



# ITA ELECTIONS 2026

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*Write-ins accepted*



**Peter Steiner** is an internationally acclaimed trombone soloist and prizewinner of the XVI International Tchaikovsky Competition (2019). His concert activities have taken him throughout Europe, Asia, Australia, and the United States. In the 2025/2026 season, he will appear in Australia, China, Japan, Italy, Germany, and the USA, with a particular highlight being his performance at the opening ceremony of the 2026 Winter Olympic Games in Bolzano, South Tyrol.

As a soloist, he has collaborated with orchestras such as the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, the Würzburg Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Taipei Chinese Orchestra, and has appeared with leading ensembles including the Vienna Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, and the Staatskapelle Dresden.

Peter Steiner received his musical training at the Claudio Monteverdi Conservatory in Bolzano, continued his studies at the Mozarteum University Salzburg, and completed his education with an Artist Diploma at The Juilliard School in New York. His principal teachers include Joseph Alessi, Warren Deck, Nitzan Haroz, and Dany Bonvin.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT

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**Louise Pollock** is Professor for Trombone in Berlin at the Hanns Eisler School of Music and guest professor at the Royal Northern College of Music Manchester. Her students have won auditions for positions in various European orchestras and are prizewinners at international competitions. Currently, she is playing with the Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin (RSB). Previously, she was principal trombonist at the Gothenburg Opera/Sweden. Prior to that, she was engaged by the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. She is a student of Prof. Branimir Slokar and Prof. Henning Wiegräbe.

Louise has been awarded numerous prizes at national and international competitions, for example the 1st Prize and the Audience Award at the International Aeolus Wind Competition. Louise regularly performs as a soloist and is invited to festivals, masterclasses and international competition juries around the world. Louise is a Conn Artist.

In 2023 she was elected president of the German Internationale Posaunenvereinigung e.V. as well as to the ITA Board of Advisors.

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**Myles Blakemore** is Assistant Professor of Trombone at the University of Maryland School of Music. Prior to this position he served as Trombonist in the US Navy Band.

As an orchestral musician, he has performed with the Baltimore Symphony, Charleston Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Malaysian Philharmonic, National Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Virginia Symphony and Washington

National Opera, among others.

As a soloist, Myles has been a featured artist at the American Trombone Workshop and the International Trombone Festival. He can be heard on his debut album "Bach-ish", which has been featured on NPR.

He currently spends his summers teaching at the DC Trombone Workshop and performing at the Wintergreen Music Festival.

**Dr. Megan Boutin** is the Assistant Professor of Trombone at East Texas A&M University and Principal Trombone of Richardson Symphony. She has performed, presented, and adjudicated at conferences and festivals across the United States. Dr. Boutin has been a guest soloist at the International Trombone Festival, is the winner of the 2019 International Women's Brass Conference Tenor Trombone Category II solo division and has been a guest soloist at the Midwest Clinic. Dr. Boutin has held the position of principal trombone with the Temple Symphony Orchestra, Austin Civic Orchestra, and the Tri-Cities Opera Company Orchestra. An active freelancer, she has performed across the country with groups including Dallas Symphony, Dallas Opera, Buffalo Philharmonic, Austin Symphony Orchestra, Austin Lyric Opera, and Boston Brass. Dr. Boutin is also a member of the International Trombone Association, serving as an Advisor for the ITA Student Council. Dr. Boutin is also a member of the International Women's Brass Conference and serves as a mentor with the IWBC mentorship program.



**Felipe Brito** is the Assistant Professor of Trombone and Director of Jazz and Commercial Music at Southeast Missouri State University. He works as an orchestral, jazz, commercial, studio, and solo musician in Cape Girardeau, St. Louis, Memphis, Nashville, Chicago, Austin, New York, New Jersey, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro.

As a solo artist, Felipe launched his debut album "Don't Put Off Until Tomorrow" in 2024 under the New York label, Outside in Music. Felipe used a modern jazz language that incorporates Afro-Brazilian music genres, including samba, bossa nova, maracatu, and alujá. The album received reviews from NPR/KRCU, All About Jazz, Missouri Business Alert, Jazz Weekly (Los Angeles), The Arts Fuse (Boston), and The Grateful Web (New York).

Felipe performs as a substitute trombone with the New Jersey Symphony, Paducah Symphony, and at the 5 Tony Awards, Buena Vista Social Club the Musical, on Broadway in New York.

He holds degrees from UNICAMP, Indiana, CIM, and UT Austin.



**Dr. Luis F. Fred** is Associate Professor at the University of Central Florida (UCF) and a member of Trombones de Costa Rica. He was principal trombone of the Puerto Rico Symphony, Associate Professor of Music at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music. He has extensive experience having played with organizations such as: the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Atlanta

Symphony, and Houston Symphony orchestras. Dr. Fred maintains an active calendar of performances as a soloist, chamber musician and

presenter in multiple conferences. His research interests include Latin American music, trombone pedagogy, and musicians health and wellness.



A native of San Antonio Texas, **David Garcia** has been Principal Trombonist of the Orchester der Opera Zürich since 2007. He held the same position in the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Florence, Italy) and the Hartford Symphony. David has performed worldwide with orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Orchestra of St. Lukes, Orquestra Sinfonia de Galicia (Spain) and Gürzenich Orchestra Cologne (Germany), working with renowned conductors, including Zubin Mehta, Kurt Masur, Christian Thielemann and Fabio Luisi. He can be heard on recordings with the Zürich Opera and the Maggio Musicale. David regularly performs and teaches at the Classical Tahoe Music Festival and the Festival Napa Valley in the summer season.

As a soloist and chamber musician he has performed with the Hartford Symphony, the Zürich Opera Brass and given recitals and masterclasses throughout Europe, the US and Mexico. A versatile trombonist, David frequently performs on alto, tenor, bass trombone, bass trumpet as well as on period instruments.

He is a graduate of University of Texas at Austin (Donald Knaub) and The Juilliard School (Joseph Alessi).

**Eden Garza**, a native of South Texas, joined the Seattle Symphony in September 2022 and serves on the faculty of the University of Washington School of Music. He earned his Master's degree from the University of Texas at Austin, where he studied with Dr. Nathaniel Brickens, and his Bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, where he studied with Dr. Oscar Diaz. Garza has performed with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, and Houston Symphony Orchestra. As a soloist, he has appeared with TAMUK's Jazz Band I, the South Texas Trombone Sound, the TAMUK Trombone Choir, the TAMUK Wind Symphony, and the University of Texas Trombone Choir at the Texas Music Educators Association Conference, as well as at the International Trombone Festival, the Midwest Clinic, and the ITF Composers Workshop. He has also been a featured soloist with the University of Washington Wind Ensemble and a guest artist for numerous trombone events. Garza is a first-prize winner of the Edward Kleinhammer, Big 12, Donald Yaxley, ITA Quartet, and Hungarian Online Trombone Competitions. Eden also serves on the faculty of the University of Washington School of Music.



Over the course of the past 20 years, **Marshall Gilkes** has established himself as one of the world's preeminent trombonists. A nonpareil artist at the forefront of brass playing, his virtuosic command of the instrument, marked by a warm and enveloping tone, Herculean chops, astounding flexibility and awe-inspiring range, place him in a league of his own.

Crafting eight albums since 2004, Gilkes has touched on a variety of settings including the compact trio, quartet and quintet formats, a merging of brass octet and jazz combo, and big band. Drawing heavy praise in the process, including a pair of Grammy nominations, he's cemented his reputation as a composer and leader of great renown.

And with his work as a first-call sideman, carried out in parallel to those efforts, Gilkes continuously demonstrates incomparable might and adaptability. His lengthy résumé includes work performing and/or recording with bassist Carlos Henriquez, harpist Edmar Castañeda, Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Slide Monsters, bassist Richard Bona, pianist Makoto Ozone and numerous other top-tier musicians and outfits. And

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through his work with the WDR Big Band and as a longtime member of the Maria Schneider Orchestra, Gilkes has played himself into the rich history of large ensemble music.

A marvel of musicality sought after and highly respected in both the jazz and classical worlds, Gilkes has earned his rightful place in the upper echelon of both realms. Not surprisingly, his vast experience and genre-straddling skills have made him an in-demand educator. At various points in his career, Gilkes has served on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music, Berklee College of Music and New England Conservatory of Music and is currently on faculty at the Eastman School of Music. In addition, he's shared his knowledge and skills through master classes, clinics, guest appearances and teaching at other venerable institutions including the Banff Center, University of North Texas, the Brubeck Institute, Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music and the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music.



**Valentin Guérin** is a French trombonist, educator, and entrepreneur working at the crossroads of performance, pedagogy, and innovation. He studied trombone in Paris with Jacques Mauger, then continued his training in Denmark with Niels-Ole Bo Johansen, and later in the United States with Nathaniel Brickens in Texas.

Since 2015, he has served as Professor of Trombone at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Clermont-Ferrand, where he is actively involved in teaching, ensemble performance, and educational outreach. In 2025, he was named a Shires Artist.

Valentin is known for the invention of the PyroTrombone. Alongside this work, he is engaged in instrument development, with two patent-pending projects focused on the design of a beginner-level trombone. He is also the founder of Slide to Play, a creative initiative producing humorous music-themed apparel and highly realistic instrument-shaped jewelry, aimed at celebrating musicians and strengthening connections between musicians and the wider public.

**Dr. William (Bill) Haugeberg** is the Assistant Professor of Trombone at East Carolina University, where he teaches applied trombone, trombone choir, and brass methods. Previously he taught at the University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley, Tarleton State University and Albany State University.

Bill has been a soloist and presenter at several festivals and is active in the International Trombone Association. He has also performed solos or recitals at the Big 12 Trombone Conference, South Texas Brass Symposium, Society of Composer's Regional Conference, National Association of Collegiate Wind and Percussion Instruments National Conference, Mid-South Horn Workshop and the International Horn Workshop. In addition to these featured performances, Bill has given recitals and masterclasses at universities around the country.

Bill earned his Doctorate of Music from The Florida State University, Master of Music from The University of North Texas, and Bachelor of Music from The University of Alaska Fairbanks.



**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. He has performed with the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, Aspen Music Festival, Grand Teton Music Festival,

Washington National Opera, and many more. In tandem with a busy orchestra career, Higgins is a sought-after composer and arranger. He was the sole arranger of the National Brass Ensemble's Gabrieli recording. In November 2021, he composed and premiered as soloist his Concerto for Trombone with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony. Additional arrangements and compositions have been programmed by orchestras such as the San Francisco Symphony, Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, and Detroit Symphony. His compositions have been commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony, Detroit Symphony, American Brass Quintet, international tuba soloist Sergio Carolino, and more. He was the composer in residence at Music Academy of the West in 2018, debuting a piece for chamber ensemble and voice featuring Deborah Voigt. His arrangements and original compositions are available through his publishing company, 415Music, established in 2014. As a teacher, Higgins is currently on faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Northwestern University, and has been a faculty member of the Aspen Music Festival since 2018. He has led masterclasses in Australia, China, Canada, Japan, and North America, including classes at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto, the New World Symphony, the Manhattan School of Music, and the Juilliard School of Music, and more. In 2013, Higgins released his solo CD, Stage Left. Recent albums include two self-produced recordings from 2020 in his Underground series. He will return to PMF after making his first appearance in 2022.

**Jen Hinkle** is an NYC-based bass trombonist and freelancer whose career spans orchestral, chamber, and commercial music. She performs with the Dan Pugach Big Band, winner of the 2025 Grammy Award for Best Big Band Album, and is also a member of the Dan Pugach Nonet. Formerly, Hinkle served as bass trombonist of the Spokane Symphony and the Tacoma Symphony, and has performed extensively in Broadway pit orchestras across New York City. As a substitute musician, she has appeared with major ensembles including the Metropolitan Opera, New Jersey Symphony, Seattle Symphony, and Oregon Symphony. She currently holds the position of bass trombonist for the Music in the Mountains Festival and the International Pride Orchestra. A dedicated advocate for disability inclusion in music, Hinkle proudly works alongside her service dog, Kita, and speaks openly about access, equity, and representation in professional musical spaces.



**Dr. John Jenkins** is an active trombonist and passionate educator with a knack for Arts Administration. Dr. John Jenkins most recently served the Bartlesville Symphony Orchestra as its Executive Director from May 2022 through December 2024. Prior to taking on this new role in Bartlesville, Dr. Jenkins served as the Music Department Chair and Associate Professor of Music at Oral Roberts University and Secretary-Treasurer for the Oklahoma Association of Music Schools.

Dr. Jenkins earned a Doctorate of Musical Arts at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music, Theatre, and Dance in Kansas City, MO and is a music education advocate and active musician throughout Northeast Oklahoma. Dr. Jenkins is a graduate of Leadership Tulsa: New Voices Class 8. He has served on the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma Resource Board, the Board of Directors for the Tulsa Youth Symphony and currently serves on the Advisory Board for the Tulsa Signature Symphony at TCC and Westside Community Center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. He lives in Tulsa with his lovely wife Tricia, a pianist, organist, and church music director, and their lovely daughter Evangeline, who recently enjoyed her first birthday.

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**Line Johannesen** is the trombonist in the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra since 2008 and trombone lecturer at the Sibelius Academy since 2020. Her background is from the Norwegian wind band tradition, but she was mesmerized by the sound of the symphony orchestra after hearing Shostakovich 5 with Oslo Phil as a 13-year-old. She studied in Norway and Sweden and was part of the Norwegian National Youth Orchestra for 1 year before getting accepted to the Verbier Festival Orchestra where she was for four years and had her formative years as an orchestra musician. She has played with the ten piece ensemble tenThing with Tine Thing Helseth, World Brass, performed as a soloist and kept master classes in Norway, Finland, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Italy, China and the UK. She has recently started her doctoral education at the Sibelius Academy doing developmental research on music for trombone and string quartet.



Since winning the position of Associate Principal Trombone with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the age of 20, **Scott Kinmont** has established himself as one of Australia's leading brass performers and pedagogues and has performed with orchestras in Australia, Asia and Europe. He is also currently lecturer in trombone at the Sydney Conservatorium.

As a soloist, Scott holds the unusual distinction of winning international solo competitions on both trombone and euphonium and has premiered works written for him. Scott is also an enthusiastic chamber musician and is a member of the Australian Brass Quintet, the Sydney Ophicleide Quartet and the New Holland Sackbut Ensemble.

Many of Scott's former students have won international solo competitions, teaching and playing positions throughout Europe, the US and Australia, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Munich Philharmonic, and almost every Australian orchestra.

Scott studied primarily with Michael Mulcahy and has had extended studies with many of the world's leading trombonists.

As a conductor, Scott regularly conducts professional, community and university ensembles.

Scott has a passion for arranging and has contributed many works for different combinations of chamber ensembles.

Scott also performs on the obscure Renaissance instrument, the Serpent, mostly to annoy his family



**Li Kuang** is Assistant Professor of Music at Portland State University, where he serves as trombone professor and directs the PSU Trombone Ensemble. He maintains an active career as a performer, educator, and clinician, with appearances at major trombone conferences and festivals in the United States and Asia. Li regularly presents masterclasses and has adjudicated national and international competitions, including events affiliated with the International Trombone Association.

Deeply committed to education and outreach, Li works with students of all ages and levels in both academic and community settings. He actively fosters international exchange through research and presentations on trombone pedagogy in Asia and collaborates with a diverse group of living composers to commission and premiere new works for trombone. Over the past decade, Li has served as a bridge between the U.S. and China within the trombone field and seeks to continue strengthening global connections within the international trombone community.

**Raymond Lam** is an esteemed bass trombonist and dedicated educator, currently serving as Associate Principal Bass Trombone of the China Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Lam served as Vice President of the Hong Kong Trombone Association, also Expert Judge for the Jeju International Wind Music Festival since 2016 and an Executive

Committee Member and Judge at the SliderAsia Trombone Festival. As Visiting Professor of Trombone at Ningxia University, Mr. Lam is deeply committed to mentoring young musicians. His solo performances include the Asian premiere of Steven Verhelst's World Concerto at the 2014 Singapore Trombone Art Festival and, in January 2026, the upcoming Asian premiere of Sterling Maffe's Hollywood Concerto in Hong Kong.



**Stephen Lange** has been a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops Orchestra since 2010. A native of Dallas, Texas, he earned a Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Science, and Performer's Certificate from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, followed by a Master of Music degree from The Juilliard School.

Mr. Lange is a dedicated educator and is on the faculty of the New England Conservatory of Music, where he teaches trombone. He is in demand as a clinician, presenting solo recitals and master classes throughout the United States and abroad.

Trombonist **Brittany Lasch**, winner of the S&R Foundation Washington Award and Astral Artists National Auditions, was appointed Assistant Professor of Trombone at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in 2023. She has appeared as a soloist worldwide with ensembles including the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own," the Queens Symphony, and the Santa Fe Municipal Band (Argentina). Praised as "masterful" (Syracuse Post-Standard), she has been recognized by American Record Guide as an excellent soloist across a wide range of repertoire. A featured artist at major festivals such as the International Trombone Festival, International Women's Brass Conference, and American Trombone Workshop, Lasch served for six seasons as Principal Trombone of the Detroit Opera Orchestra. She has performed with leading orchestras nationwide, including the San Francisco Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic. An advocate for new music, she commissioned and premiered numerous works including Reena Esmail's Sonata for Trombone and Piano, featured on her debut album Dark Horse.



**Aubrey Logan**, called is a world-class jazz vocalist and trombonist, blending powerhouse vocals with dazzling musicianship and an unforgettable stage presence. From winning the Jury and Audience Awards at the Shure Montreux Jazz Festival Voice Competition to charting her own path through jazz, pop, soul, and funk, Aubrey has shared stages with Alabama Shakes, The Commodores, Meghan Trainor, Gerald Albright, Rick Braun, and Kenny Lattimore. Featured in PBS Specials and touring internationally with Dave Koz and Postmodern Jukebox, she has multiple Top 10 Billboard Jazz albums. Her newest release, Aubrey Logan and Her Bigger Than Average Band, showcases bold, joyful vocals and arrangements that honor jazz tradition while pushing it forward.

A third-generation musician, **Martin McCain's** career spans an impressive range of musical genres. As an ambassador of the bass trombone, Martin maintains a versatile performance schedule as a soloist, recording artist, chamber, orchestral, jazz/commercial musician and educator. He has been nominated for a Grammy and was featured in the Billboard magazine as an "Emerging Artist". Comfortable performing in various genres, he has performed with orchestras such as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Detroit



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Symphony Orchestra and jazz ensembles such as the Count Basie Orchestra, Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and Frank Sinatra Jr. Orchestra. McCain performs with the Royal Studio Horns and is the trombonist of the Orpheum Theatre (Memphis). Currently, he is a Professor of Trombone at the University of Memphis Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music.

**Alex Moraru** is a Romanian-born trombonist, conductor, and educator with an international career spanning orchestral performance, chamber music, and educational outreach. He is the principal-solo trombone of the National Radio Orchestra in Bucharest. He has performed on major stages including Carnegie Hall, the Berliner Philharmonie, the New York Philharmonic, and the Sydney Opera House. A former resident of the United States for nearly a decade, Moraru maintains strong ties to the international trombone community through performances, recordings, and educational initiatives. He is the founder of The Radio Trombones and serves as manager and conductor of the Bucharest Studio Orchestra. In addition to his performing career, he collaborates as a developer artist with the Sierman factory, contributing to instrument design and development. Actively involved in mentoring young musicians through masterclasses and digital platforms, Moraru is currently pursuing a second doctoral degree at the West University of Timișoara and is committed to advancing international collaboration and the artistic and educational mission of the International Trombone Association.



Hailed by the International Trombone Association Journal for his “rhythmically driving, technically flawless, and unfailingly dynamic and exciting” playing, and by LastRowMusic.com for his “Absolute command of the double-valved instrument,” Bass Trombonist **Ilan Morgenstern** is a unique voice in our field. Morgenstern’s concerto performances have included engagements with The San Antonio Symphony, United States “Pershing’s Own” Army Orchestra, Millennium Orchestra (Seoul, Korea), Jeju Symphony Orchestra (Jeju, Korea), and the National Repertory Orchestra. In addition, Morgenstern has won numerous awards for his playing including the Jeju International Brass and Percussion Competition, Zellmer-Minnesota Orchestra Competition, National Repertory Orchestra’s Concerto Competition, and the Lewis Van Haney Bass Trombone Philharmonic Prize. Morgenstern’s debut recording projects include Danzón, dedicated to music of the Americas, and It’s Alive!! New Music for Bass Trombone, are both available wherever good music is enjoyed.

**Gracie Potter** joined the Detroit Symphony Orchestra as their new Principal Trombone after previously serving as the Acting Principal Trombone for the Richmond Symphony. She has had the privilege of performing with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, LA Phil, San Francisco Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony, and the London Symphony Orchestra. She has performed as a soloist with the Whittier Symphony and at the American Trombone Workshop with the US Army Band. Gracie won the Frank Smith and Robert Marsteller Competitions. She won the LMC’s Frances Walton Competition where she performed live on KING-FM Radio and toured the State of Washington with her twin brother, Caden Potter, accompanying her. While attending Music Academy, Gracie won the Keston MAX Competition. She won Aspen’s Concerto Competition and spent two summers as a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center. Gracie, a native of Arizona, graduated from the Colburn School with her Bachelors Degree, where she studied with David Rejano.



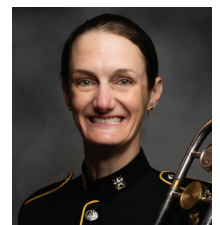
Hailed by The Boston Musical Intelligencer as “outstanding” and “fearless,” **Dr. Elisabeth Suffern** is a dedicated performer and music educator. A native of State College, Pennsylvania, she has appeared with ensembles including ProMusica Columbus, the Lexington Philharmonic, Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Akron Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra, Erie Philharmonic, and CityMusic Cleveland. She has been a featured soloist with The Ohio State University Wind Symphony, Seraph Brass, and the University of Akron ensembles, and served as an acting core member of Seraph Brass. Dr. Suffern has presented at the American Trombone Workshop, International Trombone Festival, and International Women’s Brass Conference, including her project Songs She Wrote, highlighting works by women composers. She is Assistant Professor of Trombone at The Ohio State University and Director of the Trombone Workshop at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. She holds degrees from Boston University, Yale School of Music, and Temple University, and is a Conn-Selmer Performing Artist.



**Jahleel Smith**, from Atlanta, GA, entered the Curtis Institute of Music in 2014 and studied bass trombone with Blair Bollinger. All students at Curtis receive merit-based, full-tuition scholarships, and Mr. Smith was a Crown Holdings, Inc. Annual Fellow. Following his studies at The Curtis Institute of Music, Mr. Smith went on to Indiana University’s Jacob’s School of Music as a Jacobs fellow and earned his Master of Music degree while studying with Dr. Denson Paul Pollard. Mr. Smith has performed in Carnegie Hall with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and has been invited to play with The Philadelphia Orchestra as well as the St. Louis Symphony. Mr. Smith led masterclasses and recitals at both Northwest Missouri State University and UMKC.

He has performed with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Malaysian Philharmonic, the Louisville Orchestra and the Classical/Pops All-Star Orchestra in Barbados. Mr. Smith was formerly the Bass Trombonist of both the Hawaii and The Kansas City Symphonies. While a member of The Kansas City Symphony, Mr. Smith participated in their inaugural tour as a guest orchestra at Musikfest Berlin in the Fall of 2024.

Trombonist **Katie Thigpen** is a member of The United States Army Band, “Pershing’s Own”. As a Sergeant First Class in the U.S. Army, Thigpen performs with the U.S. Army Ceremonial Band and the U.S. Army Herald Trumpets. Since joining “Pershing’s Own” in 2017 she has had the honor of performing in military ceremonies and events around Washington, DC and throughout the United States.



Active as a performer, Thigpen is currently second trombone with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra and performs regularly with various chamber groups and orchestras in the Washington, DC area. She has performed with the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, National Philharmonic, Lancaster Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and the West Virginia Symphony.

Thigpen holds a Bachelor’s degree in Music Education from the University of South Carolina and Master and Doctoral degrees in Music Performance from the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music. Her primary trombone teachers include Bill Zehfuss, Brad Edwards, Tim Anderson, Per Brevig, and Craig Mulcahy.

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**Bill Thomas** became the Bass Trombonist of the Tonhalle-Orchestra Zürich in 2015 after serving as the Wechsel Trombonist since 2011. He is also currently a member of the Les Musiciens du Prince-Monaco. Before that he served as a member of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Saito Kinen Festival Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, United States Navy Band in Washington D.C., Sao Paulo State Symphony Orchestra, and New World Symphony.

Mr. Thomas is an active chamber musician and currently a member of the Tonhalle Brass quintet. He was previously a member of the U.S. Navy Band Quintet and Lone Star Brass Quintet. Mr. Thomas also served on the jury at the Jeju Festival in South Korea in 2022 and 2024.

Mr. Thomas is a founding member of the Southeastern Trombone Symposium and Atlanta Trombone Project. His recordings include Roadwork, Beautiful Things and the Southeastern Trombone Symposium Legacy CD.

A native of Midland Texas, Bill Thomas received his B.M.A from the Curtis Institute of Music. He also attended the University of Texas at Austin. His former teachers include Glenn Dodson, Donald Knaub, Nitzan Haroz and Sharon Chase.



**Jonathan Whitaker**, recently appointed as Professor of Trombone at the University of Illinois, has had a successful career as a performer and educator spanning over 20 years.

Whitaker can be heard on numerous recordings including the 2018 release of his second solo recording entitled “Paceline” and his debut solo recording entitled “Nature’s Gift.” He is a featured soloist on two recordings with the

University of Alabama Wind Ensemble that include Anthony Barfield’s “Red Sky” and David Maslanka’s Concerto for Trombone and Wind Ensemble.

Whitaker holds degrees from Murray State University and the University of Minnesota and the Doctor of Music degree in Brass Pedagogy at Indiana University. Dr. Whitaker’s primary teachers include Ray Conklin, Tom Ashworth, M. Dee Stewart, Peter Ellefson and Joseph Alessi with additional studies with Arnold Jacobs, Edward Kleinhammer, Michael Mulcahy, Charlie Vernon and Douglas Wright.



**Ron Wilkins** is a New York City based musician whose career spans more than forty years as a performer, educator, and composer. A versatile low-brass specialist and vocalist, he has performed internationally with his own ensembles and shared the stage with leading artists such as the Count Basie Orchestra, the Jimmy Heath Big Band, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, and the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra.

He is a longtime member of the Birdland Big Band and the Dizzy Gillespie All-Star Big Band. Wilkins co-leads the Trombocalist Big Band with trombonist Rebecca Patterson; their debut album of original compositions, The Vigil and The Sleeping Giant, will be released on April 10. He has held chairs on the most recent Broadway revivals of Gypsy and Funny Girl. Wilkins has appeared as a featured artist at major trombone festivals worldwide, including premiering his Roncerto at the American Trombone Workshop. He is a veteran of the United States Air Force Band of the West.

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