

## ITEA Journal Volume 38 Number 3 (Spring 2011)

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### **Daniel Perantoni: The Man, The Musician, & The Legacy**

by Mark Nelson and Jerry Young

We would consider it highly dubious that any reader of the *ITEA Journal* does not know who Dan Perantoni is. He is unquestionably one of the preeminent artists and pedagogues in the history of our instrument and was the first national president of this Association. However, most readers, whether they have been part of TUBA/ITEA since 1973 or are young students, know very little about his broader background and history in the music profession or the breadth of his influence as a teacher, musician, organizer, and entrepreneur over the past half-century. As Mr. Perantoni approaches his 70th birthday in May 2011, we felt that this was an opportune time both to put details of his life and career into print, as well as giving individuals who he has influenced the chance to voice their reflections on him and his work. It is our hope that the information and reflections below deepens your appreciation for this giant of the music profession.



**Daniel Perantoni**

#### **EARLY DAYS**

Daniel Thomas Perantoni was born on May 5, 1941 and grew up in Johnsonburg, Pennsylvania in a musical family. His father, Ermine Perantoni, was a trombone player and had a dance band called "Bleach Perantoni and his 5 Aces" in the 1940s and 1950s. His oldest brother, Ermine (also known as Fred Perry), was a Peabody graduate on trumpet and booked bands for Jack Morton Productions in Washington D. C. including Louis Armstrong, Bob Hope, and their contemporaries. Ermine also composed and arranged charts for his father's group. Other brothers include Richard and Gilbert. Mr. P., as he has long been affectionately known to his students, was the youngest of the four brothers. His father also taught many outstanding musicians in his home town. One of his notable former students is Meco Monardo who wrote the "Star Wars Disco" work in the 1970s that shot to the top of the charts.

Although Dan showed an interest in his father's instrument, the trombone, His father would not consent to teach him that instrument. Ermine was more interested in developing a pianist for his jazz groups, so Dan started piano lessons at the age of six with a local Juilliard graduate, Mrs. Curry. As he grew and became

proficient on piano while in high school, he played in several dance bands and occasionally as a cocktail pianist in several restaurants with the goal of eventually becoming a concert pianist.

As a freshman in high school, the local high school band director, William Pratt, invited Dan to play in the Johnsonburg Area Joint High School Band. Given a choice of instruments to play, Dan asked to play the tuba, mistakenly thinking it was the euphonium which he had heard his father play. When Mr. Pratt handed him a sousaphone to take home, Dan was embarrassed when first showing the instrument to his Father. Fortunately, his Father said "Great! Your Uncle Gilio played the tuba." Perantoni never took formal lessons on tuba while in high school. He was just handed a Rubank book and a set of fingerings. At that time he had already had eight years of piano lessons and took to the tuba with a passion. He won the second tuba position at the state contest and a superior rating at the solo competition three months later. As his high school career came to a close, his father, Meco, and his band director all encouraged Dan to audition for admission to the Eastman School of Music. Another local boy, Bill Kearney, was already studying tuba at Eastman. Dan auditioned on piano and was accepted as a music education major. He also had brought his sousaphone and auditioned for the tuba teacher, Donald Knaub, playing Bill Bell's arrangement of *Air and Bourée*. To his surprise, he was offered a scholarship to come to Eastman on tuba. He accepted and ended up with a minor on piano. He played cocktail piano several nights a week at Al's Green Tavern as well as playing occasional combo gigs for extra spending money.

## **EASTMAN YEARS**

When Perantoni arrived at the Eastman School of Music in the fall of 1959, two of the tuba students at the time were Roger Bobo and Toby Hanks. When he first heard Roger Bobo, Dan called his father and said, "I think I am in the wrong business. This guy is unbelievable." His father advised him to stick it out and Roger, as well as Toby, became life-long friends. Perantoni has always had nothing but praise for his tuba teacher at Eastman whom he affectionately calls "Knauby." In a conversation relative to this article, he stated: "Knauby was simply the best teacher for me. I had so much to learn and did everything he told me to do. I remember practicing 6 hours a day for 4 years and being scared to death to fail and disappoint my family." As we all know, that did not happen.

## **OTHER VOICES**

### **DONALD KNAUB, Professor of Tuba, Eastman School of Music 1951–71, Emeritus Professor of Trombone, Butler School of Music, The University of Texas at Austin**

My time with Dan spanned four years in the middle of my 20 years as the tuba teacher at the Eastman School of Music. I began in 1951 and ended in 1971 when Emory Remington passed away and I was appointed his successor. At this time in my life I can hardly remember what happened last week and 50 years back is an almost impossible task. But how could I forget that serious, respectful young man from the heart of Pennsylvania who showed up on audition day with a sousaphone to play for me in hopes of becoming a tuba student at Eastman. I don't remember any of the details of his playing, but he evidently played well and was accepted for admission. My old class lists show that he spent 4 years in my studio and graduated in 1963. In short order I had him playing on one of our loaner Mirafone CC tubas and he made remarkable progress. I have always thought that Dan was the one student in my entire teaching career who made the most improvement. He was a sponge, a hard worker, and a terrific listener. Roger Bobo and Toby Hanks were students in school at the time, and we used their sounds as models for the tuba sound I wanted for him. I played with him on many occasions to give him the experience of playing with a bass trombonist for tuning, ensemble, blending and musicality—essential skills if a tuba player is required to play with the trombone section in an audition. Dan was the tuba player in the Eastman Philharmonia for the notable tour of that orchestra to Russia in 1963. He played the first performance of a piece he commissioned by Greg Wolfe for his concerto concert appearance with Dr. Hanson and the Eastman Rochester Orchestra for the Performer's Certificate. These experiences served him well and prepared him for the remarkable career he has had for the past 50 years. I couldn't be more proud of him as student, colleague, and friend. Congratulations, Dan. You are a role model for all tuba players to emulate.

## **EARLY CAREER**

Right after graduating from the Eastman School in 1963 with a Bachelor of Music degree in tuba and music education, Perantoni won his first position as principal tubist in the San Antonio Symphony. It was short-lived however when he was drafted into the Army three months later where he served from 1964–66. Fortunately,

as he describes in his own words, "I played the best audition of my life" and was accepted into the U. S. Army Band (Pershing's Own) at Fort Myer, Virginia. A position was, in fact, created for him in the tuba section. The Army Band tuba section of the time (in addition to Dan Perantoni) consisted of Bob Pallansch, Chester Schmitz, Jim Self, Paul Scott, and Leo Hurst. Dan also put his piano chops to good use, playing in a small combo for occasional Army functions. While playing in the Army Band, Dan arranged to have a lesson with Harvey Phillips, who had come to visit Bob Pallansch. During his student days at Eastman, he had heard Mr. Phillips play when he performed with the New York Brass Quintet. From that moment, he had wanted to study with Phillips. After that first lesson (during which Dan states he was terrified), he went to New York whenever he could to study with him. Perantoni went on to say that Mr. Phillips "made it so easy." Phillips took Dan along on recording dates, spending the entire day with him. They played duets as well as planned for Dan's future career. As many readers know, they became life-long friends and like family. Mr. P. comments, "I owe him so much. He was and is the biggest influence on my career and my life."

As his time in the Army Band was coming to a close, Donald Knaub informed Perantoni of an opening in Amsterdam for the Kunstman Orchestra, which is now the Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. He sent in an audition tape and was offered the position. He was there from 1966-67 and, in addition to his primary job, he played with the Netherlands Wind Ensemble, the Netherlands Ballet and Opera Orchestra, and the New Music Ensemble as well as subbing with the Concertgebouw and Rotterdam orchestras. He was there for a little over a year returning home for family reasons. He contacted Harvey Phillips for information on any openings in the U. S., and he was asked to call William Revelli, the Director of Bands at the University of Michigan, about a possible teaching position there, as Harvey thought Dan should pursue a teaching career. At the time, since he had only his bachelor's degree in music education and tuba, Revelli told him to get a masters degree before pursuing a university position. Perantoni had just auditioned for and won the North Carolina Symphony tuba position (at that time it was a 24 week season), and Dr. Revelli advised him to turn it down and go back to school. Perantoni did just that and returned to Washington D. C. and enrolled at Catholic University. He studied with Lloyd Geiser, Principal Trumpet and Assistant Conductor of the National Symphony. Using his G. I. bill, which paid for the degree and his connections in the D. C. area, he also managed to play five nights a week at a local club on piano with George Graves on guitar and Jim Self on bass. He completed the Master of Music degree in two semesters graduating in 1968.



**Dan and Rudi Meini tuba display (Courtesy of Custom Music Company)**

### **OTHER VOICES**

#### **JIM SELF, Hollywood studio musician, recording artist, and life-long friend**

My relationship with Dan Perantoni began in April 1965. I was the newest member of the tuba section in The U. S. Army Band in Washington D. C. Dan had been there a year and Chester Schmitz two.

I was a country bumpkin for sure—from a small college, and Dan was the confident graduate of Eastman. He was and always has been a self-confident man and gregarious, warm, and friendly. One of the earliest things I remember was the Army Band recording a whole bunch of German Marches and only four tubas were needed (of the six). Being the new guy in the section they convinced me to play all the rehearsals and recordings so they could drink coffee in the lounge—I became 4th (instead of 6th) tuba—and was gullible. They got a great kick out of it.

Another time, after a hard night of partying, I got in bed at 6 a.m. on a Sunday, at 6:30 the phone rang and it was the Army Band telling me to be at the band building in 30 minutes in dress blues. A famous personality died and the band had to meet the body at the Union Train Station. I was “blue” with a bad hangover and threw-up out the bus window all the way down Constitution Avenue. At the station I just had to leave formation to go to the bathroom. Dan and Chester covered for me to the officers—which keep me out of hot water—or even being sent to Viet Nam.

Dan helped me buy my first tuba—a Mirafone 186-4U CC. Even in his early twenties he was connected with the European tuba market—which led to a life of designing and selling tubas. He is a good businessman. He got me a horn for only \$600.

Dan was taking lessons in New York with the great Harvey Phillips and introduced me to him. That relationship was life-long too and what I learned from Harvey has greatly enriched my life.

Bob Pallansch (another member of the TUSAB tuba section) had a gig at the Scarlet Garter in Georgetown playing Dixieland music. Dan was his sub and both recommended me to be the 2nd sub. It was from 9–1 six nights a week and paid \$10 and all the beer you could drink—I drank my pay for sure! Eventually the gig became mine and I stayed with the leader, George Graves, for several years. I really learned how to play bass-line tuba—thanks to Dan and Bob.

During these years in Washington (and ever since) Dan and I have been the best of friends. We even double dated. Many don’t know this but Dan was a quite accomplished lounge-type piano player. I was a budding bass player and we worked many dance and club jobs together in the rhythm section.

After finishing his time in the Army Band, Dan went to an orchestra job in Holland and then came back a year later to D. C. to do graduate work. We worked a lot together in those couple of years.

Dan was (and is) a terrific tuba player—and again very self-confident. Throughout his amazingly successful career he has been one of the real giants as a soloist. His many recordings have been an inspiration to me and to every tuba player. And he premiered and introduced dozens of important solo works for the tuba. I was always amazed at how easily he could play the most difficult stuff. His sound is gorgeous and his technique flawless. I attribute this to his natural talent. I believe that, through his early training as a pianist and “all round musician,” he developed great ears. I look for that in young students when I recruit today. His solo playing and clinics have been on the forefront of the tuba revolution of the last 45 years. He is one of the greatest players of all time—and one of the most influential.

Dan and I also shared many experiences as leaders in I.T.E.A. (formerly T.U.B.A.). Dan was a founding father of this important organization.

We have remained close friends ever since. Our families have been close too. Dan and I shared a lot about our personal lives. He seemed to always land on his feet and now has an amazing wife, Judy, and a very happy home life.

As a teacher he is also one of the best. He probably has had more successful students than anyone in the world. The world’s college faculties, bands and orchestras are full of Perantoni students.

Dan went to teach at the University of Illinois in the late 1960s, and I went to the University of Tennessee. My connection with Dan, Harvey, and Winston Morris brought me into that small group of enthusiasts that made big changes in the tuba world. I got to be part of the planning committee for the 1st International Tuba Euphonium Conference because of those relationships.

Later Dan moved to Arizona State University, and I moved to Los Angeles. In (I think) 1988 Dan asked me to fill in a semester for him while he was on sabbatical. I was a new pilot at the time and the chance to fly there every week or two was a great incentive. At the time he had what I consider the finest class of tuba players in the world. Pat Sheridan, Tony Kniffin, Tom Holtz, and Jeff Anderson were just a few names in a large class of his students who went on to prominence in the tuba world. It was a Mecca for tuba students.

When Harvey Phillips retired at Indiana University the obvious choice to replace him was Dan. He has gone on to cap a brilliant career there. A year ago last summer I visited Dan and Judy at their palatial home. We were joined by Winston Morris and Bob Tucci. Our goal was to visit with our mentor Harvey Phillips and just to hang out. It was wonderful!

Dan always had jokes to tell and remains to this day, one of the best joke tellers I know—and has a proper irreverence for everything—my kind of jokester. It is a reflection of his open and easygoing manner. I was always impressed with his warmth and friendly manner. He is one of the most loved people I know. While we are only 2 years apart I kind of looked up to him as a big brother and he has always remained one of my idols. From my perspective I see a man who is really nice to everybody, lives an unselfish life and one who has brought music to all who touch him.

I feel blessed to have Dan Perantoni in my life. He is one of my best friends and my life is greatly enriched by this wonderful guy.

## **COLLEGE TEACHING CAREER**

### **UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS**

In 1968, Perantoni won the tuba teaching position at the University of Illinois and has been a university professor ever since. During his time at Illinois, spanning the years 1968–1982, he took advantage of the opportunity to study with Arnold Jacobs on a regular basis. Along with Harvey Phillips, Mr. Jacobs became one of Mr. P's most influential teachers. In Perantoni's own words, he was changed from "...a physical player to an efficient player." He was also introduced to the F tuba, which became his signature horn for many decades as Mr. Jacobs thought it would be better to use for the many extended range contemporary solo works for tuba Perantoni premiered at the university during this time.

While at the University of Illinois, Dan Perantoni blossomed into a world-class solo performer and teacher. He premiered many new works for solo tuba, recorded his first solo album, and played in and recorded with many world-class ensembles including the Matteson-Phillips Tubajazz Consort, the Ringling Bros. Circus Band, the St. Louis Symphony, the Spoleto USA Brass Quintet, and the Saint Louis Brass Quintet. On campus and beyond, he also played with the Illinois Brass Quintet, the Medicare 7, 8 or 9 Dixieland Jazz Band, and the Champaign/Urbana Symphony Orchestra. As a pioneer in tuba development, he became associated with Custom Music as a clinician and consultant in 1970. For over 40 years he has collaborated with Robert Tucci designing many tubas, mouthpieces, and accessories for the tuba.

While at Illinois, Perantoni wrote influential articles on the contemporary tuba for *The Instrumentalist* magazine and the *Brass Bulletin*, had the Hal Leonard *Master Solos* book of intermediate solos for tuba and piano published, and honed his legendary teaching skills with many students who went on to prominent positions in the tuba world. One of his most notable achievements early into his career at Illinois was collaborating with Harvey Phillips and others organizing and launching T.U.B.A (later to become I.T.E.A.). He served as the first president of the organization and hosted the first national conference at the University of Illinois shortly after the first international conference at Indiana University in 1973.



**Dan and Harvey Phillips at the Tuba Ranch (1974)**

### **OTHER VOICES**

#### **R. WINSTON MORRIS, Professor of Music, Tennessee Technological University at Cookeville**

Where do you start documenting the accomplishments and attributes of one of your best friends who you've known for 45 years? Dan Perantoni and I met in Chicago at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in December 1967 or 68 (who's counting?). In those days the Midwest was held at the Sherman House Hotel, which was without question one of the worst hotels that ever existed. I was hanging with my former teacher, Bill Bell, and meeting up with Rich Matteson who was just getting on board with the Meinl-Weston instruments. I had certainly heard of Dan before we met and we became instant buddies. As the years went by we established a very close relationship. He visited Tennessee Tech on numerous occasions both for professional and personal reasons. I was one of his biggest fans from day one and visited with him in Champaign-Urbana, Tempe and, now, Bloomington. As a Bill Bell student and I. U. graduate, I was of the opinion that Dan was the perfect person to assume the tuba studio duties after Bell and Harvey Phillips. Simply stated Dan is solid as a rock! We have participated in so many enterprises together I can't even keep track. The highlights include being the tuba section along with Harvey in the TUBAJAZZ CONSORT, having him as principal tuba in SYMPHONIA, and working together as co-authors on the 2nd edition of the *Tuba Source Book*. Dan has always been one of my absolute favorite tuba players. His phenomenal sound, incredible technique and unerring consistency are just the foundation to the musicality that is always manifesting in his performance. For fifteen years (1976-91) we performed with the TUBAJAZZ group all over the world. Every time we performed I was getting a free lesson from Dan and Harvey! When I say Dan is "solid as a rock" I'm speaking of the fact that if Dan says he is going to do something he does it when and how it's supposed to be done. The consistency of the degree to which Dan "takes care of business" is one of his strongest attributes. Ask any of his colleagues who have worked closely with him over the years and the dozens of successful students he has had about his loyalty to them and his availability when they needed him and you will get a sense about exactly how "solid" he is. He is unquestionably one of the most successful studio teachers anywhere in the world. He more than deserves any and all recognition and honors that can be bestowed on him. If you want to know what it takes to be successful as a person and as a professional, follow the example that Dan Perantoni sets every day of his life. For me, he is THE MAN!



**Dan, Arnold Jacobs, and Fred Marrick (Courtesy of Custom Music Company)**

**JERRY YOUNG, Professor of Music, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. Studied with Dan Perantoni at the University of Illinois, 1977–80**

I met Dan Perantoni at the Custom Music booth at an MENC conference in Wichita, Kansas in the spring of 1972 in my sophomore year of college. After talking to him for just a few minutes and listening to him play, I knew that working with him would be “the next step” for me after undergraduate school and some teaching experience. He came to the University of Arkansas for a recital and masterclass during my last semester in 1974, and that experience sealed the deal in my own mind. In the spring of 1977, I was elated to get a letter of acceptance to study with him at the University of Illinois beginning in the fall. From the first day I arrived in Urbana, he took the reins of my professional development and career plans, guided my development as a musician and tubist, networked connections for me with the right people, and, to sum it all up, made the life and career I have enjoyed over the past 30+ years possible. At the same time, he opened doors of opportunity for my wife, Barbara, as a collaborative pianist, featuring her with virtually every famous guest artist who came to Illinois during our years there and often on his own recitals. With Mr. P., while musical expression and excellence is critical, at the bottom line, it’s all about family, truth, and sincerity. His friends and students are in a very real way his extended family, as readers should correctly surmise from the things written about him by representatives from that cadre in this article. There is nothing fake about Dan Perantoni—it’s all real. Another of my former teachers once said, “Spend your life helping other people, and you’ll have everything you could ever want.” Dan Perantoni lives that credo every day, and I certainly can’t imagine that he is wanting for anything. He has all of the things that make a human being truly rich, and, as many other writers have expressed in these pages, a model that all musicians, whether student, professional, or amateur, should study and consider as they pursue their own goals. Mr. P. has made a difference with his teaching and artistry in the past and present, and I fully expect him to continue to do so well into the future.



**Harvey, Jerry, and Dan (Courtesy of Jerry Young)**

### **OTHER VOICES**

**JOHN MUELLER, Associate Professor of Trombone and Euphonium, University of Memphis. Studied with Dan Perantoni at the University of Illinois, 1976–80**

The images that stay with me from my formal study with Dan fall into three categories:

**The Determined Teacher:** Dan constantly urged me to move air or play expressively or stay focused. Always urging me to play musically, he often encouraged visualizations of women as motivation. I grew technically and musically from this constant high expectation. He willed me through the preparation of my successful Army Band audition.

**The Mentor:** Dan monitored our demeanor and often gave fatherly advice when non-musical situations negatively influenced us. He recognized the whole person-musician in each of us.

**The Performer:** Dan constantly inspired us with regular solo and ensemble performances to include the faculty brass quintet, Tuba Jazz Consort, and Medicare 6, 7, 8 Dixieland Band.

**Fond memory:** Several students riding back from Harvey Phillips' Octubafest party at I. U. in Dan's car after eating copious amounts of brats and beans.





**Dan & Larry Campbell at MENC in April 1978 (Courtesy of Charles McAdams)**

**CHARLES MCADAMS, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Northwest Missouri State University  
Studied with Dan Perantoni at the University of Illinois, 1980–81**

I studied with Dan Perantoni when I was working on my master's degree in music education at the University of Illinois, but I have continued to be a "student" of Dan's throughout my professional career. Whether it was in a lesson, watching him conduct a masterclass, or in recital, every encounter with Dan Perantoni is an opportunity to learn.

His ability to quickly diagnose problems and recommend a "cure" for students is truly amazing. He is a firm believer in the power of the mind. He demonstrated time and time again how important winning the "inner game" is to achieve your full potential. He could be very hard on students that were not prepared or did not practice, but he was also incredibly gracious and fun to be around if you put in the effort and produced. Dan Perantoni has the ability to do what only the great teachers can: help you achieve at levels you did not believe were possible.

He helped put into perspective my personal and professional goals and develop a plan for achieving them. Dan Perantoni is truly the "complete" music teacher as his pedagogical prowess is only surpassed by his jaw-dropping technical and musical ability. He truly is "the man" or "Dan the Man" as I, and many others, would refer to him as there is no one else like him. His influence is immense and I consider myself very fortunate to have had the opportunity to study with him as a graduate student and to call him a colleague and friend as a professional educator.

**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY**

In 1982, two positions opened up at Arizona State University: Professor of Trumpet and Professor of Euphonium/Tuba. At the time, the Arizona State University School of Music was growing fast and was funded well. The Midwest states were suffering from funding cuts and declining populations as the Sunbelt housing boom was beginning. Both David Hickman and Daniel Perantoni from the University of Illinois applied for and won their respective positions. For Perantoni, it was a huge move to an entirely new situation. His predecessor at ASU, Raymond Nutaitis, had been the tuba instructor at the University of Illinois the year before his arrival and was an Eastman student a year ahead of him, as well. As Mark Nelson recalls, during the audition process, Perantoni told Nutaitis that he would NOT be following him into his next career (Mr. Nutaitis resigned his position to go into real estate sales). The graduate population of tuba and euphonium students had been established only a couple of years earlier and the undergraduate population was growing. Dan immediately began establishing a *Tuba Mecca* at Arizona State University and was able to attract many great players who

went on to prominent professional positions. His influence continued to be increasingly worldwide as he and David Hickman (with others) founded the Summit Brass Ensemble and Summit Brass Institute while teaching at Arizona State. He also began working as an artist/teacher at the Banff Center for the Arts summer festival. While in Arizona, Perantoni also subbed for the Phoenix Symphony, played in the Del Sol Faculty Brass Quintet, recorded and premiered solo works, and widened his influence with many masterclasses and solo recitals around the world. During his time at ASU he was made an honorary life member of ITEA.



**Perantoni and Barb McGill at ASU Octubafest (1985 or 1986) (Courtesy of Michael Colburn)**

### **OTHER VOICES**

#### **DAVID HICKMAN, Regents Professor of Trumpet, Arizona State University**

I first met Dan in 1974 when I interviewed for the trumpet job at the University of Illinois. He made me feel very comfortable and was my mentor during my eight years there. I joined the Saint Louis Brass Quintet in 1975. When we needed a new tuba player a year later, I immediately recommended Dan for the spot. Everyone agreed that he was the best player we could hope for, and his ability to keep rehearsals and travel upbeat cinched it. Likewise, when the quintet discussed my wild idea about forming Summit Brass (in 1984), Dan's encouragement and support made it happen.

Dan and I assumed professorships at Arizona State University in 1982. His presence on the faculty brought a great deal of respect to the brass department, and he continued to be my mentor, friend, and inspiration. His positive energy and humor always made any program or project fun. We were sorry to see him leave ASU, but the job at Indiana University was ideal for him. Fortunately, I have been able to keep in constant touch with him through the hundreds of concerts we did together with Summit Brass. Although he jokes about getting older, his energy and performance ability has never changed since I met him nearly forty years ago. He remains my hero!

#### **KEVIN STEES, Professor of Tuba and Euphonium, James Madison University**

#### **Studied with Dan Perantoni at the University of Illinois 1979–83, Arizona State University 1983–85**

"So what is it you want to do with your life?," Mr. P asked me. "I want to be a professional tuba player. I want to learn to play the tuba really well," I answered. Then with that all too familiar smile of his, right before he

told you how it really should be, he said, "Well, I'm not really interested in great tuba players, but I am interested in great musicians!" Then he said, "Okay, now put down your horn and sing it again for me. This time like you really mean it. Like a musician!" That exchange I had with Mr. P over 30 years ago, still guides my performing and teaching to this day. It is an amazing thing, for the most part I never really looked at him as a tuba player, but as the absolutely brilliant musician he still is today. His passion for expression and artistry is something I hope I have been successful instilling in my own students. Thank you Mr. P. for your generous and warm spirit, unwavering musical standards, commitment to the craft and inspiring musicianship!

**MARK NELSON, Chair of Performing Arts, Pima Community College. Studied with Dan Perantoni at Arizona State University from 1982–85**

By a curious twist of fate I ended up being Dan Perantoni's first doctoral student at Arizona State University when he arrived in 1982. I was completing my Master of Music degree in tuba performance with Raymond Nutaitis at ASU the previous semester when I applied for the doctoral program at the University of Illinois to study with Dan. I was accepted there with a full scholarship. However, Ray ended up resigning and Dan came to Arizona so I transferred my application back to Arizona State and ended up studying with Mr. P. for three years receiving my DMA in 1985.

I have many fond memories studying with Mr. P. at ASU and for two consecutive summers at the Banff Center for the Arts in Canada. He was a demanding teacher but kind and full of humor and was always more than just a teacher—he was also a mentor, a second father, and later, a friend and colleague. I never worked so hard in my life because I wanted so much to learn from him and earn his respect as a performer. I remember in one lesson I was technically proficient but in his words "lacked the passion and emotion of the music." He looked at me with a twinkle in his eye and said something like "remember the love you have for your girlfriend? Play the music like that!" It not only worked in the lesson and from then on but I have also been married to that woman for the last 26 years. He always had purpose in each lesson. He was intimate with the physical details of how to play well including relaxing the body, which really helped me with the high register and more efficient breathing. I think his hand pushed down my shoulder so many times to relax me that I was getting a dent in it! I bought my first F tuba in 1982 from him, and that changed my life. He knew the entire repertoire intimately: solo, chamber music, and orchestral and was fearless in his own playing no matter what the challenges of the music. I learned more in five minutes of just listening to him play than with hours of my own practice. He was generous with his time despite the fact that several of us graduate students were full time public school teachers and could not come for lessons until late in the afternoon. After I started teaching at the University of Vermont during my last year at ASU, Dan arranged with the administration for me to finish my last semester of lessons via videotapes we sent back and forth and for me being allowed to record my last required recital in Vermont in lieu of having to play it on campus. He always went the extra mile for his students and we are all so much richer for it. I grew much as a musician but just as importantly, I grew up to be a man through his tutelage. To this day, I have nothing but praise and respect for Mr. P.

**COL. MICHAEL COLBURN, Director, "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Band. Studied with Dan Perantoni at Arizona State University 1984–87**

I was a junior in college when I started studying with Dan Perantoni, at a time in my life when my main goal was to win a position in one of the premiere military bands in Washington, D. C. When I queried the principal euphonium players in those bands for teacher recommendations, Dan's name was one of the few that appeared on everyone's list. I desperately wanted to impress "Mr. P.," so I spent the summer before I went to ASU honing my technical skills on etudes and barnburner solos. Shortly after lessons started, however, I suspected I had been wasting my time, for we spent my entire first semester working on the 150 melodies in the "Art of Phrasing" section of the Arban book. My instructions were simple: sing the tune, buzz the tune, play the tune. Over and over, week after week, the assignment was the same, and eventually I began to question the wisdom of Mr. P.'s approach. When I finally dared to ask if he didn't share my concern that I wasn't really improving my technique with his buzz/sing/play method, Mr. P. told me that I already had more than enough technique to win an audition, but that nobody was going to hire me if I didn't have a beautiful sound and the ability to shape a phrase. I'm not sure that I fully believed him at the time, but I continued to follow his advice and eventually began to hear a real difference in my playing. With Mr. P. the focus was always on what came out of the horn, and he seemed irritated whenever I wanted to talk about my embouchure, mouthpiece placement, or some other technical aspect of playing. I vividly remember one lesson in which I was suffering from a nasty canker sore and complained that my chops just didn't feel good. "Feel good? FEEL good?!?" was his incredulous reply. "Hell, I haven't felt good in years! If you want to be a professional musician, you've got to learn how to sound good no matter how you feel." This may be the single most valuable piece of advice I have ever received, and I can't begin to recall the number of times I have shared it with students and fellow professional musicians. I have no doubt that without the wisdom, guidance, and artistry of Dan Perantoni, I would not be the musician I am today.



**Perantoni and Nancy Colburn at Keystone Colorado, Summit Brass Institute (Courtesy of Michael Colburn)**

**JOANNA ROSS HERSEY, Assistant Professor of Tuba and Euphonium, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Studied with Dan Perantoni at Arizona State University 1989–91**

Two things stand out in my memory of Mr. P. from those days in the Arizona sunshine; how often the phone rang in his office during the lessons, and the first tuba-euphonium rehearsal I attended as a nervous young freshman. As one of the first young women in the studio, my arrival caused Mr. P. some alarm regarding the general atmosphere during rehearsal. To my embarrassment, he spent the whole time trying to keep himself and all the rest of the studio from their usual language and bodily functions with the repeated comment, "Gentlemen, there is a lady present!" Fortunately everyone soon relaxed and life went on as normal with Mr. P. at the helm.

Mr. P. is a warm, encouraging and rigorous teacher, who honed my skills and pushed me beyond my limits, so much so that I was only with him two years before I won my first position. One of the best pieces of advice I received from him was about the importance of focusing on winning a job in this tough field. His belief in the importance of "having a place to hang your hat" kept me moving toward that goal. Even after leaving school, meeting Mr. P. at conferences was enough to keep me focused on doing him proud and being sure that my career held up his reputation! That short time in the environment that he created gave me what I needed to form a lifelong career.

**THOMAS BOUGH, Director of Athletic Bands, Northern Illinois University  
Studied with Dan Perantoni at Arizona State University 1990–96**

I have lots of memories of Dan Perantoni. I had made arrangements to audition for him (and the ASU studio) during my last year of undergraduate study while he was on the road with Summit Brass. As I sat in the audience for the concert, basking in the incredible sounds created by these wonderful musicians, I was so entranced by the music that I forgot to get nervous. After the concert, I grabbed my horn and played for him. I don't remember what I played, but it must have been okay, for as we talked he invited me to come out to the studio the following year to start my Master's. I remember thinking "time to get serious." Over the next few years, I practiced harder and longer than I ever imagined in order to catch up to the amazing group of musicians who had assembled in his studio to study with the great "Mr. P." He truly had a profound impact on my career, musically and otherwise. He suggested that I take as many graduate theory and history classes as possible with the most challenging professors, which put my academic career on a solid foundation. I vividly remember playing the Hindemith *Tuba Sonata* for him in a lesson, sometime during the course of my DMA program. He listened intently for the entire piece without saying a word, which was unusual. At the end of the

piece he said, "That was (expletive) great! That is better than I play that stuff." Whether his statement was true or not it was a wonderfully affirming thing to say. I treasured that moment as a point of arrival, an indicator of taking a step into the larger world of music. Thanks Mr. P. for the music you shared, the encouragement, and the opportunity you provided to me.

**TIM NORTHCUT, Professor of Tuba and Euphonium, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Studied with Dan Perantoni at Arizona State University 1991–94**

I first met Mr. P. in January of 1973 as a guest artist for Winston Morris and his "annual" Tennessee Tech Tuba Symposium. Almost twenty years later is when I began my formal studies at Arizona State University. Although I have had many music lessons and masterclasses from Mr. P., these two simple "life" lessons stick out in my mind. 1. Taking life too serious: one evening in a local establishment you told me that I was taking life much too serious and that I needed to relax and enjoy myself *especially* while I am playing the tuba. Although I struggle with this and admit that I still have a long way to go, Mr. P.'s words that evening were powerful and that was exactly what I needed to hear at the time! 2. It's okay to be passionate about something other than the tuba: Mr. P. being of the Italian ancestry and raised liking good food and wine, rather he realized it or not, there were several lessons in your kitchen cooking spaghetti and meatballs. Through witnessing the gratification on your face and our laid-back conversations, I learned that there is more to life than just the tuba. By the way tuba-euphonium friends, the secret is in Iron Chef Perantoni's sauce!

Thanks for being my teacher, mentor, colleague, and friend, but, more so, thanks for believing in me and the words of encouragement over the years.

**ENRIQUE "HANK" FELDMAN, Founder and Director of Education, F.A.M.E. Foundation, Film Composer. Studied with Dan Perantoni in high school from 1982–88 and later as a student at the University of Arizona commuting to Arizona State when his university had no tuba teacher**

In a lesson he was attempting to teach me the difference between an accent in a Berlioz excerpt as compared to one in a Wagner excerpt. He had me sing it, buzz it, and play it. He played it for me, but I still wasn't quite getting it. He then put his hands on my legs...relax, not what you're thinking...and showed the difference in pressure by pushing down heavily and in a sustained fashion for the Wagner and with more of a jabbing gesture for the Berlioz...I got it! I learned so much from Dan, both musically and as a person. In this case he taught me that you have to be able to say the same things a hundred different ways. On a lighter note, because I studied at his home, I walked into a lesson one Sunday morning and there was Mr P. in shorts...no shirt...a shocking amount of very curly chest hairs and a pirate chest full of gold necklaces hanging around his neck. The good news is that there was no body odor.

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY**

In 1994 the legendary Harvey Phillips was set to retire from Indiana University. Who could possibly replace such a teacher? It turned out that Dan Perantoni was perfectly positioned to assume that role and became Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at Indiana University where he still teaches to this day. During his tenure at I. U., Perantoni continued to reap accolades such as receiving the Indiana University School of Music Teaching Excellence Recognition Award in 1998 and ITEA's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000. In 1995, he was a founding member of Symphonia, America's Large Tuba-Euphonium Ensemble. He also continues touring with the St. Louis Brass Quintet, playing with the I. U. Faculty Dixieland Band, and the I. U. Summer Festival Orchestra, acting as visiting tubist for the Indianapolis Symphony, and premiering new works.

**ANTHONY R. KNIFFEN, Principal Tuba, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Studied with Dan Perantoni 1987–89 Arizona State University, 1994–2001, Indiana University Toured with Summit Brass with Mr. P., substitute for Mr. P. for two sabbaticals at Indiana University**

In my earlier, more naive years, I often wondered what the secret to Dan's success was. I thought he was just demanding. His assignments for lessons and excerpt class as well as the audition repertoire for ensembles seemed brutal—freshmen have never been coddled! He once made me play *Fountains of Rome* thirty times in a row on the morning of an audition, asking for roughly five things to be better each time. Studying from him was like the proverbial "drinking from a fire hose." But maybe other teachers had their students learn the Ring Cycle, Prokofiev and Bruckner on the F tuba just for fun, too.

Recently, I had the opportunity to survey his *curriculum vitae*—where does anyone find the time to do all of this stuff, let alone the ability? I have always thought of him as my mentor and friend, but now the sheer volume of his contributions blow me away. It's time to thank him publicly for a few of these things that have

helped me personally without running on. Thank you, Dan, for the summers at the Keystone Brass Institute and the amazingly helpful influence from the quality of Summit Brass, the Hirsbrunner York copy, your support and friendship for twenty-plus years, the opportunities you have given me, all the great mouthpieces (we know you're proud!), the *Tuba Source Book*, the PT-10, the parties, the great solo albums, all the commissions and premieres which have advanced our instrument, the quality of scholarship in ITEA, etc., *ad infinitum*.

Getting old is difficult for nearly all it seems. Dan is in a rare class of people I know who seems to have found the fountain of youth. Like my father, he has gotten better and better, healthier and happier, as life goes on. Of course, his hairline has improved with age, too! Judy is probably the biggest part of the secret to his success, but part another big part of it is his work ethic and optimism, and I know he thanks God for it all.

**DAVID SALTZMAN, Principal Tuba, Toledo Symphony, Adjunct Associate Professor of Tuba and Euphonium, Bowling Green State University. Studied with Dan Perantoni beginning in 1994 at Indiana University**

I was fortunate enough to be a student at I. U. during the transition between Mr. Phillips and Mr. P. It seemed to be an impossible task to try and fill the void Mr. Phillips was leaving upon his retirement. We as students took our role as advocates for the position very seriously and organized multiple meetings with the Dean to assure we could entice Mr. P. to come to I. U. Mr. P. is bigger than life, doing everything on a grand scale. I remember vividly his "audition master-class" before he was offered the job. The entire studio, myself included, were beyond excited by the immediate effects he had on everyone who played for him that morning. This carried through after he got the job, where his lessons always seemed to leave me wanting to learn and try his new (and more effective) ideas. Every lesson began with a "So, how's your girlfriend son?" and ended with me wanting to spend more hours locked away in the tuba basement (where no girlfriends wanted to be). Mr. P. is a master at motivating, encouraging and creating opportunities for his students. He went the extra mile for me and my career many times as a student and young professional and has continued to be there to help encourage and inspire me now nearly 15 years after I graduated. I was excited then, and even prouder now, to have been a member of his studio and to be able to call "The Godfather of the Tuba" my Professor.

**JAY HUNSBERGER, Principal Tuba, Sarasota Orchestra; Professor of Tuba and Euphonium, University of South Florida. Studied with Dan Perantoni at Indiana University 1996-98**

Studying with Mr. P. as a working tubist and teacher was one of the smartest decisions of my life. His ability to quickly get to the issues I was dealing with coupled with his clear communication was immensely helpful. He has such a simple, consistent approach: the consummate example of both player and teacher. He created a relaxed environment in which I could easily share my thoughts and concerns with him without fear of "looking dumb."

Observing Mr. P. work with his students gave me great insight into his approach as a teacher. He has a unique ability to gently guide each student down a path of self-realization so that he/she discovers the pros and cons of their own performance (all the while being led by his strong hand). The depth of the lessons learned are consequently much stronger for the student than they would be if they were simply told what they did wrong or needed to improve.

Listening to Dan play is *always* a lesson in ease and consistency. Whether he's sitting in the St. Louis Brass or playing a solo he is supremely relaxed and employs an effortless approach. He is one of the few great teachers who really practices what he teaches and the results of that are incredibly beneficial for his students.

A real gentleman with a prankster's glint in his eye! I'm immensely fortunate to be able to call him a mentor and friend. The level of respect he has among hundreds of students and colleagues is greatly deserved!

**SEAN GREENE, Professor of Tuba, Carson-Newman College and Lincoln Memorial University. Studied with Dan Perantoni at Indiana University in the 1990s**

Mr. Perantoni was my teacher at Indiana University in the early 1990s. When I came to I. U., I had practically zero exposure to the wealth of orchestral, solo and chamber literature, and I recall in a very short time of studying with Mr. P. I was bombarded (in a wonderful way) with scores and recordings to pore over and work to master. I felt like I had a lot of work to catch up on as nineteen year-old, but something about Mr. P.'s teaching style made me want to work ever harder. While lessons were challenging, Mr. P. always had a funny joke at the ready when frustration set in and was very helpful at putting tuba playing into perspective when it came to the business of making music.

In addition to the exposure to new ideas, instruments, and literature, my time studying with Mr. P. is particularly memorable because I met my future wife Missy while studying at Indiana. Mr. P. knew Missy and would always ask about her before lessons, figuring if things were going ok with the girlfriend, things were ok.

I lost my father to a heart attack shortly after leaving I. U. and Mr. Perantoni was particularly kind when he heard of my loss. Mr. P. and my fellow students at I. U. were and still are some of my best friends. Fifteen years later, I rarely pick up a Rochut book that I do not think of Dan Perantoni. Thanks, Mr. P.!

**CHRIS LEE, Principal Tuba, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Studied with Dan Perantoni at Indiana University 1998-2001**

Simply put—I doubt I would have a professional tuba position if it were not for my time studying with Mr. P. He was a great teacher but also a mentor and as close to a family member as one could be. In tuba lessons—he really changed my perception of what I was capable of doing. He did not accept excuses and pushed me every week further than I had thought possible. The tuba studio was a highly competitive and supportive environment, and we always looked forward to our weekly rep class. We set goals at my first lesson and everything we did was with my goals in mind. There was no “what did you practice this week?” type of mentality. I pattern my teaching style after my experience at Indiana University, and I often wish I could go back and re-enroll as a student.



**Mr P. masterclass at the University of Manitoba with Steph Davis on tuba (Courtesy of Chris Lee)**

**ALEXANDER LAPINS, Tuba/Euphonium Faculty, Northern Arizona University. Studied with Dan Perantoni at Indiana University 2002–06**

I had the luck to be a doctoral student with Professor Daniel Perantoni, and spent a couple of years as his teaching assistant. Having grown up in Virginia, I had attended many of the Army Band conferences when I was young, and it always impressed me how many featured performers listed Mr. P. as their teacher. Like his teacher, Arnold Jacobs, Mr. P. is an expert in seeing what each student needs and guiding them on their own path. In my case, Mr. P. was focused on helping me grow into a competent, confident professional. I learned plenty from him about tuba playing, but I learned a lot more about communication, imagination and the psychology needed to create and sustain a career in music. What amazed me about his teaching was how

much he prioritized positivity. For Mr. P., competence and a positive attitude are interconnected. For him, excellence and happiness are not just habits, they are a unified lifestyle. His generosity to his students is legendary. He always had time for each one of us, busy though he was. Finally, I need to remark on how incredible it was to hear him demonstrate musical ideas in lessons. He makes technique seem so simple and phrasing so incredibly important. Mr. P. is tremendously inspirational. I feel very lucky for my time with him—musically, professionally and personally.

### **TONY HALLOIN, U. S. Navy Band. Studied with Dan Perantoni at Indiana University**

Mr. Perantoni, to me, is quite an anomaly. I don't think I've met someone who is both as intense as he is but also as relaxed. This quality is evidenced in his playing where the expression that comes out of the bell is powerful, moving, and tasteful, yet he just sits there behind the tuba, making it look incredibly easy.

When I went to study with him for a Master's degree, I was coming off a somewhat disappointing finish to my undergraduate work, where I hadn't really shined as a player. Despite having some good qualities in my playing, I severely lacked in confidence, consistency and tended to over-think everything. Mr. P. made everything seem so simple in lessons. He would say, "Blow from the lips," followed by an air pattern (with musical intensity) on whatever piece I was working on. He had me sing, buzz, and play simple etudes to get the inner ear working. With me, he had a way of tricking me into *how to think* as a performer, where I would simply play what I wanted to hear without judging what was coming out of the bell.

He also had this unerring way of instilling confidence in his students. This was an incredible help for me, as I struggled with nerves in pressure situations. Ultimately, I can't thank him enough for his continued support and encouragement. I find him to be a truly inspiring teacher and musician.

## **V. THE FUTURE**

As Dan Perantoni celebrates his 70th birthday this year, he has good reason to pause and reflect on such a remarkable career spanning nearly 50 years and his influence on generations of musicians. The testimonials and reflections in this article are but a sampling of countless other students, friends, and colleagues that respect and admire this man. The authors are sure Mr. P. has no plans on slowing down anytime soon and as time marches on, we hope to see Mr. P. for many years to come in master classes, on the Internet, at our conferences, and in recitals and concerts.



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### **Table 1: Significant Solo Recordings**

*Perantoni Plays Perantoni* (Mark Custom Recordings CD2433, 1999)

*Daniel in the Lion's Den* (Summit Records DCD 163, 1993)



*Tuba N' Spice* (Mark Records MRS 37879, 1982)

*Sterling Brass* (Crystal Records S394, 1978)

*Perantoni and Karp Perform Works for Tuba and Piano* (University Brass Recording Series SN-101, 1973)

### **Table 2: Major Publications**

*Guide to the Tuba Repertoire: The New Tuba Source Book*, with Winston Morris. Indiana University Press. 2008.

*Master Solos* (intermediate solos for tuba and piano). Hal Leonard. 1976.

"Brass Ensembles: Opportunities for the Tubist," *The Instrumentalist*. December 1988.

"Tuba Talk, Part 2," *The Instrumentalist*. December 1983.

"Tuba Talk, Part 1," *The Instrumentalist*. November 1983.

"Contemporary Systems and Trends of the Tuba," *Brass Bulletin*. 1974.

"Contemporary Systems and Trends of the Tuba," *The Instrumentalist*. 1973.

### **Table 3: Major awards**

ITEA Lifetime Achievement Award

Indiana University School of Music Teaching Excellence Recognition Award

Summit Brass Outstanding Service and Support Award

National Association of Jazz Educators Award for Outstanding Service (3 times)

TUBA (ITEA) President's Award

### **Table 4: Major ensembles**

Symphonia

Summit Brass

St. Louis Brass Quintet

Matteson-Phillips Tubajazz Consort

Spoletto U.S.A. Brass Quintet

Netherlands Ballet and Opera Orchestra

Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra

United States Army Band, "Pershing's Own"

San Antonio Symphony Orchestra

### **NOTES**

1. Much of Dan Perantoni's early history and career was supplied by himself in an email to the authors on December 7, 2010.
2. Other information about Mr. P. was found on his Curriculum Vitae at [www.danielperantoni.com](http://www.danielperantoni.com).
3. All testimonials, stories, photos, and collegial statements were gathered in a six-week period from mid-November 2010 to early January 2011. The authors sent out a specific questionnaire via email. Some responses were edited for grammar and/or length.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Dr. Mark A. Nelson** has been Chair of Performing Arts at Pima Community College since 2000. Previous appointments include Professor of Music (tenured) at Millikin University and Associate Professor of Music (tenured) at the University of Vermont. He has been the Editor of *New Materials* for the *ITEA Journal* for over 20 years and has appeared as a soloist, clinician, adjudicator, and lecturer in venues across the U. S., Canada, Japan, Australia, and England. He has two critically acclaimed solo tuba CD recordings, hundreds of published reviews, many articles on music, a dozen tuba-euphonium ensemble arrangements, and a book. He is currently in his third term as the elected V. P. of Professional Development for the Arizona Music Educators Association.

**Dr. Jerry A. Young** has been Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire since 1983 and is a former member of the faculty at the Interlochen Arts Camp. He served two terms as editor-in-chief of the *ITEA Journal*, a former member of the Board of Directors of ITEA, and is a member of the Board of Directors for the Leonard Falcone International Euphonium and Tuba Festival. Dr. Young has appeared across the U. S., Europe, and Japan as a soloist, chamber musician, clinician, lecturer, and adjudicator. He was selected as the 1999 Distinguished Alumnus of the University of Arkansas Department of Music.

