

# Sotto Voce Press Kit

## CONTENTS

- Introductory Letter
- Ensemble History
- Concert / Schedule
- Quartet Bio
- Demondrae Thurman Bio
- Mark Carlson Bio
- Nat McIntosh Bio
- Mike Forbes Bio
- Reviews / Quotes
- Performance Rider
- Del Valle Concert Series Letter

Updated 2.25.10

To Whom It May Concern:

Greetings! Many booking firms and concert series have a "token" brass group as a crucial part of their roster. While the regular choice today is to use a brass quintet, we would like you to consider a fresh, unique idea that transcends *regular*: *The Sotto Voce Quartet!* I invite you to learn more about us throughout this media kit and please visit our website: [www.tubaquartet.com](http://www.tubaquartet.com).

"High Art For Low Brass" best summarizes our chamber music group of two tubas and two euphoniums (which are small tubas, similar to baritones). While we are a novelty group because of our unique instrumentation, what audiences find most novel is how an instrument so large can be played so effortlessly and with flamboyant technique...it is for this reason that a number of our performances were selected for broadcast on American Public Media's *Performance Today*. Moreover, the warm, mellow sound that our quartet can create is in deference to what most audiences have heard from tubas in the past. Beyond our standard instrumentation, we also play Sousaphones, baritones, and trombones and in a few numbers we even break into a barbershop quartet and sing!! In our zealous pursuit of entertainment, we have created (in house) a unique and diverse repertoire that spans musical styles from Elizabethan Consort Music to Frank Zappa. In addition to our wildly varied literature, we constantly change our instrumentation in order to deliver an aural kaleidoscope that keeps audiences intrigued and on the edge of their chairs as they hear original works and familiar transcriptions of music performed from the depths of the bass clef.

In addition to entertaining thousands throughout twelve years of performances across the U.S., Canada, and Europe, we are equally at home giving clinics and master classes to musicians of all ages. Half of the membership of *Sotto Voce* holds doctorate degrees, and all of us currently have or have had academic teaching positions. Along with entertainment, education is also at the heart of our mission to change people's common misconceptions of the tuba. We have given introductory performances to kindergarteners, master classes to middle and high school students, coachings and clinics to budding professional musicians, and have been featured lecturers at some of this country's most well respected conferences (including Chicago's well known Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic). We do this because we love to teach and entertain, and we are zealous about bringing our sometimes forgotten musical instruments into the limelight.

I hope you enjoy the media kit presented here and if you have any questions regarding *Sotto Voce*, I urge you to log on to our website or contact me at any time. Thank you for your time in evaluating our materials, and I hope to hear from you in the future.

Very best wishes,

Mike Forbes  
Sotto Voce Quartet

## History

The *Sotto Voce Quartet* is America's premiere low brass chamber music ensemble made up two euphonium and two tuba virtuosos. There is no other group of its kind in the U.S. that performs and records more regularly or is more highly acclaimed than *Sotto Voce*. The members of the group are stars in the tuba/euphonium world, published composers, and university professors. The quartet's self-created repertoire includes original compositions and arrangements of music from all eras (English Madrigals to the music of Frank Zappa). Furthermore, the quartet prides itself in surprising audiences by showcasing what amazing things its instruments can do in concerts and clinics around the globe.

The ensemble began its life as a college group but quickly realized it had something special to offer when it won prestigious prizes at competitions for low brass and gained reputable status at world-renowned chamber music competitions such as the Fischhoff and Concert Artists' Guild. Having been a professional touring group for over twelve years now, the group has performed throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe. *Sotto Voce* is regularly invited to perform at International Tuba/Euphonium Conferences and to serve as the quartet-in-residence and head-judges at these and other tuba related symposia. The quartet is also often invited to give clinics and masterclasses in high schools, universities, and music educator conferences. *Sotto Voce* has released three recordings on the Summit Records label: *Consequences*, *Viva Voce*, and *Refractions*.

Occasionally the players in the group will also perform on other instruments to include but not limited to: trombones, Sousaphones, all four on euphoniums, and singing (barbershop). This doubling ability gives the group greater timbral color and delivers more emotional impact to listeners unaware of what the different low brass instruments can sound like in mixed groupings. While the quartet cherishes the novelty of its unique instrumentation, the group continuously strives to be viewed as a viable chamber music ensemble by making first-rate chamber music. In their educational clinics and through commissioning, creating, recording and concertizing new works, *Sotto Voce* continues to change the way audiences view low brass instruments and the musicians who play them.

*Sotto Voce* has performed in a variety of venues from farmer's markets to prestigious concert series. It is equally comfortable in educational forums for all ages and abilities—often leading large low brass choirs in performances of their diverse repertoire. The quartet recently gave clinics and concerts at the prestigious Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago. Recently, the quartet has appeared in front of the Mobile Symphony Orchestra for its Christmas Pops concerts and is in the midst of contracting further work in that setting with additional orchestras.

## **TYPES OF PROGRAMS OFFERED**

*Sotto Voce* offers a number of different programs to suit the host's needs and desires. Performance rates vary depending on the type of program and the duration. The concert fees for a traditional concert series and workshop fees (if applicable) are negotiable and are applied on a case-by-case basis. Beyond coaching other chamber music groups in workshops, the quartet also lectures on fundamental brass playing, practice/rehearsing techniques, writing for brass, jazz/improvisation, and general chamber music techniques and ideas. Oftentimes, the quartet will do a 2-3 day residency at a high school or university. These residencies include multiple masterclasses, sectionals, private-lessons, open rehearsals and an evening concert (sometimes along with the host band). The quartet is also available for private events including receptions and informal concerts at informal venues for lesser fees.

## **RECENT EVENTS**

November 18 – 24 2010: Midwest Tour

- Nebraska Music Educator's Conference - Low Brass session "Brass Tacks"
- *Sotto Voce* Concert Hour Performance
- *Sotto Voce* "Overtures for Overtones" Session
- Iowa Music Educator's Conference Key Note Speaker & *Sotto Voce* Mini Concert
- "Overtures for Overtones" Session
- Masterclass (University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point)
- Recital (UW-SP Michelsen Hall)
- "Live from the Chazen" Wisconsin Public Radio Broadcast
- Stoughton High School Band Presentation
- University of Wisconsin-Platteville Concert (Black Box Theatre)
- Whitnall High School outside of Milwaukee

June 25 – 28 2009: *Sotto Voce* Chamber Music Symposium: Greensboro, NC

- *Sotto Voce* Concert
- Quartets Final Concert

January 29 – February 01 2009: Carolinas Tour

- Charleston Southern University
- SC Honor Band (at Berkely High School in Moncks Corner, SC)  
Masterclass + Concert
- Coastal Carolina Community College

November 17 – 23 2008: Kansas Tour

- Arts Midwest Conference, Kansas City, MO
- Shawnee Mission Northwest High School Concert + Clinic
- UMKC/KU at the Immanuel Lutheran Church, Kansas  
Masterclass + Concert
- Blue Valley North High School Concert + Clinic
- Kansas State University Masterclass
- Kansas State University Masterclass + Concert

June 27 ITEC 2008: Cincinnati, OH

- Lifetime Achievement Award program: John Stevens
- Lifetime Achievement Award program: Jan Koetsier
- Fanfare Performance

June 9-15 2008: Alabama Tour

- Sotto Voce Quartet Chamber Music Symposium:  
University of Alabama
- Birmingham "City Stages" Music Festival Concert

May 8-12 2008: New Brunswick Canada Tour

- Elementary and High School Clinics, Fredericton, NB
- University of New Brunswick "TubaFest"
- St. Andrews, NB Church Concert Series
- South Fredericton High School Clinic + Concert

March 25-29 2008: Southern Texas Tour

- Sam Houston State University (Huntsville, TX) Masterclass + Concert
- University of Houston Masterclass + Concert
- Texas A&M Kingsville Masterclass + Concert
- Texas State (San Marcos) Masterclass + Concert
- Southwestern State University (Georgetown) Masterclass + Concert

February 22-25 2008: Southern California Tour

- California Band Director's Association (Fresno) Clinic
- Bakersfield, CA High School Clinic + Concert
- Mario's Music Concert (Lancaster)
- University of Southern California (L.A.) Masterclass + Concert

November 7-10 2007: Colorado/Wyoming Tour

- WYO Theatre, Sheridan, WY: Concert Series Performance
- University of Colorado (Boulder) Artist Series Masterclass + Concert
- Colorado Springs, CO: Bethel Lutheran Church Concert Series

March 17-18, 2007:

- Church of St. Lukes Concert Series
- Bethlehem Music Series (to be broadcast on NPR's "Performance Today")

April 5-8 2006:

- Workshop: San Francisco Conservatory of Music.
- Mario's Music Shop Concert: Lancaster, CA
- Modesto College Band Concert with SVTQ, presented by Gottschalk  
Music Company
- Del Valle Concert Series (California).
  - 2 High School clinics
  - 1 middle school clinic
  - 2 elementary school clinics
  - Evening 1.5 hour concert series

June 28-July 2, 2006: International Tuba/Euphonium Conference, Denver, CO

- Quartet-in-Residence
- Head Judge: Quartet Competition
- Feature Guest Artist Concert
- Masterclasses

October 6-8, 2006: Germany Tour

- Kirn Concert Series
- Sauerland-Herbst Brass Festival: Opening Concert
- Heinigen Concert Series

## **SOTTO VOCE QUARTET: BIOGRAPHY**

The highly acclaimed, internationally recognized **Sotto Voce Quartet** is America's premiere professional quartet of its kind and has become one of the world's leading low brass ensembles. The quartet enthusiastically challenges preconceived notions about what tubas can do by composing, arranging, and commissioning virtuosic new works that highlight the diversity of their ensemble and its unique membership. *Sotto Voce* has three recordings on the *Summit Records* label: "Consequences," "Viva Voce: The Quartets of John Stevens," and "Refractions: Old & New Music for Low Brass." Having attained an international reputation for serious chamber music, their performances have been showcased on *Performance Today* and their recordings are often played on NPR stations throughout the U.S. The ensemble maintains an active international touring schedule throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe. In the past two years, they performed concerts in Germany, Canada, California, Wyoming, Minnesota, Alabama (with the Mobile Symphony), and have held prominent performing/judging roles in the past five International Tuba/Euphonium Conferences. They have also been invited to give concerts and clinics at various state music educator conferences including the prestigious "Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic." As Miraphone Performing Artists, *Sotto Voce* will serve as the ensemble-in-residence at the annual Miraphone Academy in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The artists who make up the quartet have widely diverse careers in music and are regularly in demand as performers, composers, and clinicians. **Demondrae Thurman** is the Assistant Professor of Tuba/Euphonium at the University of Alabama and maintains a very active solo euphonium career. His solo CD "Soliloquies" is available on *Summit Records*. Demondrae also appears regularly with the Atlanta Symphony and the *Brass Band of Battle Creek*. **Mark Carlson** recently completed his doctoral degree in euphonium performance at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He now teaches music technology, theory and low brass at Richland College in Dallas. **Nat McIntosh** is the tubist with the *Dallas Brass* and is probably best known as the founder and sousaphonist with the *YoungBlood Brass Band*. **Mike Forbes** is perhaps best known for his many compositions and arrangements and is a *Carl Fischer Band Composer*. He teaches low brass and music theory at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and was a member of the *U.S. Army Band, "Pershing's Own."* Today, he maintains an active freelance career as a conductor and soloist and his solo CD "Forbes Plays Koetsier" is available from *Summit Records*.

## DEMONDRAE THURMAN

Demondrae Thurman (b. 1974, Tuscaloosa, Alabama) is considered one of the stars of the formidable generation of brass soloists. His euphonium playing has been described as "awe inspiring", and he is touted as "an amazing musician". Demondrae has a firm international reputation as a euphonium soloist having performed in France, Germany, England, Norway, Romania, and throughout North America. Many of America's premiere colleges and universities have hosted him as a performer and teacher and he continues to be in high demand. Over the last ten years, Demondrae has been an invited guest artist/clinician at many of the world's prestigious euphonium festivals including the International Tuba/Euphonium Conference, U.S. Army Band Tuba and Euphonium Conference and the Leonard Falcone Competition. His primary teachers are John Stevens, J. Michael Dunn, James Jenkins, and Daniel Drill.

Demondrae is also an active chamber musician. He plays first euphonium and trombone in the highly regarded Sotto Voce Quartet which tours extensively. The quartet has released three recordings on the Summit Records label; all of which have received stellar reviews. *Viva Voce!: The Complete Quartets of Johns Stevens* won the International Tuba/Euphonium Association award for best chamber music recording in 2006. The quartet has been featured several times on American Public Media's, *Performance Today*. He also plays first baritone horn in the Brass Band of Battle Creek, a British brass band comprised of many of the world's best brass and percussion performers. In addition to his chamber music work, Demondrae is in demand as a euphonium specialist for symphony orchestras including the Atlanta, Eastern Music Festival, and North Carolina Symphony Orchestras.

In addition to the Sotto Voce Quartet recordings, Demondrae released his first solo recording on the Summit Records label in 2005 entitled, *Soliloquies*. It received a 9 out of 10 from classicstoday.com and he was referred to as "having earned (his) stripes as one of the premiere euphonium players in the world". Showing his dedication to new music, all of the music on the recording was written for him or with his playing in mind. His second release, *Songs of a Wayfarer*, is set for release in 2010. Demondrae can also be heard on recordings with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Brass Band of Battle Creek, and the New South Jazz Orchestra.

Currently, Demondrae is Associate Professor of Euphonium and Tuba and Chair of the Brass Area at the University of Alabama. His students have been extremely successful having won many of the prestigious international competitions for low brass. He is also teaches at the annual Miraphone Academy.

Demondrae Thurman is a Miraphone Performing Artist and plays exclusively the Miraphone 5050 Ambassador "Edition" euphonium which was designed specifically for him. He also plays the custom "Demondrae" model mouthpiece manufactured by Warburton Music Products. For more information, visit [www.demondrae.com](http://www.demondrae.com).

## **MARK CARLSON**

Mark Carlson (b. 1980, Ames, Iowa) is the newest member of the Sotto Voce Quartet. In addition to his uncanny ability to match the musical styles and timbre of lead euphoniumist, Demondrae Thurman, Mark serves as the quartet's webmaster. He teaches music technology, theory, composition, low brass, and directs the string orchestra as Professor of Music at Richland College in Dallas, Tx.

Mark grew up on a farm outside Macomb, Illinois. He has studied with John Stevens, Jukka Myllys, Rex Martin, Bruce Briney and Joseph Goble. After completing his bachelor's degree in Euphonium and Music Technology at Northwestern University, he traveled as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar to Oulu, Finland. Also in Finland, he took second place in the Lieksa Brass Week International Euphonium Competition. During his master's work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he was a winner in the Concerto Competition, and took first place in the Tubonium5 Solo Euphonium Competition. He was recently runner up in the 2008 International Tuba Euphonium Conference Solo Euphonium Competition.

Mark has performed as a soloist and clinician both domestically and abroad.

## **NAT McINTOSH**

Nat McIntosh (b. 1978, Longmont, Colorado) is perhaps best known as co-founder and sousaphonist with the Young Blood Brass Band, an eight-piece brass and drum ensemble that is based in the tradition of a New-Orleans-style brass band.

Throughout his nine years as leader of the group, Nat garnered critical and public acclaim for his many compositions, blending intense brass music with hip-hop, afro-cuban, brazilian, and jazz-funk styles. Serving as the centerpiece of the ensemble was Nat's innovative sousaphone playing, which served as the dynamic bass voice in the group as well as the "acoustic DJ." His mastery of numerous extended techniques and the infusion of these with simulated DJ cuts and scratches, pseudo-electronic effects, and the imitation of instruments ranging from an electric guitar to a didgeridoo created an entirely new and inimitable approach to the instrument. He served as producer of YoungBlood's five albums: *Word on the Street*, *Unlearn*, *Center:Level:Roar*, and *Live.Places*, a live release recorded during one of their numerous intercontinental tours. He was also recently featured on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," where he performed one of his solo sousaphone features entitled "The Warrior Comes Out to Play."

Nat studied tuba performance at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with John Stevens, where he first met and began to perform with the *Sotto Voce Quartet*. During this time he also worked extensively as a freelance tubist, euphoniumist, and trombonist in the Madison area.

Nat and his brother, trombonist Ben McIntosh, run McIntosh Musical Services: a music transcription, arranging, and copying business. He also performs as a freelance multi-instrumentalist, playing gigs ranging from classical tuba to salsa trombone to Balkan sousaphone. Nat also serves on the faculty of the Academy of Creative Education, a Los Angeles based summer school for gifted junior high and high school musicians.

## MIKE FORBES

An artist of widely diverse musical talents, Mike Forbes has set forth on a career encompassing all aspects of performing, teaching, composing, and conducting. He can be heard on his solo album, "Forbes Plays Koetsier" on the *Summit Records* label where he features all seven works for solo tuba by Dutch composer, Jan Koetsier. Currently, Dr. Forbes is the theory/composition and low brass professor at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. He has previously served as full-time and adjunct faculty at a number of other institutions in the Midwest and on the East Coast.

He began his career as a tubist with the *U.S. Army Band, "Pershing's Own"* in Washington, D.C. During his tour, Staff Sergeant Forbes was an active soloist and chamber musician as well as the founder and conductor of the U.S. Army Brass Tentet. Forbes is the former principal tubist with the *Hot Springs Music Festival* and has also appeared with the *Aspen* and *Chautauqua Festival Orchestras* as well as with a host of regional orchestras.

As the former conductor of the *Brass Band of Central Illinois*, Forbes led the band to a victory in their division at the 2005 North American Brass Band Competition (NABBA). He has served as a conducting fellow with the Hot Springs Music Festival, and has guest conducted the U.S. Army Band and numerous high school honor bands and brass choirs. Forbes is regularly asked to serve as an adjudicator and clinician with today's finest high school band programs.

A regularly commissioned composer and arranger, Forbes's works have been selected for numerous international competitions and recordings. He is a composer for *Carl Fischer Music* where he specializes in creating new works for middle and high school band and orchestra. He has received numerous awards and accolades for his published works and regularly receives commissions from today's most well-known brass artists and band directors. *Editions BIM* publishes his brass compositions while his many arrangements for low brass can be found in the catalogs of *TubaQuartet.Com*, *Kendor Music* and the *Tuba and Euphonium-Press*.

Dr. Forbes completed his Doctorate of Musical Arts Degree at the University of Maryland and holds a Master of Music degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. During his undergraduate studies at Penn State, he took a year-long exchange program to Manchester, England where he studied at the University of Manchester and the Royal Northern College of Music.

## **REVIEWS and QUOTES**

"Sotto Voce might be the best euphonium-tuba quartet out there. ...a welcome addition to a genre with precious few entries."

-Barry Kilpatrick  
*American Record Guide*

"...high caliber, professional musicians."

-Natalia Manzocco  
*New Brunswick (Canada) Telegraph-Journal*

"All of the players...are at the absolute top of their game. Whether they are playing lyrical ballades, latin dance rhythms, or jazz improvisations, the clarity, style, and musicianship are matched by very few quartets in the world. It would be unfair to compare a group of this musical quality to any ensembles other than the very best out of any medium—including the best string quartets out there."

-Jesse Chavez  
*Synergy Brass Quintet; TubaNews.Com*

"As adept at Brazilian syncopations as arrangements of Frank Zappa's music, the quartet gets around as nimbly in their repertoire as their oversized instruments."

-Michael Huebner, *The Birmingham News*

*Sotto Voce Tuba Quartet*: the hippest thing to happen with tuba repertoire, playing and style for a long time.

- *BigBrass.com*

"The Sotto Voce recording [Consequences] is really remarkable. At first I was struck by the virtuosic ease with which the ensemble plays, and as I listened further I became more and more aware of how expressively everyone on the recording performs. Any brass player, any wind musician, will learn a lot from this stunning recording, and really enjoy it as well."

-Chris Gekker  
*Former Member, American Brass Quintet  
Professor of Trumpet, University of Maryland*

"What a great CD [Viva Voce]! Not only is it technically brilliant in the rudiments of just having things happen together, in tune, in time and balanced; this recording displays some great individual artistry in phrasing, rubati and expressive interpretation. Steven's music is current, fun, challenging, engaging and, above all, heart-felt."

-Gene Pokorny  
*Principal Tuba, Chicago Symphony Orchestra*

"Sotto Voce is a chamber music group of the rarest human and musical chemistry. Listeners are immediately aware that they are hearing the highest level of unanimity and sonic 'meltdown' at a Sotto Voce performance."

-Sam Pilafian  
*Former Member, Empire Brass Quintet*

## **PERFORMANCE RIDER**

The sotto voce quartet would like to request:

Four chairs and four good stands.

The option of a sound shell at the back of the stage.

An announce mic on stage, preferably switched.

A secure backstage dressing room.

Eight bottles of water and at least four bottles of fruit juice and vitamin water.

Some fresh fruit, including four bananas.

The option to get in the hall at least an hour before the show (30 min before the hall opens). At that time the hall should be concert ready with stage set and lights at performance level. Event staff should be available to make any necessary alterations.

A table in the lobby to sell CDs starting 30 min before the show, during intermission, and after the show. It is preferable that if the event is ticketed and there is room to share CD sales space with the ticket sales at the same table.

A volunteer, on recommendation of the contact, to sell CDs starting 30 minutes before the show, during the intermission, and at the conclusion of the show. The volunteer will receive one complementary CD of their choice.

That somewhere in the program the following statement appear: "Sotto Voce performs on Miraphone musical instruments."

That the contact or host make their best effort to promote the concert through flyers, newsletters, bulletins, newspapers, radio, etc.

That the contact or host invite local media to the concert and request a review of the program.

18 February 2008



To whom it may concern,

Del Valle Fine Arts engaged Sotto Voce to perform in a concert as part of our regular season. I personally acted as the artist liaison for Sotto Voce and was very pleasantly impressed with the professionalism of the group. Not only did the quartet perform at the highest level of virtuosity, but they also were extremely easy to work with.

Del Valle Fine Arts works with local schools to present assemblies featuring musicians who can educate the children regarding classical music and develop an interest among the children in listening to music. Sotto Voce performed in two schools and did a great job of engaging students and both educating and entertaining them. The quartet was prompt in arriving, thorough in setting up and excellent in their performance.

The concert that Sotto Voce performed was extremely well done. The musicianship was first rate and the program was well done. Everyone in attendance was entertained and impressed by the quality of the four euphonium/tuba virtuosos. There was something on the program for every musical taste. If given the opportunity, Del Valle Fine Arts will be happy to bring Sotto Voce back to Livermore, CA again.

Best regards,

*Eric Horning*

Eric Horning  
President  
Del Valle Fine Arts  
Livermore, CA 94550