

Brass Roots Trio

Press Release "American Impressions" program & Bios 2009-2010

About Brass Roots Trio and "American Impressions" program

Blending the classical chamber music genre with jazz, ragtime and gospel styles, Brass Roots Trio creates symphonic sounds that melt into sultry jazz and magnificent melodies - making three instruments sound like a small orchestra! The trio is an innovative concept – an unusual instrumentation – trumpet, horn and piano. With that instrumentation and the diverse musical backgrounds of the musicians – classical, jazz, early music, sacred music and opera – Brass Roots Trio's programs become a colorful tapestry of styles and sounds...and then there is the bonus surprise in every concert when the horn player puts down his instrument and sings an operatic aria or spiritual!

With a virtuoso command of their instruments, Travis Heath (trumpet), Douglas Lundeen (horn), and Rosetta Senkus Bacon (piano) infuse their music with passion and sincerity. Their spontaneity and genuine love for what they are doing on stage is felt by the audience, and their warmhearted presentation establishes a great rapport with the audience. Exhilarating performances and imaginative programming have established Brass Roots Trio as one of the most compelling ensembles of the 21st century.

"American Impressions" is a timeline of 20th century American culture and a musical travelogue through Appalachia, the Old West, the South and up the Mississippi River. Brass Roots Trio brings to life memories of the Mississippi River boats and the musical legends that they carried from New Orleans, the southern gospel revivals and the haunting beauty of Appalachian melodies. From Gershwin's jazz influenced classical style to Copland's portrayal of the early American west to Fats Waller's stride piano, to Billy Joel's "Root Beer Rag," the program is a colorful array of American music.

Rosetta, Travis and Doug have demonstrated their prodigious talents across the country and around the world with engagements at the Kennedy Center in Washington, Avery Fisher and Carnegie Hall in NY, Symphony Hall in Boston, the Banff Centre in Canada, the Guinness Jazz Festival in Ireland, Cultural Centers in Taiwan, Japan, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, and Lithuania, and with major symphony orchestras in the US, England and Latin America. In 2009 the trio's performance in the Chicago Brass Festival and Jewel Box Series was broadcast on Chicago's classical radio station. In 2009 Brass Roots Trio completed their 5th season of concerts. Their tours have taken them to every corner of the US and UK., and the trio is equally at home in an intimate setting with a small town audience as they are in the grand concert halls of large cities. In May 2009 Brass Roots Trio's concert at the Chicago Brass Festival was broadcast on Chicago's classical radio station WFMT.

Individual Bios

The founding member of Brass Roots Trio, pianist Rosetta Senkus Bacon has performed extensively throughout North America, Europe and Asia with concerts at the *Kennedy Center* in Washington, DC, *Taipei County Cultural Center* in Taiwan, *St. Moritz Cultural Center* in Switzerland, and *Kaunus Philharmonic Hall* in Lithuania. A frequent guest at international festivals, Rosetta has served on faculties and performed at "*The International Summer Chamber Music Festival*" in Taiwan and "*The International School of Performing Arts*" in Bucks County, PA where she accompanied Master Classes of Metropolitan Opera stars Sherrill Milnes and Gilda Cruz-Roma. She concertized with Metropolitan Opera soprano Judith Raskin and the internationally acclaimed Lithuanian clarinetist Algirdas Budrys. In a lighter vein she was one of the duo-pianists in "*Side By Side By Sondheim*" starring Arlene Francis and Hermione Gingold. A native of West Virginia, Rosetta graduated from West Virginia University and received a Masters Degree from the Manhattan School of Music in New York. She was the recipient of the "Outstanding Musician Award" from the West Virginia Arts & Humanities Commission.

Equally at home with both classical and jazz genres, Travis Heath's international performances have included solo works, big band, and chamber music. He has been a soloist with the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra and Metropolis Ensemble, and performed frequently with the Brevard Symphony Orchestra and Orlando Philharmonic. In addition, Travis has performed commercially at Universal Studios and for the Walt Disney World Co. He played lead trumpet with Nashville based touring groups Truth and the American Rhapsody Orchestra celebrating the George and Ira Gershwin centennial. He was also the lead trumpet for Ray Charles on two different PBS broadcasts. Currently Travis performs around the globe with the Brass Roots Trio and Crescendo Brass, including recently at the opening of PNC Hall in Japan, Banff Centre in Canada, the Guinness Jazz festival in Cork, Ireland, and in the UK at Oxford University and St. James Piccadilly. He can be heard on the Naxos, BRT, and Mark recording labels. A native of Vero Beach, FL, Travis holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Rutgers University and is the Coordinator of the Brass Department and Associate Chair of the Music Department at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.

Alongside his studies on the French horn, Douglas Lundeen began his musical training in opera in Manhattan, coaching with Metropolitan Opera assistant conductor Frank Basilice. It was maestro Basilice, whose father had been principal horn of the Met orchestra under Toscanini, who encouraged Doug to pursue a horn-playing career while he waited for his voice to mature. An engagement as Principal Horn with the *Orquesta Nacional de Costa Rica* began what has turned into a 35-year career as a hornist. Equally at home as a soloist, chamber player and orchestral musician on the modern horn, Doug is also one of the leading players in North America on the valveless natural horn. Since winning first prize for solo natural horn in the 1987 American Horn Competition, he has played principal horn in period instrument orchestras in New York City, San Francisco, Chicago, Montréal, Boston, and Washington, D.C., and has recordings on the Sony, Koch, Titanic, Hyperion, and Musical Heritage Society Labels. On the modern horn, Doug has played principal horn with orchestras in Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, in Philadelphia with *Peter Nero and the Philly Pops* and the *Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia*, on Broadway with "*Jekyll and Hyde*" and "*Aida*," and he is currently Principal Horn of the Princeton Symphony. In addition he has performed at the Mostly Mozart Festival in NY, the Gustav Mahler Festival in Paris, The Montreal Bach Festival, Thomaskirche in Leipzig, St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and the Palao de la Musica in Valencia, Spain. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Cincinnati Conservatory and is Associate Professor of Horn at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.