

Reprints from the

International Trumpet Guild® Journal

to promote communications among trumpet players around the world and to improve the artistic level of performance, teaching, and literature associated with the trumpet

VIRTUOSITY DEFINED: AN INTERVIEW WITH HÅKAN HARDENBERGER

BY MARK DULIN

January 2009 • Page 6

The International Trumpet Guild® (ITG) is the copyright owner of all data contained in this file. ITG gives the individual end-user the right to:

- Download and retain an electronic copy of this file on a single workstation that you own
- Transmit an unaltered copy of this file to any single individual end-user, so long as no fee, whether direct or indirect is charged
- Print a single copy of pages of this file
- Quote fair use passages of this file in not-for-profit research papers as long as the ITGJ, date, and page number are cited as the source.

The International Trumpet Guild® prohibits the following without prior written permission:

- Duplication or distribution of this file, the data contained herein, or printed copies made from this file for profit or for a charge, whether direct or indirect
- Transmission of this file or the data contained herein to more than one individual end-user
- Distribution of this file or the data contained herein in any form to more than one end user (as in the form of a chain letter)
- Printing or distribution of more than a single copy of the pages of this file
- Alteration of this file or the data contained herein
- Placement of this file on any web site, server, or any other database or device that allows for the accessing or copying of this file or the data contained herein by any third party, including such a device intended to be used wholly within an institution.

<http://www.trumpetguild.org>

Please retain this cover sheet with printed document.



VIRTUOSITY DEFINED: AN INTERVIEW WITH HÅKAN HARDENBERGER

BY MARK DULIN

This interview with Håkan Hardenberger took place in January of 2008 in Cincinnati. The conversations you see here were the result of two interview sessions. Mr. Hardenberger was generous in giving me so much time with him. His enthusiasm and eloquence when speaking about the trumpet were inspiring, as were his performances with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Paavo Järvi with whom he performed the concertos of Arvo Pärt and Eino Tamberg. The author would like to thank Stephen Burns for his gracious help in setting up this interview. Also thanks to Maestro Järvi, and the musicians and staff of the Cincinnati Symphony for all of their help throughout the week. *MD*

The name Håkan Hardenberger is known to trumpet players around the world. His virtuosity is legendary as he has been a highly regarded soloist for nearly three decades. Hardenberger was born in Malmö, Sweden. He began studying the trumpet at the age of eight with Bo Nilsson in Malmö and continued his studies both at the Paris Conservatoire with Pierre Thibaud and in Los Angeles with Thomas Stevens.

Hardenberger performs with the world's leading orchestras, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Vienna and London Philharmonics, London Symphony Orchestra, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, The Philharmonia, Orchester des Bayerische Rundfunk, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, and NHK Symphony Orchestra. Conductors he regularly collaborates with include Paavo Berglund, Pierre Boulez, Alan Gilbert, Daniel Harding, Neeme Järvi, Paavo Järvi, Ingo Metzmacher, Esa-Pekka Salonen, John Storgårds, Thomas Dausgaard, and David Zinman. He is a frequent guest at the major festivals of Lucerne, Salzburg and the BBC Proms, and has given recitals in the Konzerthaus Vienna, Wigmore Hall, Tonhalle Zürich, and Musikhalle Hamburg.

The works written for and championed by Hardenberger now stand as key highlights in the trumpet repertoire including works of Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Hans Werner Henze, Rolf Martinsson, Olga Neuwirth, Arvo Pärt, and Mark Anthony Turnage. HK Gruber's concerto *Aerial* has received in excess of 40 performances by Hardenberger and was highlighted at the 2007 Proms Brass Day with the BBC Philharmonic under the direction of André de Ridder. This Proms "special" also marked Hardenberger's conducting debut with members of the BBC Philharmonic and Royal Northern

College of Music Brass.

Of Hardenberger's extensive discography on the Philips, EMI, and BIS Records labels, two discs were released in 2006: solo works for BIS Records, and a disc for Deutsche Grammophon of Turnage, Gruber, and Eötvös works with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and Peter Eötvös which has received high praise. Newly commissioned works in the 2007 – 08 season include a Luca Francesconi concerto with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia directed by Antonio Pappano, and Kurt Schwertsik concerto with the Tonkuenstler Orchestra and Kristjan Järvi in Vienna's Musikverein. Olga Neuwirth's concerto *O... miramando multiplo...* will be further performed with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and Ilan Volkov. Hardenberger premiered this work at the 2006 Salzburg Festival with the Vienna Philharmonic and Pierre Boulez, and also with co-commissioning partner Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert. The latter engagement formed a major focus on Hardenberger in Stockholm's Konserthuset, including performances of Henze's *Requiem*, Gruber's *Aerial*, the aforementioned Neuwirth, Haydn concerto, and Rolf Martinsson's *Bridge*.

The 2007 – 2008 season also saw Hardenberger perform with Oslo Philharmonic, Bayerische Rundfunk (performing *Aerial* under the direction of the composer himself), City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Radio Orchestra, and the Camerata Salzburg, at the Salzburg Festival as Director-Soloist. On tour he performed with The Philharmonia in Brugges again performing under the baton of the composer Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. He toured a newly commissioned work of HK Gruber for trumpet, banjo, and string orchestra with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta, and made an extensive tour with the New Zealand Symphony.

In recital Håkan Hardenberger maintains several key partnerships with pianists Roland Pöntinen and Aleksandar Madzar, with whom he has toured to the U.S; a unique partnership with Swedish poet Jacques Werup and jazz pianist Jan Lundgren; and with percussionist Colin Currie. Hardenberger and Currie can be heard on a CD released in 2007 and were heard for the first time in the U.S. in January of 2007.

Hardenberger is also a professor at the Malmö Conservatoire. His commitment to teaching is further recognized by his increased presence at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester where he is now a Fellow.

Dulin: Can you talk about your first lessons with Bo Nilsson?

Hardenberger: Yes, trying to look back, it is difficult to know how much you fantasize and how much is actual, real memory. But, what is definitely true is that even from the word go, it was very intense. Long lessons, you know, at least one hour and a half... I was eight years old. Lessons were tough.

Because I was that young, my parents came along to the first lesson, but they couldn't take it. They thought it was too tough. But I never had that feeling at all. I mean, I just enjoyed it very, very much. I also saved the first years. I mean, I didn't buy any methods the first year, or whatever that time span might have been. He would write in exercises in the book and

that's also very interesting to see. Nilsson seems to have been very clever. I am amazed when I look at it, how high they start. You would think that when you start with a beginner, you always start in a certain range, second-line G or low C or whatever. It must have been that it was easier for me to produce the first note in, let's say an E. I look at his writing, and most of the exercises, start around C and E, and then go up and down. That's quite an interesting thing. What he must have been very good at, first of all, what he is still very good at, is this enthusiasm thing. It becomes like a poison, immediately. I can see that with people he teaches. You just will not give in. This is what I'm going to do. That must have been very important. And also the way he brought out the basis of my sound. Because I believe that my sound was always my sound. So many people can make the trumpet sound conformist. You know, we have a certain way we think a trumpet should sound so we do certain exercises to move the sound in that direction and this takes out the personality of the person who is going to become the musician. It is a huge difference in the outset of thought.

Dulin: *That's interesting. But you say for a long time you didn't use methods, he just wrote out exercises.*

Hardenberger: Yes, they were basically Schlossberg exercises. And then, I bought the book afterwards. Important things in the beginning were Schlossberg, Louie Maggio, early on. He worked with me on Walter Smith flexibility studies, and Clarke of course... lots of Clarke.

Dulin: *And Arban?*

Hardenberger: Not so much. Not with him.

Dulin: *How long did you study with him?*

Hardenberger: A long time. From when I started (age 8) until I went to Paris (age 16). So eight years.

Dulin: *Eight years is a long time with one teacher.*

Hardenberger: Yes, and it was a very fortunate start. I couldn't have been luckier. Nilsson was a young man of 27 or something like that. He was very, very curious. He went to Cichowicz and studied for long periods. He went to see Thibaud and he was very curious to find out what was going on. It's not like today where you can just get on the Internet and find out everything. You actually had to really go out and travel and meet these people, and he did. And I benefited from that very much. Because of the fact that he learned about the Chicago school, and he saw Thibaud in Paris, I had a mix of three things: the Scandinavian school, the American school, and the French school, which were to become very important in the mix of how I play. You know how some teachers become very protective when they have a talent like "that's my student..." Bo was not like that. If he would go away to study for a while in Chicago he would send me to study with Bengt Eklund in Gothenburg, or if I went to Paris with my parents for a holiday, he would say go and see Thibaud. Nilsson was always encouraging me to see other people. I remember going in 1976 to one of the first brass conferences in Montreux, Switzerland where I then met Timofei Dokshizer and David Hickman and a lot of people. I was very curious.

Dulin: *I have seen it listed that you took lessons from people like Herseth and Dokshizer. Did you study with these people as well?*

Hardenberger: I had a few lessons with them. I think it's a very important process that you collect information with people like that.

Dulin: *So you studied a little with many different players. But it was the three main teachers, Nilsson, Thibaud, and Stevens who you were with the most?*

Hardenberger: Yes, that's where I felt that "now here is a completely open line." This is what I really want to do. So the first encounter with Thibaud was on a holiday in Paris. I found him and I had a lesson, and then I knew that this is someone I wanted to study with.

Dulin: *What were your three years of lessons with Thibaud like? Intense, I assume.*

Hardenberger: (laughing) That may be the understatement of the year. It was two different things. In the school there was always class. And class like I have never seen anywhere else. Sometimes quite a small room with all the other guys smoking, and if you miss they would laugh. It was quite a cruel environment. I remember the first lesson I started out playing the first Arban etude, I started off in the tempo I thought it said in the book and Thibaud said "Too slow, sit down." You know things like that, or "too many mistakes in the first two bars, sit down." Next week, don't do it again now, next week! It's cruel, but it's how it is as a musician. Maria Callas said, "The audience hasn't paid to see us try." It's now or never. But then I also practiced every day in his house. He would sit upstairs and stamp his foot if I did bad practice downstairs! Another interesting thing with Thibaud was, in the same way Bo Nilsson brought out my sound, Thibaud brought out my musicality. I

"...in the same way Bo Nilsson brought out my sound, Thibaud brought out my musicality."

mean as dogmatic as he was about things having to be in tune, centered, really clean and practiced, no scales where you would only hear the first and last notes, etc... he was very dogmatic. But musical things he sort of let come out of you. He was very careful not to say things like "it should be like this." He would give me all the traditions of the French repertoire, for instance "here we do this, here we do that" stylistic things, but he really let my musicality grow without disturbing it, which I think is very unusual.

Dulin: *What did methods did Thibaud use?*

Hardenberger: He would use a lot of his interpretation of Stamp, as well as a lot of Arban and a lot of Schlossberg. Also he would change things around a lot. Going very intensely into Schlossberg for instance, "you must do it like this; you must do it like that" and then the next week I would be practicing Schlossberg and he would say, "Why are you practicing Schlossberg?" He did all these things that really made you think. Thibaud was also the first, I think, to adopt the Caruso method in Europe.

Dulin: *Was there anything in the Arban that he emphasized?*

Hardenberger: He would work on articulation with me. He also stressed the mixed disciplines such as the slur and the articulation. He was after really clean classical playing. I mean if you can play the Arban book from beginning to end then you can play most things. Arban and Clarke... most people

"Nilsson was always encouraging me to see other people."



Students of Pierre Thibaud at the Conservatoire Supérieur de Musique, Paris. Thibaud is seated in the middle of the first row. Hardenberger is second from the left in the first row.

usually practice little bits of these methods, just certain things. Thibaud worked the whole thing.

Dulin: *And you still use Arban?*

Hardenberger: Oh, yes. Now it's more like I can feel when certain disciplines need work. If I am playing a lot of classical pieces I would spend more time on the Arban, or if I need to get a discipline really back into shape. Again, these are things that I spent so much time on. It's such a vital part of how my playing developed in Paris. It's all about centering. You know, attack is such a bad word because it implies something going towards the front, and I see the tongue action as a release of sound. It needs to be going back very fast. If you do that then the sound is free and you can do the next one. And then when you can do it on one note, Arban very cleverly moves on to intervals. I really studied the whole book very meticulously during my time in Paris. Now if I have been doing a lot of modern pieces and feel the need to preserve the classical qualities of my playing I will dig into the Arban again. But as far as what I do out of the Arban every day, it is very little. Two minutes or so just to make sure that that discipline is under control. I will do page 14 number 16. But I will do it slurred in groups of four focusing on the first note of the group. And then I will slur three notes and articulate one, then slur two and articulate two, and finally as written. I really try to achieve a machine-like action so that each note should be like a pearl on a necklace.

Dulin: *Do you do it in other keys?*

Hardenberger: No, just in F. If the feel is there, I don't need to spend a lot of time on it. But if I have been doing a lot of very rough work, then I might need more time cleaning that up. Sometimes you know we can end up playing what Thibaud called "too much in front" of the instrument, over blowing everything, then this is a very good process to back off.

Dulin: *Do you still play the Characteristic Studies?*

Hardenberger: Yes, I do them just for fun, just to recognize them. They are perfect to build stamina. Not taking a break at

every double bar, really making the connections. (Hardenberger sings a small bit from the first study) And really go through the etude from beginning to end. Because there are two things with strength: one thing is pure strength, which is to be able to play high and loud. And of course the other is stamina so that I can play that piece (Hardenberger points to a score of a new piece by H.K. Gruber that he will premier later this year). It's what we mean when we talk about playing economically. That's the theory anyway.

Dulin: *And you said you still practice Clarke?*

Hardenberger: Yes, or any kind of scales... there is no way around scales. There are a lot of these disciplines on any instrument. We try to find short cuts around it. Strength is one and scales are another. Every musician has to play them. So I do Clarke alternating with the Stamp patterns on page 29. And of course Clarke is good because you get some articulation in there as well.

Dulin: *Do you use the entire book?*

Hardenberger: Well, I did. In Paris we had one whole chapter each week that needed to be good in every key, not just the comfortable ones. And now, one day I will practice one section, and on another day a different section. It's best if you learn these when you are young, and the younger you are, the better it is. It's much harder after you are twenty.

Dulin: *Did Thibaud use the Franquin method? (Thibaud emphasized the Franquin after Hardenberger left the conservatory)*

Hardenberger: No, not so much, but we did do a bit of it. The Franquin was something I picked up on my own. The competition in the school was fierce. There were the two classes, Maurice André and Thibaud. I read in an interview that the Franquin was something that had been important to André. I tried it out

and Thibaud showed me of course how it worked. But that is something that I think I developed on my own later.

Dulin: *What is it that you work out of in Franquin?*

Hardenberger: It's basically one page, page 115. But already in the first few pages he makes a clear distinction between *détaché*, so a clear "tah." It sounds simple to say it, but on the trumpet it's not so easy. Then he adds a slur, a proper slur, a really smooth slur, and then finally *détaché dans le son* (tonguing on the sound), a clear "tah" without stopping the sound. This is in the first page. I know a lot of professional players who cannot do that. It demands real control, almost like bowing on a string instrument. Thibaud used to say, "On the violin there are five thousand ways of beginning the same note. On the trumpet we have two, we get it or we miss it." (Hardenberger laughs) And he said if you can have ten, then you already have a musical language. Because the beginning of the note conditions how the rest of it is going to be of course, and if you have ten you already have different colors.

Dulin: *Did you work on etudes very much?*

Hardenberger: Yes, very much, both with Bo and Thibaud. I had a very solid foundation by the time I came to Paris so I could take the beating.

Dulin: *What etudes do you still practice?*

Hardenberger: The Charlier studies are the ones I still play now. I don't use them now for the same purpose as I did as a student. You know when you are a student you use etudes as a

"...there is no way around scales...
Every musician has to play them."

way of learning style and finding expression, and now it's more to recognize something. If I am working on a lot of modern repertoire for instance it's just like a cleansing process to play a few of those etudes. There is a Russian book that Bo gave me a photocopy of and I play a few of those. I like to play books by a lot of different composers. And then of course I will revisit etudes when I am teaching.

Dulin: *You also mentioned the Balay method and the etudes.*

Hardenberger: The Balay method is very good. Once you have achieved an easy way of playing one note, then you have to do that within a phrase in Balay. They are very musical little studies, and they are unpredictable, which is something I always look for in exercises. You can't mentally rest. They have to be phrased. They are very simple, with sort of a Mozart quality. You know that's something we suffer from. We don't have any high quality easy music like pianists who have very good music that is not difficult. So we have to make that up in the Arban or in the Balay, but it's only little snippets.

Dulin: *Do you have a story about the Balay etude book?*

Hardenberger: Well, (Hardenberger smiles) it was in the second etude in my second year in Paris. I didn't play it very well. And Thibaud made me cry in front of the whole class and then he kicked me out for a couple of months. For two months I was not allowed to play in class. And remember I was still practicing in his house every day and was eating dinner with him. Eventually I was allowed to play again in class. Much later I asked him why he did that, because it was very tough on me. He said because he wanted to see if I could take it, because he knew if I could get through that I could take what the music business could be like later on. Thibaud was a tough teacher, but very wise.

Dulin: *What do you do to warm up?*

Hardenberger: I spend a lot of time bending notes until I feel I am producing the sound the way I want.

Dulin: *And then you use Stamp?*

Hardenberger: Yes, and then basically with that embryo I just expand it so that I keep the feeling of playing a medium G and keep that through all the disciplines. That's what the daily warm up or routine is about. Stamp is like Schlossberg. I think it's very often misunderstood that they are methods that



Håkan Hardenberger

you should work from the beginning of the book to the end of the book. They (Stamp and Schlossberg) were both people who gave little notes of exercises "here practice this for a week," so I think you make your own routine, or together with your teacher you make your routine. There are specific exercises aimed to solve specific problems. So you don't have to do all of them all your life. I start with bending notes, then I go onto the mouthpiece, and then I take one of the warm-ups and expand it.

Dulin: *Could you talk about "poo" attacks?*

Hardenberger: Yes, that's a central idea in the Stamp method. That idea, well practiced, creates such a good rapport between the musician and the instrument. It creates a contact between the air that you have inside the body and the air that is inside the instrument. You cannot force the vibration or force the air with the tongue. If you practice that all over the range of the trumpet then you are

"Thibaud was a tough teacher, but very wise."

more comfortable finding the right position for each note.

Dulin: *How much do you practice this part of your playing?*

Hardenberger: Through whole first part of the warmup... it's also very important for the articulation. We were talking earlier about ten different articulations. The poo attack is one extreme. If you are at ease with that it's wonderful. The second movement of the Haydn is an example of this because it makes the articulation more secure. So, in fact, the Arban and the poo attack belong together because they are the two extremes of this scale of articulation.

Dulin: *You mentioned Caruso; is that part of your warmup?*

Hardenberger: Not in the warmup, no. It's a very limited version of Caruso. Thibaud started doing it when it first appeared. I had not heard about it and he started using it. We were all guinea pigs. So we started doing it very severely there, and at first we couldn't play at all. Because we were not taking the horn off at all, and keeping the tension, we couldn't play. But very soon I realized I was getting stronger. And the advantage when you are very young and you study with someone you believe in completely is that you don't have second thoughts, as you might if you were past twenty or slightly more mature. I just did it. But then soon I found out that for me it was really good to do the six notes and the thirds, then take a break and the thirds again and pedal notes. And that's it. All it takes is fifteen minutes of my day and it gives me strength. It was only after that that I could start to attempt to play the Brandenburg or what came later with Birtwistle and others. It's very important still. If I am in a period of performing, or if I need to build strength and I am playing tough pieces, I do it at the end of the day. And to do it at the end of the day is very good because you have no second thoughts. You don't need to worry "my sound will not be good after this," because then you have at least eight hours to recover. It's a personal thing, but for me it conditions the muscles for the next day. This is the opposite of warming down.

Dulin: *What do you practice most on, B-flat or C trumpet?*

Hardenberger: C definitely. It was always the most natural. I started on the B-flat, which I think is a good idea. I think you should definitely do all the basics first on the B-flat and then if it's natural change to the C. Just because Tiger Woods has a certain shoe size, everybody shouldn't be wearing the same shoe that he is wearing. Again it comes back to what was stated earlier, "I want my sound to be like this." If you don't know that, it doesn't matter what you play.

Dulin: *Did you do a lot of solfege in Paris?*

Hardenberger: Yes, we had nine hours per week. I came from Sweden where I had none and I didn't speak French, so there was a lot for me to do.

I remember once I got into the school, Thibaud said, "You need to do solfege, now you know that. Well, I will buy you the Lavignac method which is what I used when I was young." He came home with a huge pile of books.

There were solfege lessons two or three times per week, and I am sure I had to practice it at least an hour or two everyday. We worked on everything having to do with solfege including transposition with clefs.

Dulin: *Could you explain the Premier Prix at the Paris Conservatory?*

Hardenberger: Well, it's not there anymore, but the system

was such that at the end of each year there was a competition. Everybody who had taken their exams in the theoretical subjects could pass this exam competition. The two teachers (André and Thibaud) would not be part of the jury. They had no say. So the jury would be external; they would be colleagues of the teachers... other players in town, so it would get very political. It's not that only one person would get the premier prix. This is what people often misunderstand. One year there could be five people getting the premier prix, it was a level. Usually if you got the deuxieme prix you could stay on another year so that you could finish school with a premier prix; but if you had a premier prix you could go. If you were good at solfege you could finish your theoretical exams and in a short time have the premier prix after another one or two years.

Dulin: *When did you study with Thomas Stevens?*

Hardenberger: Stevens was after Paris and after the professional life had started a little bit.

Dulin: *Did you study with James Stamp?*

Hardenberger: Yes, at summer camps. You know they were wonderful things. Jean-Pierre Mathez, who published the *Brass Bulletin*, organized these events where Thibaud, Stevens, and Stamp would teach at the same time during week-long classes in Switzerland. It was great to go to as a fifteen year old. And I sort of always knew Stevens had something that I wanted, but I didn't know what that was.

Dulin: *Do you think that some of your interest in contemporary music was influenced by Stevens?*

Hardenberger: No, I had that already. I was playing Henderson while I was at school in Paris. So that was there from the beginning. But he has this amazing control. I didn't know what it was. I thought maybe it was yoga or something mental he was doing. But what he taught me was in fact how to read music properly. His approach was grounded in the Vacchiano tradition. Teaching your eye to see what is important. He would have me do these very difficult transpositions out of the Sachse and would keep changing them saying "Do this one in G, now in F#." He didn't allow me to stop, insisting on the phrasing and on the important musical issues that are in the text as a rule, even if your brain is busy transposing, and this is a great, great method. Through this approach, your ability to see what is in a line develops very quickly. If I ever write a book about anything in trumpet playing, it's going to be about that. You know it's not what you practice, it's how you practice. You

can practice Stamp all day and Arban all day, and Franquin and Sachse... but if it's not done with an idea or a goal set by an idea, or just because your teacher says so, then there is no point.

Dulin: *You have known Bob Malone for a long time.*

Hardenberger: Yes, a long time. He was there on my first visit to Los Angeles, and I met him through Tom Stevens. So he has known my playing forever and he hears what I am trying to achieve and helps me to do that. On a trip early on where I went all around America, I had been to Chicago, and in Evanston I bought a C trumpet that was very vibrant, but it had issues, and his leadpipe just fixed it. At that time, Tom was working with him. With Bob things are ongoing. I am very conservative when it comes to equipment. I would never ever change the mouthpiece myself. I will have very definite ideas about what I think it is, in a mouthpiece for example, that

"We worked on everything having to do with solfege including transposition with clefs."

makes certain things happen, and then when I come to a place where “now I need to do something” then I do it, but never too early, never as a short cut. I would rather practice. However, it’s good to have someone like Bob to help when I need it.

Dulin: *What are your thoughts on breathing?*

Hardenberger: That we all know how to do it very well. It’s the first thing we do. It’s the first thing we do in the morning, we yawn. It’s the perfect breath. Then it’s a matter of playing and having a rapport with the instrument where you don’t disturb that. We all know how to do it, but we see people that as soon as they get a trumpet they forget how to do it all together. The place where we can take the force from to create the higher airspeed is low, but it’s not a constant pressure. It depends on the range you are playing in. To me the diaphragm is only intermediary, we cannot control the diaphragm. It’s a freedom thing more than anything so that this (Hardenberger points to his chest) is all resonance.

Dulin: *What about the timing of the breath?*

Hardenberger: I heard a voice teacher say this once and I thought it was brilliant “You should breathe as openly as possible and then remain like that as long as you sing or play.” The breath is what conditions what your sound is going to be like. You need to do it fast, and how to do it for a long phrase. It’s like the back swing in golf.

Dulin: *What is your practice schedule like?*

Hardenberger: When I was young Bo gave me a rule to rest as much as I practiced. In those days it would be ten minutes practice and then ten minutes rest. Then life changes and you need to get a lot of practice done in a shorter amount of time. But now I like to just go on. I may have a book with me when I need a break.

Dulin: *What is a normal practice day like for you?*

Hardenberger: Well it’s different if I am at home or on the road. At home I can practice more. Like Wednesday when I got here it was four or five hours. On concert days it’s normal to do two hours. And at home it will be five or six hours.

Dulin: *But on the longer days do you rest more?*

Hardenberger: No, not really. I think it started when we had kids. Before that you could practice when you felt inspired. You could practice late at night. Then with kids, there would be a slot of four hours in the morning and a slot of four hours here and there, and so you practice as much as you can, but that is easier to do when you are more advanced.

Dulin: *Do you record your practicing?*

Hardenberger: No, I did though. Not everything, not whole sessions or anything like that. There will always be things that we don’t hear. Vibrato is a good example. I always had a sort of natural vibrato; I don’t know where it’s made. It’s not a hand vibrato. And there was a time when I had to get a grip on it a little bit, to be able to take it away.

Dulin: *Was this early on or in the middle of your career?*

Hardenberger: Early to middle. Once you start to make records it’s not so necessary to record yourself in practice. Half of the concerts I play are recorded so I try not to listen myself

too much... I want the way that I perform to stay in the present.

Dulin: *So your career as a soloist started when you were fifteen?*

Hardenberger: I did my debut concert at that age playing the Hummel. You could say it started with that, but it depends on what you mean.

Dulin: *Did you participate in many competitions when you were young?*

Hardenberger: There were a few years there when I did a lot of them. They are terrible things so I was fortunate to do them when I was young enough not to care too much. But there are good things about them. I met people like Stephen Burns. You make friends for life. For me it gave me a sense that there was something in my playing that made people listen, that made it stick out. You don’t know that when you hear people say that “you’re good” or “you’re not good” because you have no idea if it’s something that carries out to people until you have tried.

Dulin: *So is that what steered your career towards being a soloist?*

Hardenberger: Probably... life is a strange thing you know.

Who knows? If I had gone to Chicago instead of Paris, what would have happened then? Or what would have happened if I would have gotten a job in Paris in Boulez’s ensemble instead of going home to Sweden for my “military career” (laughs). I mean in those

days we had to do military service in Sweden. Otherwise you had to stay out of Sweden for ten years and I wasn’t prepared to do that. So I went home and did my six months of what I had to do. Just before that I auditioned for Boulez and almost got the job. Had I gotten that job I would have stayed out of Sweden and then maybe I would have gone that direction and no solo career. So who knows? Of course the teaching of Thibaud brought that out in me also because he could see the ambition and the possibility I suppose.

Dulin: *How did your interest in contemporary music start?*

Hardenberger: Very early, maybe this was because there was no classical music in the family. I didn’t make so much of a distinction between old and new music or contemporary or not contemporary music. What I liked or didn’t like was more important.

Dulin: *You have been a champion of expanding the boundaries for the trumpet literature by working with many composers. Can you talk about your process in working with composers?*

Hardenberger: Well, there is no normal. With different composers it works differently. With Birtwistle, he is like Beethoven. He writes it and there it is, you have to deal with it. With Henze, if you look at his *Requiem*, the same material is found in the *Sonatina*. With Gruber I gave him all of the tricks to work with. I really think he is a genius. There is a lot of collaboration with him.

Dulin: *What qualities do you look for in composers?*

Hardenberger: I want to stay very open to everything. I don’t want to get stuck. You know the modern music world has many different camps, and they hate each other. There is the “neo-such and such” and the “ism-this and that.” But as I do get older, I do tend to like certain things. I like pulse and some

“Half of the concerts I play are recorded so I try not to listen myself too much... I want the way that I perform to stay in the present.”

“I want to stay very open to everything. I don’t want to get stuck.”



Håkan Hardenberger

sort of harmony. It doesn't mean that it has to be traditional harmony. I like complication. So in fact, this is why I like Gruber. This is why he is writing his fourth trumpet piece now. This is probably because we understand each other very well. I understand his music and he is excited to write for the trumpet. This is a nice quality in a composer. He just phoned me today with questions about how quickly can I change from one mute to another and could this and that be done? It's fun.

Dulin: *What's your first reaction when you get a piece like the Henze Requiem or the Gruber pieces?*

Hardenberger: It's like reading a map. There are things that you recognize and things that are completely new. Or it's like a language. If you know French, you can recognize some words in Italian, but there are other things you have to learn. You take what you recognize as the foundation and very slowly you build around it. Sometimes you run into real trouble and you have to solve various problems. If it's a first performance, you can talk to the composer to see if another solution can be found. Sometimes there is a fair amount of risk taking. Very often on the day of the first performance, I don't actually know if I can make it from the beginning to the end physically. With the Birtwistle premiere in 1986 the pure physical aspect of the whole thing was really something. It required the need to find a very economical way of playing where no extra energy is wasted on any note. It needs to be so centered and so controlled that you are not wasting anything. The slur needs to be really smooth, etc. It's all of these little, little things that makes it possible to play nonstop for twenty-seven minutes or whatever it is.

Dulin: *So the Birtwistle was the first piece like that?*

Hardenberger: Yes, that's what sort of made my career take off, especially in Britain. It was definitely a new phase for me. There was actually the Zimmerman from 1954 that nobody was playing, which today is now major repertoire. You can't be a trumpet soloist and not play that piece. It's a real respected piece that any conductor would want to have on their program. It's right up there... a masterpiece.

The Zimmerman requires that same element of physical strength and that's probably why it wasn't played for so long. Then I started to play it, and Reinhold Friedrich started to play it, and now it's standard repertoire. Birtwistle was the first composition written for me that had this sort of musical weight. The basic idea of the piece is that he (Birtwistle) had been to this medieval town, Lucca, Italy. And there was a procession and he would see it from different points of view. But it was always going on. So one of the ideas was this constant playing, it was very important to the piece as such. When I



Håkan Hardenberger

first saw it I was overwhelmed... I was twenty-five years old at the time.

Dulin: *How do you train for what your job is now? How do you train for something like Brandenburg versus Birtwistle?*

Hardenberger: The basics are the same and very simple. If you can center every note and control it into the body, it doesn't matter what music you are playing, so that you are not faking anything in your playing. The preparation in that is exactly the same. You have to keep the lip strong, but at the same time flexible.

Dulin: *What is your process when you are learning new pieces?*

Hardenberger: Well, something like that (points again to the Gruber) you have to stare at it for a long time before you even understand what it says. There's no information there that is strange. It's normal musical signs, it's just a lot of it, and it's in an order that we are not used to. I use the piano, and solfège to try and hear it, and from the beginning I try and employ a nonviolent method of assimilation. I think that is

maybe what I do differently. I am very disciplined at this stage. I will not try to see how it would sound, because as well as you can program good things into the back of the brain, you can also program mistakes, and once they are in there they are very hard to get out. With big intervals, I slur them first, slow and soft, slow and soft.

Dulin: *How do you address nerves when you are dealing with the large works that you are doing now?*

Hardenberger: I have been doing this all my life, that's how I deal with the nerves. I can tell you the first time I had to play the Gruber which starts with a low F# and you have to sing in falsetto a C# to create a chord, my heart was pounding. So nerves are there, and you deal with them through your preparation and through the feeling that this is the thing that you live for. You know, that's why you get nervous, because it means a lot to you. But once you realize that, you can turn it around. It's like a force if you use it correctly, but it's all in the preparation. A funny thing with those very hard pieces, they are also the easiest pieces to have in the repertoire, because once you have practiced them and you have done it correctly you can very quickly take them up again. This is because in the initial preparation you had to do so much to even get close to reality that once you are past that all you need is a week and you can pick them back up.

Dulin: *How old were you when you started playing serious pieces like Enescu and Honegger?*

Hardenberger: Very young, fourteen or fifteen.

Dulin: *Could you talk a little about some of our landmark pieces from the trumpet and piano repertoire and the influence they had on what was to come?*

Hardenberger: Our repertoire can by no means be compared to that of a violinist or pianist. So the pieces that are good need to be treasured. I think the Enescu is really the first of these. It really showed what the trumpet could do. Sadly, more people should have heard, and it should have created a lot more pieces. How we determine quality is a very interesting thing. I think it's only by time. I think my way of determining it is that in a good piece you can always find new things, whereas a slightly lesser piece will offer only one or two solutions and that's it. The Haydn *Concerto* can be played in millions of ways and still be correct. The Hindemith *Sonata* is a major piece in that respect. I think that trumpet and piano

must be a very difficult combination to write for. You know you will see it in all the good pieces the pianist needs to be very busy because we need a lot of sound. The trumpet can be sometimes one dimensional. You can see this in concertos as well. Composers often add artificial dimensions to the piece. For example in the Birtwistle he adds vibraphone always shadowing the trumpet.

Dulin: *Are you interested in having sonatas written for you?*

Hardenberger: Yes, but there have been no sonatas written for me. I have brought it up so many times with composers but I think the prospect of doing it is frightening to them. Part of this is that many composers are afraid to write for the piano because they have the opposite problem of what we have... they have so much good repertoire. So a lot of composers are maybe afraid of falling short of the standard. Whatever combination of instruments you play with, you should try to find the pieces that allow you to say, "I like this music, I am curious about this music and I really want to present it." I see too often, especially young people playing just anything because "oh well, that's cool," and then give it a half-hearted effort because there is no wish to do anything with it.

Dulin: *What were your musical influences when you were growing up, both on the trumpet and away from the trumpet?*

Hardenberger: Very many, I think that's the most important answer is that there were many. Not copying anyone in particular. Maurice André was there of course. He was the soloist on the classical side. Without him I don't think it would have happened. He was a role model. I listened to everyone on the trumpet side. I couldn't put any one player higher than another. I have great respect and love for very many. Thibaud, Dokshizer, Herseth, you know you can go on forever. Quite early I listened to Miles Davis and Clifford Brown. I would also have to say that I was musically influenced by a lot of singers.

Dulin: *You mentioned Dokshizer, what was his influence like?*

Hardenberger: He was, of course, a major influence. He had his style as Maurice has his style and Ed Tarr his. It's not a question of adapting their style. It's rather to see someone who has gone so far and is so expressive. That is what is so exciting, and it speaks to you and you listen, it's as simple as that. I got to meet Dokshizer when I was very young... it was exciting.

Dulin: *You mentioned singers, was anyone in particular important to you?*

Hardenberger: Yes actually, the Swedish tenor, Jussi Bjorling. He was very important and still is. I would also add the violinist Jascha Heifitz. You know, you go through certain phases, it's the same with composers. People ask you, "Who is your favorite composer?" It's impossible to say. There will be certain ones you always come back to like Bach, because without him it wouldn't have happened. And then you go through phases where you would listen a lot to early Baroque or a lot to Sibelius, and at certain times they will have the strongest impact on your musical life.

Dulin: *While we are on the subject of Baroque music, would you talk about your approach to it?*

Hardenberger: One of my very early influences was Ed Tarr, because Bo was working with Ed Tarr in his ensemble. Before I went to Paris, I actually thought that that was the route I was going. I had a natural trumpet, and if I could play in Tarr's ensemble, that would be a really great thing to do. I was maybe fifteen or so and I had quite a lot of contact with him. When I went to Paris, however, I went in a different direction. So

with me there has always been a mix and I juggle them until they become mine. Once I found the Sherzer piccolo trumpet that was very important. I had a Selmer and I tried Schilke, but I could never make the sound on the piccolo that I wanted. And suddenly one day these German trumpets appeared in Paris. Bernard Jeannotot, who had a store named Olifant, called up Thibaud and said there was this new piccolo trumpet and to come and try it. So we went over there and tried them out. Suddenly I could make the sound that I wanted on the piccolo. I had no money so Thibaud bought it. My parents later paid him back, but that just shows how giving he was. As far as my approach, it's like cooking. I get four or five recipes and then I make my own dish. So I am curious and suspicious at the same time.

Dulin: *Can you talk about where you draw your influences with the classical style, in particular the Haydn and Hummel concertos?*

Hardenberger: I think like any other style, the influences need to come from many different places. The worst thing you can do is listen to another trumpet player and just do what they do. You need to read books from that time, look at paintings from that time, and preferably a little bit before that time, because it's always interesting to see how music was in a broader historical context. If you see Impressionism, the music comes a little bit later than the paintings, for instance. You draw the inspiration from these things and by asking things like "How would a pianist do this?" The more of these influences you have, the more your own idea will form itself. It's like an assimilation process. I cannot always explain because I read this book that I play the Haydn like this or that, it's just a whole mix of things and it comes out. I also believe that during the classical era there was a premium on framework and mechanics, and then, within that, to find emotion and humanism. So it's a stricter framework. But I think people often go wrong by just buying someone else's point of view. For example, let's say there is a place in a piece that has a section that can be interpreted with some rubato. Now if you've never practiced that part with a metronome completely strict, without any rubato, then you don't know what you are doing. The first time you practice it, you play it like you have heard it with an artificial sense of rubato, but you don't really know what you are doing. To add more to this subject let me say another thing. It would be nice if people would practice the whole piece and be prepared to play it. How many times have I heard in masterclasses very good playing up until the normal audition place has passed, and then after that, there's nobody home... and it's only safe playing until there, not very imaginative.

Dulin: *Do you have plans to record the French concerto repertoire?*

Hardenberger: I do want to record that repertoire. It must be done someday. I would like to record the Tomasi, the Jolivet *Concertino*, the Planel and perhaps the Desenclos. But the record companies don't want to because it might not sell as much, but it will happen.

Dulin: *Can you talk about your partnership with the Jacques Werup?*

Hardenberger: Yes, it started around 1995 or so. I had these pieces that were based on or inspired by poetry and predominantly French poetry, and he is a Swedish poet but he has lived in France. He has always worked with music; he is a jazz saxophonist himself. He likes to use his text with high art and low

art. He's a very interesting guy. We started to put this program together and it was good because I had to play for so long. I had to play for one hour and ten minutes or so and I needed to play basically all the time. At first I thought it was impossible, but then listening to him, rather than thinking "this hurts," made it possible. When we perform, if we are too obsessed with how we feel, it's not good. We need to take away our sense of self-awareness in that moment. That should also be the approach when you practice. It's a very important difference to make. When you practice you can look at things from all possible angles, but once you perform you have to try to let go.

"When you practice, you can look at things from all possible angles, but once you perform you have to try to let go."

Dulin: *What is the repertoire for these programs?*

Hardenberger: Well, the first program we did I played some Telemann unaccompanied pieces either for flute or recorder and we brought them up with poetry. We also did this with the second Charlier etude, with a very beautiful poem that really gave it even more character. It was a process where we used some pieces that already had poetry. We used some of his poems and I chose music to it. We also used Takemitsu, Henze, and Michael Blake Watkins. In another collaboration we are using one of Sweden's best jazz pianists, Jan Lundgren. In this instance we are presenting three art forms that sort of clash.

Dulin: *What is your view on how the trumpet has changed as a solo instrument?*

Hardenberger: As a solo instrument I hope I have done some things with trumpet and that others with me have helped the medium along. Without the previous generation of soloists it would not have been possible for my generation to do the things we have done for the instrument. I hope we have taken it a little bit further. I am proud to be playing with the Chicago

Symphony and the Vienna Philharmonic and orchestras like that. I don't think that this has been the case before. It's a great thing that pieces like Zimmerman or Henze are played now. I think at times the trumpet is considered as good as any other solo instrument. Actually, when I started my career, I thought here in America, "Oh, they will be open to new things." But it was completely the wrong idea. It's more conservative here (the United States) in the symphonic world.

Dulin: *Where do you see things going from here?*

Hardenberger: Well, I hope it keeps going. I see the ones that are good pieces are slowly becoming more accepted. At first it is considered impossible and then someone comes along who can do it. Time will tell. I mean, it's not automatic that our art form that has existed only a few hundred years in the entire history of mankind will stay around. If we don't treasure what we have, it is likely that it will go away. It's the responsibility of every musician to make sure that our art form continues. It won't just happen on its own.

About the author: Mark Dulin teaches trumpet at Winthrop University in Rock Hill South Carolina. He holds a DMA from Stony Brook University, a MM from the University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music, and a BM and Performer Diploma from Indiana University. His teachers include Kevin Cobb, John Rommel, Marie Speziale, Michael Sachs, James Pandolfi, and Joe Phelps. Dulin performs frequently with the Charlotte Symphony and the Charleston Symphony and as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the east coast. For more information see his web site (<http://www.markdulin.com>).

Photos by Marco Borggreve

