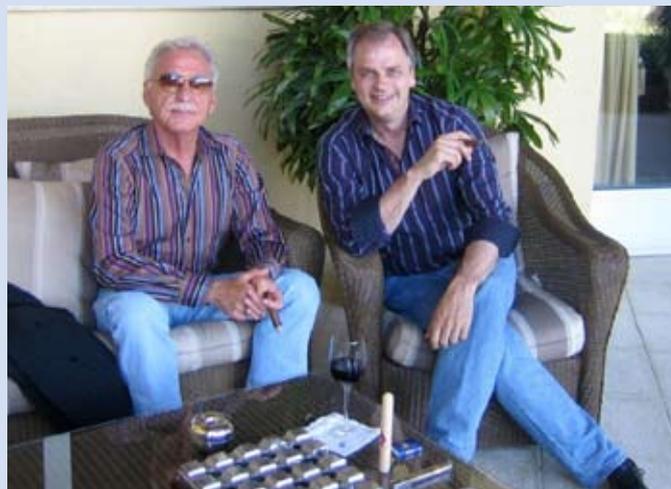
PB Your teaching at the University of California, Los Angeles is only part of your teaching portfolio though.

JL I have the privilege to work with students from all over the world in master classes and having them strive for excellence is the challenge...there really are no shortcuts when it comes to perfecting a craft like a musical instrument. Aside from UCLA, I also run a brass programme at the Banff Centre for two weeks every summer. It's one of the most beautiful places on the planet and the setting is idyllic for inspiring creativity. The programme is intended for advanced chamber groups and soloists and it is also where the All-Star Brass is in residency for 5-7 days. The challenges for most students are universal too, regardless of where

I go. Generally, playing issues arise out of a lack of attention to detail and fundamentals. Rhythm is the essence of playing an instrument and it also happens to be the musical term for co-ordination. From breathing to tonguing to fingerwork, timing is everything and that is why the greatest players make it look easy...everything is connected as easily as speaking a language. Of course it sounds simple, but the beauty of music is that it is a lifelong pursuit without ending...everything is fluid. The simplest tip I can give to any of your readers is to always try and play with a beautiful sound. Even aggressive tone should be the exception and not the norm. If your sound is gorgeous, then people will want to hear what you have to say.

PB Who would you count as your major influences on the trumpet?

JL Without a doubt, I would have to cast Doc Severinsen as my greatest overall influence on the trumpet. I simply cannot think of a more complete player. He has technical virtuosity of the highest level, is an improviser, lead player and, most importantly, is a man who connects



Jens Lindemann with Doc Severinsen.

with audiences. He demands it and draws you in with his stage presence and enthusiastic personality. Of course, my friend Wynton Marsalis has also done so much for our instrument... he has literally become a cultural icon! My earliest trumpet teachers were Alvin Lowrey and Bill Dimmer of the Edmonton Symphony; they established my basic love for the instrument. James Thompson at McGill University (now at the Eastman School) was probably my biggest mentor when it came to the fundamental approach of playing the trumpet. He approached technical issues with an intelligent, efficient game plan and always played in a way that backed up his philosophy. Mark Gould at Juilliard was (and still is) the perfect teacher for the advanced student. One has to be ready for Mark...and you know within five minutes of your first lesson if you are! Highly intelligent, creative and not interested in the status quo, Mark challenged me to find my voice. He has become a great friend and confidante. David Hickman = piccolo trumpet...period! The grace and respect with which he plays the piccolo is matched on the brass band side by the same effortless ease that Peter Roberts plays soprano cornet. That doesn't happen because you are 'natural', it happens because you have a wise approach to those particular instruments.

PB I know Herald readers would never forgive me if I didn't ask you the horns and equipment you are currently playing.

JL I have played Yamaha trumpets my entire career and they are all 24K gold plated. That last part always makes for an interesting marketing angle outside musical circles but in all honesty, I have always loved gold horns. In order to gold plate, the horn is silver plated first. The added layer of gold calms the horn down even

further so that I can lean on it without having the tone break up and that helps create my desired sound when I play for audiences. I have also been very fortunate to work closely for years with the amazing Bob Malone at Yamaha, especially on recent instrument developments such as the new rotary piccolo trumpet. I also use custom GR mouthpieces (Gary Radtke) and playing on those has made the trumpet feel even more balanced and fun. While with the Canadian Brass, I also did some work with Terry Warburton and his team. My



Stellar line-up of trumpet players in Banff, 2008. L-R, Maurice Murphy, Fred Mills, Doc Severinsen, Allen Vizzutti, David Hickman and Jens Lindemann.

playing concept is borne entirely out of trying to be as efficient as possible. It's no secret to anyone that knows me that I believe that most brass players (trumpeters especially) perform on a mouthpiece that is usually too large.

It's a trend that started a generation ago and is entirely unnecessary in many cases. Falling inside an industry standard medium range mouthpiece will give most people the widest range of options to perform as many styles of music as possible. That is ultimately what we have to do as brass players. There is an easy to find 'mouthpiece



The Banff Centre Summer Brass Festival.

rant' that I posted on the internet a few years ago which goes into greater detail. (This will appear in a future edition of *The Brass Herald*.)

PB I know you are a person who never stands still. Your plans for the 2011 and 2012 - I know your diary will be full.

JL Yes, it is busy and eclectic. Performing world wide with some new orchestral premières and interesting collaborative projects including TV, recordings and multi media performances. Also a CD with James Gourlay and the world famous Foden's Band which I had the good fortune to work with in Manchester a few years ago. There will also be a television special that I'm doing in the spring which will feature the

legendary pianist, big band leader and current Canadian Senator Tommy Banks.

PB When you have time, what do you do away from the trumpet?

JL I have always had a deep love for sports cars and searched many years for the exact model, year and colour of my current vehicle. Every summer I drive it from my home in southern California to Banff and the Canadian prairies where I grew up. It is a 3-4 day drive, but I look forward to it for many months every year. I have also been married now for 12 years to pianist Jennifer Snow who keeps me well grounded...very important in this globetrotting lifestyle. Recently, I also just attained my scuba diving certificate. I have found it very wise to balance things into my schedule that have nothing to do with the trumpet...it keeps a healthy perspective on both music and life in general.



Jens back home on the prairie with his Porsche Targa.



Jens practising on the plane.

PB Any other thoughts for our readers?

JL I would like to say Philip that even though I have an international touring lifestyle, I am very proud to be Canadian. Without the education and mentorship that I received in early school band programmes, I would never be a musician today... it is my responsibility to give back. Also, my parents were immigrants who preached a simple work ethic: "Work hard and focus intelligently...there is no free lunch." The older I get, the more that statement makes a ton of sense.

PB Thanks Jens. It's always a great pleasure to work with you, experience your electric performances and be in your company.

I look forward to the next time we meet up, wherever in the world that might be.

JL Philip, it's always a pleasure. I very much look forward to meeting up with you soon. Perhaps Chicago in December.

Jens Lindemann is hailed as one of the most celebrated soloists in his instrument's history. Jens has played in every major concert venue in the world: from the Philharmonics of New York, Los Angeles, London and Berlin to Tokyo's Suntory Hall and even the Great Wall of China. His career has ranged from appearing internationally as an orchestral soloist, being featured at the 2010 Olympics for an audience of 3 billion people, performing at London's 'Last Night of the Proms', recording with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, to playing lead trumpet with the renowned Canadian Brass and a solo Command Performance for the Queen of England. Jens has also won major awards ranging from Grammy and Juno nominations to winning the prestigious Echo Klassik in Germany as well as receiving an honorary doctorate.

A prodigious talent, Jens Lindemann performed as a soloist with orchestras and won accolades at numerous festivals while still in his teens. A prizewinner at numerous competitions including the prestigious ARD in Munich, Jens was also placed first, by unanimous juries, at both the Prague and Ellsworth Smith (Florida) International Trumpet Competitions in 1992. Since then, he has performed solos with orchestras including the London Symphony, Philadelphia, Beijing, Bayersicher Rundfunk, Buenos Aires Chamber, Atlanta, Washington, Seattle, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Montreal, Toronto, National Arts Centre, Vancouver, Warsaw, Bogota, Welsh Chamber, I Musici de Montreal, St. Louis and Mostly Mozart at Lincoln Center.

Jens has three active websites

www.trumpetsolo.com

www.brassfire.com

www.allstarbrass.com

Jens Lindemann
www.trumpetsolo.com

Ryan Anthony
Trumpet

Martin Hackleman
Horn

Keith Dyrda
Trombone

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Tuba

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Finally, I had found a case that could do everything. I and all the musicians of **All-Star Brass** are proud to travel internationally with Gard Bags and wheelies - our instruments mean the world to us!"

-Jens Lindemann

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