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"a trumpet newsletter for the young and the young at heart"

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Kristin Mortenson, Editor

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So You Got Braces... Now What?

By Grant Manhart: Northern State University, Aberdeen, South Dakota; and
Thomas Dust: University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

My collaborating colleague Thomas Dust and I have spent many hours over the years discussing and researching the psychological and physical events surrounding a trumpeter acquiring braces. Tom is a professional trumpeter and the son of a dentist, in addition to being professor of secondary education, and I am a professional trumpeter and brother of a periodontist, in addition to being a professor of high brass.

My personal high school experience went as follows: There I was, a high school sophomore and I had it all, first chair in a leading Wisconsin large high school band program, when my mother said it was time to get top and bottom braces to correct "those two crooked front teeth from your father's side of the family." Suddenly I am sitting third chair, with thoughts of jazz ensemble and pep band lead trumpet and brassy exciting solos... gone.

I was devastated. I tried wax, pushing hard, not using any pressure at all, new and unusual embouchures, consulted with my band director and local teachers, but nothing seemed to help a bit! I did persevere, but not in a direction I would advise anyone reading this article to go. I bit a hard sticky caramel bar which pulled off the braces on my top front teeth. The situation became so frustrating for the orthodontist and my mother that they both gave up on my top teeth. My teeth eventually straightened on their own, and bottom teeth braces did not seem to bother my playing, and I became a professional trumpet artist, and now a university professor of trumpet.

My other more realistic options were: 1) to have quit, redefining my young teenage self in a different way, which seemed far too high a price to pay just for getting some dental work done, and 2) to search the world over for a method of playing trumpet with braces. In 1973, there was no literature, methods, or appliances available to a young player with braces, at least that I could find. The most learned advice I could find was "use soft wax," and "bad luck... get used to it."

Dr. Dust and I have been searching for and experimenting with appliances and methods of playing with which a young trumpeter enhanced with braces would experience:

- a minimal loss of range, technique, and sound,
- the benefits of the braces their parents are paying for, and
- a technique which would result in continued muscular and musical development on the trumpet, which transfers positive-

ly without radical change to playing when the braces are removed.

We researched the Morgan Lip Bumper, the Jet-Tone Lip Protector, Brace Guard and Manhart's Brace Base (polysiloxane dental impression putty), Teflon pipe tape, and Infolab's "Brace Relief" kit.

For my contribution to braces research, I had a local dental lab make me a set of top braces, and I hit the practice room!

The Morgan Lip Bumper and the Jet-Tone Lip Protector are flexible thin plastic shields that fit snugly over the brackets and wire in a line. When playing with my braces, I found these smoothed out the sharp edges of the braces but slightly enlarged the "lump" that is the real problem of the braces on the top front teeth. I found I could play by transferring virtually all the pressure of the mouthpiece to my bottom lip... a very unnatural feel, but I eliminated the "goose call" missed notes from the piece of top lip constantly pivoting in the mouthpiece due to the lump under the mouthpiece.

Teflon pipe tape proved to be tricky to get in place and keep in place, and due to its very thin and light nature there is an elevated danger of possibly inhaling the tape. The thinness of the tape eased somewhat the edges of the brackets.

The quick-hardening polysiloxane dental impression putty mentioned above with the Brace Guard and Brace Base products allowed me to play almost as well as before I put on the braces and formed a smooth base for my embouchure. It seemed the harder I pushed the mouthpiece into the relaxed top lip with the smooth base under the lip, the more the lip relaxed and played with my pre-brace sound quality, volume, and range, though the strange feeling was disconcerting at first. Each brace protector I made was slightly different and I made five different styles before I got a "great" one (it convinced me to make a digital movie of my efforts and include it with the putty!).

"Going natural" and toughing it out was extremely painful, and the brackets and braces caused me to tense up the muscles in my top lip to fight the pain and control the flip flopping of the top lip in the mouthpiece below the wire. If a student actually gets calluses so he or she can push harder, the sound pattern will still be inconsistent due to the lump of the brackets and wire. My best success was experienced when I treated the embouchure as described above with the Morgan Lip Bumper and the Jet-Tone Lip Protector, by transferring the mouthpiece pressure to the bottom lip.

TOP TEN THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU GET BRACES:

- 1) Do not panic! You are the same fine person and musician as you were the day before you received the dental appliance. You will

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ITG members are encouraged to submit articles appropriate for students or comeback players, for publication in *itg journal, jr.* Please forward submissions to the editor at junior@trumpetguild.org

The Stoneback Sisters: Playin' Trumpet, Havin' Fun!

By Joseph Bowman: Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand

Many of us have grown up in a musical family, but the Stoneback sisters have taken their love of music and turned it into a full time job for the entire family. Mary, Sarah, and Kristin Stoneback have performed across the United States, soloing with bands and orchestras, teaching at many schools, and definitely having fun in the process. The Stonebacks took time out of their busy schedules to answer some questions about their life in music.

Who were your first trumpet teachers? How did they influence you?

We would not be the same people today if it had not been for our first teachers and people we have met and continue to meet along the way that have encouraged and supported us. Certainly our father, Ron Stoneback, as well as John Colson, Harry Krueger, Gail Bachand, Gary Pederson, and Bill Rowley who were band directors in our early high school years, Stanley Friedman who was our trumpet teacher at IAA (Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, MI), and David Hickman at Arizona State University have all been influential in our lives. All these people have had a direct influence on our facility and our technique with regard to trumpet playing. But what we have come to realize is that in life all of us are teachers in different ways. We continually brush up against each others lives and leave impressions that can last forever.

Kristin: I feel very fortunate to have a father who is a musician/performer and an educator.

Mary: I'm reminded of the night we went to a Maynard Ferguson concert. He called us backstage afterwards and talked for several hours about his career, life, and trumpet playing.

Sarah: Also there was Clara Bryant, whom we met at the International Women's Brass Conference in our middle school years. She said, "Never compromise your values, girls—just play the horn and do it the best you can and God will take it where he wants."

Mary: I want to be available to others and be as generous and helpful as some of the professionals I've met in the field. I think especially of Marvin Stamm and Susan Slaughter and our Dad. They have been such generous spirits in wanting to see the best for everyone around them. I hope to grow to be as benevolent in my own career.

MKS: I don't think a day goes by when we aren't thankful and grateful for the people who have gone before us. We all realize just how important encouragement and support is to continuing any career. We truly wouldn't be doing what we are doing if it weren't for all the things that people like Clara Bryant, Doc Severinsen, Susan Slaughter, and many others have done before us. We are continually inspired and encouraged by the many professionals and music educators we have met along the way.

Tell me a funny story about your sisters and trumpet playing!

Undoubtedly the most funny moment we can think of is when the three of us were soloing a second summer season with the St. Louis Symphony Queeny Pops Series, in front of an audience of thousands. Mary, followed by Sarah, and then Kristin each made their way to the stage steps.

Mary: As we had discussed, I led the trio to center stage.

Sarah: I followed Mary as I was supposed to and as the spotlight hit us we nodded and smiled at the audience only to look right to find that Kristin was not next to me on stage. We, the director, and

audience all looked back to the stage right stairs where Kristin appeared to be stuck and unable to move!

Kristin: I had become immobilized and couldn't figure out why. My heel had lodged itself in a crack on the stairway and my shoe was stuck! Luckily a helpful gentleman from the audience was able to dislodge my shoe from the steps. His effort and my freedom were met with roaring applause. I joined the trio and we continued the

concert. As intermission came, conductor Richard Hayman, the consummate showman, reenacted the scene by pretending to be stuck on the same step, held on to the railing, and cried out to the audience "Help me! Help me!"

Would you talk briefly about studying at Interlochen and then at Arizona State? What made you choose those places?

At Interlochen we had the opportunity to study with Stanley Friedman. It was an enjoyable and unforgettable experience. The growth we experienced at IAA was invaluable not only musically but academically as well. We were able to study the trumpet, but we also participated in excellent academic courses and theory, which were challenging and extremely rewarding. We chose IAA to further our music education because it offered

the opportunity to focus more intensely on trumpet and music while taking the core classes and studying from an amazing list of faculty.

We chose Arizona State because of the Rafael Méndez library and David Hickman. It was important to us to improve both as individuals and as a trio. The opportunity to work out of the library while receiving both group and individual lessons each week was a tremendous learning experience.

Sarah: Something that meant a lot to us during our schooling at ASU was receiving full performance rights to the Méndez library by Rafael Méndez's twin sons, Drs. Robert Méndez and Rafael Méndez, Jr.

Kristin: We feel very privileged and are humbled to have the opportunity to perform the trios.

Mary: We also were afforded the opportunity to study with David Hickman while at Arizona State University and were able to learn much from his trumpet expertise.

Is there any part of trumpet playing that is really hard for you? What do you do to improve it?

Mary: I try not to view trumpet playing as hard. Some things are more challenging than others but with time, patience and practice anything is possible.

Sarah: Playing any musical instrument is a work in progress. There is always something to work and improve on.

Kristin: By focusing on your strengths you will find that your weaknesses get stronger too.

What is your favorite part of playing together as a group?

It is the support and team camaraderie. Without it there wouldn't be a group and it's those characteristics which carry over into everything you do.

Sarah: It is neat to be able to practice and perform together and to know that the people playing next to me want the best for me and are continually encouraging me to be the best I can at everything I do.

What advice do you have for all the young trumpet players?



MKS: Keep it fun and encourage others. You'll never regret encouraging other people to do the best they can. This only serves to lift each other up and strengthens everyone involved. We've all been given different and unique gifts.

Sarah: Get involved with your local school or community music program. Music will become a lifestyle in that you don't have to be a professional to do it, but the work ethic you learn in it can carry into every other aspect of your life.

Mary: Whatever you like to do, whether it is music, sports or academics etc... do the best you can at it. You'll never regret working and striving for success. You'll only regret never trying.

What future projects and plans do you have? Will you continue to play together?

What began as a family thing that was fun to do became a family business that is still fun to do!

There are basically three aspects to what we are currently doing: The first aspect is we as a trio perform under the name of the Stoneback Sisters and are featured guest soloists with bands and orchestras across the United States. We are honored to have had a trio written for us by Allen Vizzutti and have been enjoying performing it very much. He is working on a second trio for us as well.

The second aspect is where the Stonebacks/Stoneback Brass, including the three of us and our father (who plays trumpet as well as tuba), go to elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as colleges, to do one week residencies. In working with the various music programs, we strive to enhance and support the school music programs and the students throughout the Midwest. Here we offer to provide various course offerings including: assembly/recital presentations and concerts, large group ensemble rehearsals, small group ensemble sessions, performance workshops, audition/interview seminars, and master classes. With this, we also perform as a featured solo trio with the local band or orchestra. Along with the school residencies, we may also present community concerts as touring artists where our mother (who plays French horn) and father will join us, which helps to add more depth and diversity to our offerings.

The third aspect is the Stoneback Music Ministry, where we perform church concerts, services, and many other functions.

We really enjoy playing as a trio and as a brass group and working with students. We hope to continue performing, learning, and sharing what we have been given as long as we can.

You come from a musical family. What early musical experiences do you remember in particular?

Sarah: Impressionable times for me were found when playing in different nursing homes and retirement villages. Our grandparents were in separate nursing homes so we spent a lot of time playing for them and their friends at those nursing homes. Through the years and still to this day we enjoy bringing music to people who otherwise are unable to go to concerts.

Kristin: I remember how much fun the summers were. When we were too young to go to a music camp, our Dad conducted a music camp for his studio and the three of us. Days were constructed so that we were able to practice two to six hours a day, and studied theory, music history, and trumpet pedagogy. We also played trios, quartets, quintets, and duets. For time outside of the practice day we went on plane rides, horse back rides, toured an organ factory, and at the end of the two weeks made a recording at a recording studio.

Mary: When we first started playing in the fall of our fifth grade year the three of us really wanted to know what it would be like to be in a marching band. Upon talking about it we discovered there

were quite a few beginner band and orchestra members who lived in our neighborhood. So we went out one night after school and organized the Stoneback Neighborhood Marching Band. Our marching band consisted of three trumpets (us), a bari sax, an alto sax, a viola, and a drummer on a frying pan. We had a great time marching up and down the streets of our neighborhood performing together on a constant rousing chorus of *Hot Cross Buns* (The only number everyone could play by memory).

Why did you all choose to play the trumpet? What was the attraction to that specific instrument?

Our Grandpa played cornet in a Marine Band and our father also spent time in the Marine Corps. I think because of those images and the inspiration of our Grandpa and father playing trumpet in those roles, it made trumpet look like a dignified instrument to play. We all three really enjoyed the sound of the trumpet. We grew up in a musical family. When we were given the opportunity and choice of what to play we all thought it would be neat to be able to play together as a trio and family.

Is there ever any sibling rivalry among the three of you? If so, how do you resolve tension among three sisters living such closely linked lives? What do you like to do for fun?

Life as sisters and multiples is natural for us. And even though we are close in likes we do have differences. Our parents always encouraged us to be ourselves.

Kristin: My hobbies are swimming, life guarding, drawing, and guitar. I always remember when our parents took us Christmas shopping for each other when we were little. They would take us each separately to shop for each other and for years we would end up getting each other the same gift. One year we ended up with six down comforters among the three of us!

Mary: My hobbies are photography, writing, playing the flute, and running.

Sarah: And my hobbies are writing and poetry, reading and running.

We all really believe in each other! There is enough competition in life. If one wins we all succeed. Maybe it was the way we were brought up or perhaps it's a "Midwest thing." It's not hard to do what we do when you are working alongside your best friends. We support each other not only in trumpet but in every other aspect of our lives. If one of us has a goal the others will help to achieve that and make it a little easier for that person or even just be a cheerleader on the sidelines. Doing this only serves to strengthen the group as a whole. Time and distance will inevitably separate us but we believe that the foundations of friendship and love that exist will follow through into our own separate lives as well.

What is life like for you on the road?

Life on the road is very busy. When we are not practicing and performing we are doing business and when we are not doing business, we are practicing and performing!

Mary: Some days we almost feel like we should wallpaper the side of the van!

Sarah: Yeah... just as long as Kristin stays in the back seat.

Kristin: Maybe it's time for someone else to be in the back seat!

Seriously, life on the road is hard but rewarding work. It's so neat to meet people who recall memories of musicians they have met in their lifetimes who have influenced them. Many of these people have met musicians and or played with musicians whom our generation has only read about, like Rafael Méndez, Woody Herman, and Harry James. Everyone we meet has a unique story. The people we have had the opportunity to meet make it all worthwhile.

If you would like to contact the Stoneback Sisters, they can be reached via e-mail (stonebrass@aol.com).



Dutch Treat: Floris Onstwedder

By Emile Meuffels: Heiloo, The Netherlands

Twelve-year-old Floris Onstwedder received his first trumpet lessons at the age of five from his grandfather, Gerrit List. After not really playing the trumpet for a couple of years, Floris started playing seriously at the age of 8. He has been taught by Guus Dohmen at the Eindhoven music-school for about two and a half years.

In 2003, Floris played during a master class by Frits Damrow, principal trumpet of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and professor of trumpet at the Amsterdam Conservatory. Damrow was so enthusiastic about Floris that he gave him a number of private lessons before accepting him as a student in the "Young Talent" program of the Conservatory in January 2004.

Floris has already won several regional competitions for young musicians. In December 2004, he played in the finals of the "Stichting Jong Muziktalent Nederland" (Foundation for Young Musical Talent in the Netherlands), one of the most important competitions for young musicians in the Netherlands. He has performed the Goedicke *Concert Etude* on several occasions with both the Philips Windband and the Philips Symphony Orchestra in his native town of Eindhoven, but his preference is the piccolo trumpet. He has performed the 9-movement Clarke *Suite* and the Stradella *Sinfonia* with orchestra multiple times, and played the first trumpet part to Handel's *Messiah* in a concert in Vlissingen.



The highlight of Floris' career thus far has been his personal meeting with his trumpet-idol, Wynton Marsalis, at the North Sea Jazz Festival in June 2003. Marsalis said, "Floris, you can **play!**" But he has already met a lot of trumpet stars. Floris followed master classes by Andy Crowley and Martin Hurell of the London Brass, and Wolfgang Guggenberger, a famous German professor of trumpet, and in June 2004, Floris met Sergei Nakariakov after a concert in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

Recently, Floris was featured as a soloist at the "Prinsengrachtconcerten", the highlight of the "Grachtenfestival" in Amsterdam. These open-air concerts on a floating stage in the Amsterdam canals are visited by thousands of listeners on foot and in little boats. Floris played during the children's concert in the afternoon, where four of the most talented young musicians in the Netherlands played a piece with orchestra and a piece with their favorite pop-musician and orchestra. Floris was the only wind player who was selected

and he played the first movement of the Torelli *Concerto* and a ballad with Dutch pop-idol "Do." Floris was also featured at the evening-concert where he played the Clarke *Trumpet Voluntary* with piano as an opening piece. Both concerts were broadcast live on Dutch national television. We look forward to hearing more about this outstanding young Dutch trumpet talent!



Braces *Continued from Page 1*

be remembered by how well you handled the adversity!

- 2) Keep blowing! It is the *wind* that activates the air in the trumpet and the lips that vibrate. There will be a great tendency to shrink or squeeze your blowing in response to the strange feelings.
- 3) If you tense up your top lip *and* squeeze your air in response to the pain and strangeness, you will likely have a tense and spitty sound.
- 4) Try a number of methods, and go with what works.
- 5) If you have pain, sores, and bleeding, stop! Practice with more breaks and shorter phrases.
- 6) Listen to the best trumpet playing you can find, and constantly imagine it is you.
- 7) When you play, insist on the best sound and carry your articulations, music, and range through that sound.
- 8) Do not go to extremes to find the range you had

yesterday. Your range today with braces will be different, at least for a while.

- 9) Accept that it is going to feel different!
- 10) Go slowly when the braces come off. You will have grown and changed musically since the braces were first put on, and instantly demanding your old range, sound, and endurance usually deforms an otherwise fine embouchure. You must relearn the trumpet for a bit!



Information on the following products can be found on the Internet at:
Morgan Lip Bumper: <http://www.morganbumper.com/details.htm>
Jet-Tone Lip Protector: Offered through Brasswind: <http://www.wbw.com>
Brace Guard: Offered through Music123: <http://www.music123.com>
Manhart's Brace Base with Video: <http://www.northern.edu/manhartg/>
Teflon pipe tape: Used to seal threaded plumbing joints—available at your local hardware store!
Brace Relief: <http://www.infalab.com/>

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