

## BLOG POST FROM MARY THORNTON, TRUMPET

Hello to all of our Mid Texas Symphony patrons, supporters, musicians, and friends!

It seems like it has been a REEEAAALLLY long time since we've been together. It hasn't been easy adjusting to a life with no rehearsals or concerts. March and April are typically very busy months for a freelance musician. The calendar was just wiped clean and I didn't play for an Easter service for the first time since I was in seventh grade!

That said, I have continued teaching trumpet online at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi where I have been Professor of Trumpet with one title or another since 2005. I am grateful that I have been able to continue and help my students through this whole new world. We have just wrapped up the semester and we are all hoping things can be better for the fall.

I have tried to keep busy with my own trumpet playing and I have found it challenging to maintain the drive without performances as an end goal. I have joined in on some of the online performance things which are not, in my opinion, a fantastic substitute for real chamber music and live performance...but it's better than nothing.

This brings up one of my favorite topics in music and that is chamber music. While Mid-Texas Symphony highlights orchestral repertoire and the trumpet in the best moments (in my humble opinion), I have long been involved in creating chamber music repertoire for trumpet in new and interesting settings. I have been involved in many commissioned works, most recently for my unique mixed trio, Drumpetello. Drumpetello is a combination of trumpet, cello, and percussion. As you might have guessed there was no music for this combination when the three of us decided to try something new, so we commissioned James Stephenson, Lauren Bernofsky, Thomas Osborne, and Matthew Schoendorff for our first set of pieces. We asked these composers to write music inspired by Mexican and/or Latin American folk tales, mythology or stories. We were so excited to receive four fantastic new pieces that are all very different but still with a common theme. We spent a lot of time preparing the new works and then we took them out into the schools for our regular outreach programs for K-12 students and to the recital stage in Texas, and then a tour of Scotland. When we returned we recorded this set of pieces for our first CD on the Summit Records label entitled "The Beginning of Everything" which is also the title of the piece written for us by Thomas Osborne. The CD is available on iTunes and from me, and through various online vendors. Just make sure you spell "Drumpetello" correctly ☺ [www.drumpetello.com](http://www.drumpetello.com)

Dr. Carrie Pierce is the cellist in Drumpetello and she has also joined the MTS upon occasion. Our percussionist, Matthew McClung was our colleague at Texas A&M – Corpus Christi until he recently moved to the Twin Cities where he occasionally bumps into our very own Akiko Fujimoto when he subs with the Minnesota Orchestra.

Just prior to our pandemic, I was in Lawrence, KS, where I met with six other brass players to work on putting together a new brass septet called Zen Brass. Since we are players from all

over, including Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas, the travel issues put a damper on our in person rehearsals and collaborations. We decided to launch online with a couple of pieces (more are in the works) that we recorded separately and put together. We look forward to soon being able to rehearse together and begin our first tour. Our rehearsals in Kansas took place at the Reuter Organ Company and we hope to visit many of their instruments as we tour performing brass and organ concerts around the country. I hope you will consider following us at <https://www.facebook.com/Zen-Brass-102468281406840/>

This has been just a quick little blog post to let you know a bit about the chamber music that I love and the different types of instrumentation that can allow for some pretty interesting music making. Drumpetello and Zen Brass are not your “usual” instrumentations and can present real challenges for things like balance and ensemble, but discovering new sounds and colors within the mix of different instruments is one of the most exciting parts of music. Being able to work with living composers for Drumpetello has also been a joy. When you receive a piece of new music, sometimes you look at it and think there is no possible way that can work...but then it does. This is why, no matter what new music may be in front of me, I give it my all and my very best shot, because you never know what you might find. That’s the greatest thing about music. You can always find new things, new feelings, new sounds, a new interpretation...at the same time, for pieces that have been around a long time, there can be the comfort of knowing what to expect, the luscious sonorities that you can return to again and again.

To be sure, I don’t know what I would have done so far in the pandemic if I didn’t have access to recorded music and electronic sharing...BUT, I really can’t wait to get back on the stage with all of my friends and colleagues, to share live music with YOU! Best to you all, Mary

Here are links to some recordings:

<https://www.drumpetello.com/audiovideo-gallery-1>

<https://www.facebook.com/Zen-Brass-102468281406840/>

And some action photos...





