

A “pianist-advocate” for wolves? For H el ene Grimaud, it’s all part of a bigger objective.

“It’s a matter of basic respect,” she says. “It doesn’t matter if it’s for another species, another being with a different religion or different race or respect for the habitat that we all share. If you speak of wide-ranging predators and how to preserve them, you have to speak about habitat conservation.... and so this is the idea that wolves are, I don’t like to use the word but, used as really a keystone for larger conservation efforts.... Basically, if you work to save a large predator you, without oversimplifying, pretty much save everything that lives below the animal on the food chain.”

#### TONY MORRIS

As all who give and give back to their community know, the gift is in the giving. Those who give their time, money and expertise are likely to get just as much in return.

Tony Morris is part of the musical fabric of Central Texas. The Austin-based

guitarist performs and teaches in the area, and hosts the internationally broadcast radio program “Classical Guitar Alive.” He also performs regularly in Central Texas hospitals, nursing homes and hospices.

Tony Morris did not originally view these non-traditional performing venues as a means and place to give back. He freely admits to seeing them as safe places where he could hone his performing skills, and primarily to steady his live performance nerves, fears and anxieties.

Now, after years of performing in nursing homes and hospices, Morris seems practically addicted to giving back. The venues where he and his colleagues perform are difficult; light and hope are measured in milliseconds, if they can be measured at all. How do they know if their music is getting through? Sometimes, they might hear about it later from family members or from the facility staff. But when they’re in their musical zone, it’s not uncommon for the musicians to get the quiet notion that their musical presence is being felt by their audience.

In my conversations with Midori, Yefim Bronfman, H el ene Grimaud and Lang

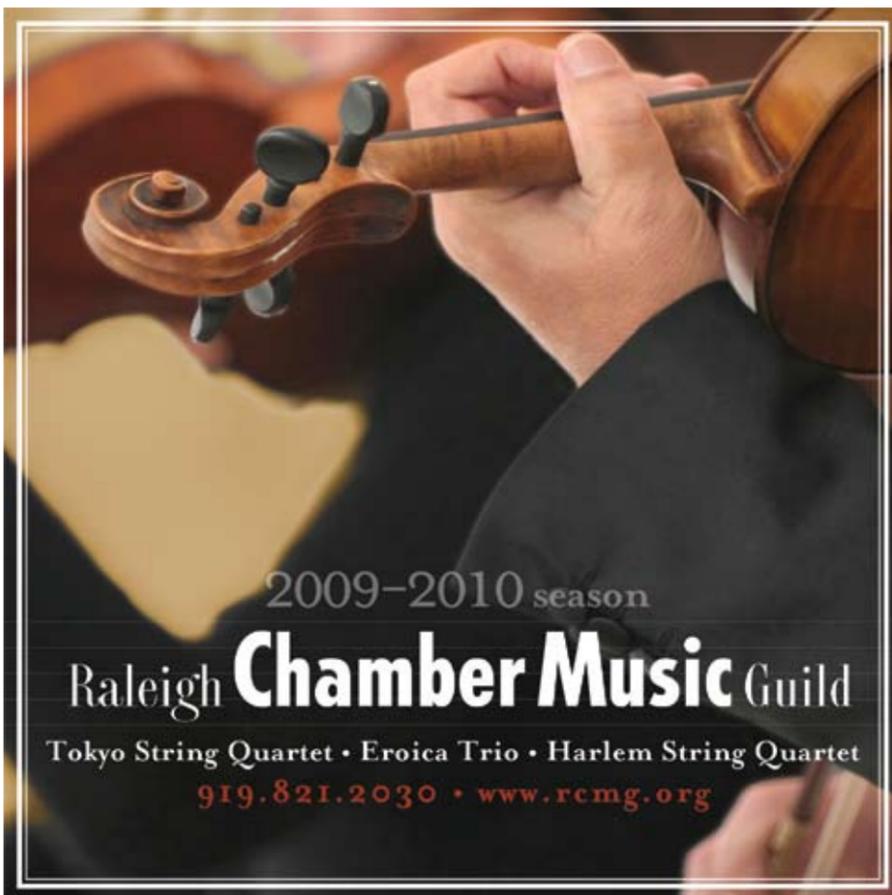
Lang about their giving back activities, they responded quickly, without need to contemplate. The words just flowed.

But whether they’re serving children, passing on a love for music, creating bright musical futures for the next generation or playing Mozart, these performers are passionate and driven to be more than just musicians.

There’s certainly a place, I hope, for us to honor these musicians – and especially all musicians who give at the office and never believe their musical work is done: even after the hall lights have been turned off, the doors locked and we’ve all gone home.

*David Srebnik produces Virtuoso Voices, an interview service for classical music radio stations. Along with Cynthia May, he wrote and produced “365 Holidays with the Canadian Brass,” heard nationally on Public Radio stations and Sirius-XM in December 2008. Musical organizations mentioned above and organizations where classical musicians give back:*

- **Young Strings of the Triangle**  
*www.ncsymphony.org/education/*
- **Partners in Performance (PRP)**  
*www.pipmusic.org*
- **Orchestra Residencies Program**  
*www.gotomidori.com*
- **Lang Lang International Music Foundation**  
*www.thelanglangfoundation.org*
- **Wolf Conservation Center**  
*www.nywolf.org*
- **Classical Guitar Alive**  
*www.guitaralive.org*
- **Classical Action** – *classical musicians raising funds for HIV/AIDS service, education, and prevention programs across the country.*  
*www.classicalaction.org*
- **Shropshire Music Foundation** – *The mission is to redress psychosocial trauma, advance emotional health, develop scholastic achievement, foster ethnic tolerance, promote peace, and improve the quality of life for war-affected children and adolescents through the establishment of on-going music education and performance programs.*  
*www.shropshirefoundation.org*



A lesson with student Jason Wainwright.

# Paul Randall

## A Lifestyle in a Trumpet Case

By Jeannie Mellinger

Remember your first job? Maybe you slung hash or worked in a stockroom or babysat for the neighbors. You probably didn’t think of your initial entr ee into the adult world of work as a permanent gig. Unless you auditioned with a major symphony orchestra in the spring of your junior year in high school. At age seventeen. And then won that audition. Maybe then you would consider that first job the beginning of a brilliant career.

Paul Randall grew up in Detroit where his father was a singer. “He started out as an opera singer and then became a nightclub singer,” Paul says. “He also played a few instruments – he was a pretty musical guy.” One of the instruments Paul’s father played was trumpet. Something about the instrument appealed to Paul – the gleaming surface, the way it looked in the case – really, everything about it. “I would look in that case and see glamour, excitement, music. It was like there was a whole lifestyle, sitting in that trumpet case, waiting for me.”

Paul joined his school band in the fifth grade. “My teacher, Irv Sarin, was not the normal grade school band director,” Paul says. “He had played first trumpet with the Pittsburgh Symphony for 17 years and had also played with the Israel Philharmonic for five years. I don’t really know the whole story, but somehow he ended up in Michigan teaching band in an elementary school.”

This was Paul’s first good luck. At the end of his fifth-grade school year, his parents could see he had talent and offered Paul private lessons with Sarin. “You know,” says Paul, “most people knock around with a couple of different teachers – maybe even a high school kid – until

they find the right one, but I got to start out with this amazing person. Right away, he recognized two things about me: I was talented and I was lazy. He really jumped on me from the beginning and was always pushing me to play things I wasn’t quite ready for – or at least, I thought I wasn’t ready for.”

Sarin cut Paul no slack whatever. “One Saturday, my father picked me up from my lesson. When I came out, he could tell I was upset and that I’d been crying. He asked the teacher if I was okay. ‘Sure,’ says Sarin, ‘he’s fine. It’s good for him.’”

Paul’s father did not question this at all. “He was a musician himself,” says Paul, “and he understood what my teacher meant by that. If you’re going to be successful, there are a couple of things you have to learn early on. One, you can’t show up to play something unprepared, and two, you’re going to be subjected to harsh criticism so you might as well get used to it early. By the time I was 15 or 16, you could say **anything** to me and I wouldn’t get upset.”

Sarin also had a trick or two to instill a competitive streak in Paul and help him overcome his lazy tendencies. “He’d tell me about some other student of his, about my age, and he’d say, ‘Yeah, this

guy plays this piece really well. He’s going to be much better than you.’ And I’d think, ‘What, really? Oh no, I better go home and practice!’ I wasn’t naturally a competitive person, but he sure turned me into one!”

With this rigorous training and natural talent, by the time Paul was a high school junior Sarin thought he needed experience more than he needed to continue his education. He advised Paul to write a letter to every single orchestra in America and ask if they had openings. Keeping in mind Paul’s perhaps not entirely latent lazy gene, along with the fact that this was years before home computers and word processing, it is easy to understand why Paul in no way wanted to take this on. So he used his dad’s copy of *International Musician* to find openings. Some turned him down without even hearing him, citing his lack of experience. One orchestra, however, was interested.

“I was having lunch with my parents on Saturday when a mailgram was delivered. I don’t think anyone in my family had ever received a mailgram before, so this was very exciting. It was a message from the New Orleans Symphony. It just said ‘The audition is Thursday. If you want to come, be there at 6pm.’ There was an address, and that was all. No list of works, no other information. By ‘Thursday,’ they meant, in five days. So the rest of lunch that day was me trying to convince my parents to let me do it. It was April of my junior year of high school.”

Understandably, his parents were against the idea at first. But Paul had a couple of things in his favor – he had always been pretty responsible, but more significantly, his mother had always harbored a semi-secret wish to see New Orleans. So the two of them flew down to the Crescent City; one to fulfill a travel dream, the other carrying a case that held a whole lifestyle inside.

\* \* \*

The audition went well. There were no surprises for Paul, no requested works that he didn’t know how to play. Sarin’s demanding teaching paid off. Paul made it into final rounds, but he had to catch his flight home and left New Orleans without hearing the result of the audition. “We’ll let you know,” someone told him.

A day or so later, the orchestra called when Paul was in school. The caller didn’t leave a message and didn’t call back. Paul tried from his end, but never could reach the person. This went on for two weeks. By this time, Paul figured that he didn’t get the job, but stubbornly kept calling anyway. Finally he reached the general manager who said, “oh yeah, sure, you got the job.”

Paul was completely flabbergasted. “Maybe you could tell me!” he laughs, remembering. He was supposed to start in the fall of what would have been his senior year in high school. “I did manage to graduate,” Paul says. “My mom was very involved in the schools and so they really bent over backwards to graduate me. I took lots of summer school classes before I left. This was the summer of Watergate, so mostly what we did was sit around the classroom watching the hearings. For the rest of the credit I needed, they came up with a sort of work-study with the New Orleans Symphony manager. I did graduate, but I wasn’t even there. I was in New Orleans, working!”

\* \* \*

So Paul Randall, age seventeen, not yet graduated from high school, begins his job as second trumpet in the New Orleans Symphony, 1000 miles from home, with his own car and his own apartment, green as bamboo sapling. “I just figured it out as best I could,” he shrugs. “I learned a lot of things the hard way. I opened a bank account so I could pay bills. But I’d never written a check for anything before. So when I got my first bill from the electric company, I filled out the check and mailed it in. It came back about two weeks later with a note attached: “you didn’t sign the check.” Well, I didn’t know I was supposed to sign it – I figured my name was printed at the top, so wasn’t that enough? I had no idea.”

On his own, Paul learned how to do his taxes, get his car registered, and actually sign his name to checks. He discovered that while New Orleans is a great town for eating out, the cost adds up, so he learned to economize. Were his parents nervous about their son, on his own in a city as alluring and well, slightly wicked, as the Big Easy? “They had to have been,” says Paul. It is to their enormous credit that

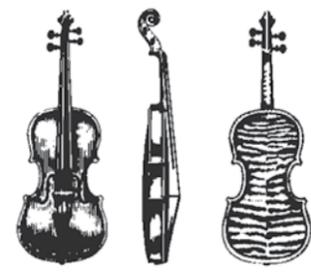
they let him work it all out himself. “You know, when you’re on your own, it’s not that bad. At least I wasn’t trying to take care of a family. If I messed up, it only affected me. I just sort of rolled with it.”

Paul was not entirely cast adrift, however. Clearly the youngest member of the orchestra by far, his colleagues took pity on him and gave him advice whenever they could. Norman Smith, the Symphony’s principal trumpet acted as a mentor. “He was young himself,” Paul says, “about thirty. He was a great guy – one of those really magnetic personalities. I hung out with him as much as I could. He taught me everything I needed to know about surviving in an orchestra. I admired him very much – he was literally my role model. I wanted to be just like him.” Smith also introduced Paul to tennis, which he still plays regularly.

New Orleans is Paul’s second piece of good fortune. Getting an orchestra job is far from easy. The number of yearly openings is far surpassed by the number of qualified and interested players. “It’s even harder with wind instruments,” Paul points out, “because those are smaller sections than say, strings. If you want to play in the Chicago Symphony, for example, you may wait 20 or 30 years for the first trumpet to retire and then you’ve got to go up against every other bugle player in the world that wants the job. Your chances aren’t that great. I was extremely lucky. I was talented, yes, but I was really lucky too. I had the right training and I was in the right place at the right time.”

Paul learned later that while there were more experienced players at his audition in New Orleans, it was the way he executed the basics that impressed the committee. “Rhythm, clarity of attack, that kind of thing was what sealed it for me, apparently,” says Paul. Was Sarin excited when he learned Paul won the audition? “I guess he was. He always thought I was destined for great things. We still talk a few times a year and every time we do we have the same conversation: why aren’t you in Philadelphia? I try to explain how competitive it is out there. He just doesn’t get it.”

After just four years with New Orleans, Paul became Principal Trumpet. His friend and mentor was taking a year’s sabbatical. “That same year,” Paul says,



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“we got a new music director – Leonard Slatkin. This was before he went to the Saint Louis Symphony. Anyway, he wanted an audition for this one-year job. I auditioned, but they hired someone else. I was runner-up. I was very disappointed.”

Still depressed and brooding, he left for his summer gig with the Chautauqua Symphony in western New York. One day during a rehearsal, he got a phone call backstage. “I was very surprised, I couldn’t imagine who would be calling me there. It was the New Orleans Symphony manager. He’s telling me that the audition winner took a job at the Met Opera and so, he says, ‘we want to give the job to you.’ So I’m standing there, shocked, and – I’ll never forget this – I’m looking out at that lake behind the hall and I’m thinking, ‘Wow! This is what I’ve always wanted.’” He was just 21 years old.

When Norman Smith decided not to return to the orchestra after his sabbatical, on the strength of Paul’s one season as principal, Slatkin decided to forego any more auditions and hired him permanently. Paul stayed in New Orleans for



An evening of tennis with friends at Kildaire Farms Raquet Club.



## Emeril's Red Beans and Rice

### Ingredients

1 lb dried red beans, rinsed; 3 tbs bacon grease; 1/4 c ham, 1 1/2 c yellow onions, 3/4 c celery, 3/4 c green bell peppers, all chopped; 1/2 tsp each salt and pepper; pinch cayenne; 3 bay leaves; 2 tbs each chopped parsley and thyme; 1/2 lb smoked sausage, 1-inch pieces; 3 tbs chopped garlic; 10 c chicken stock, or water; 4 c cooked white rice; 1/4 c chopped green onions for garnish

### Instructions

Place the beans in a large pot and cover with water by 2 inches. Let soak for 8 hours or overnight. Drain and set aside.

In a large pot, heat the bacon grease over medium-high heat. Add the ham and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the onions, celery and bell peppers to the grease in the pot. Season with the salt, pepper, and cayenne, and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are soft, about 4 minutes. Add the bay leaves, parsley, thyme and sausage, and cook, stirring, to brown the sausage and ham hocks, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the beans and stock or water, stir well, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the beans are tender and starting to thicken, about 2 hours. (Should the beans become too thick and dry, add more water, about 1/4 cup at a time.)

Remove from the heat and with the back of a heavy spoon, mash about 1/4 of the beans against the side of the pot. Continue to cook until the beans are tender and creamy, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and remove the bay leaves.

Serve over rice and garnish with green onions. *Yield: 8 servings*

fifteen years. “I would probably still be there if it weren’t for their severe money problems,” Paul says. “I loved it there; it’s a city like no other. And I had some wonderful experiences – we had a lot of big tours – in 1982 we were in Europe for an entire month.”

Paul also enjoyed playing with the New Orleans Opera. “The orchestra was part of the opera; we played for their annual six-week season. There was one conductor who came once or twice a season that I just loved – Anton Coppola, related to Francis Ford. He was a tiny little Italian guy, white-haired. So short, like a child. You would never notice him walking down the street but on the podium he was eight feet tall – commanding, intimidating, like Toscanini. He was excellent – he really knew his stuff and took no grief from anyone.

“One day we were rehearsing a Verdi opera and sometimes the parts aren’t that exciting for the players, especially during long arias. This particular day, some of the musicians weren’t really engaged; they were joking around and not taking things seriously. Coppola lost patience and yelled, ‘Look! You may not think this is very interesting, but let me tell you something. Verdi was a better musician than any of you will ever be, any day of the week. He could have written really complicated music here but he didn’t, and if he didn’t there is a reason! We’re going to do it like he wanted it! So play it right!’”

Paul and his then-girlfriend, also in the orchestra, decided to invite him over for dinner. “Actually,” says Paul, “it was her idea. I thought she was nuts, that he would never come. But he did, and we all had a great time.” This became a tradition. “Every year, there was a big party and we’d cook at someone’s house. Anton would cook too, which was really fun. To this day, some of my favorite Italian recipes are from Anton. He was a great guy.”

\* \* \*

Eventually, though, the New Orleans Symphony’s financial woes became untenable. Paul started looking elsewhere. “I won an audition at the North Carolina Symphony just at the beginning of the 1987-88 season, and I started in North

Carolina the next fall, feeling, in a way, that it was sort of a sideways move. But I was thrilled to be going anywhere that I could still play.”

The Triangle was a revelation to Paul. “The move turned out very well for me,” he says. “I got married in New Orleans and Jenny and I were beginning to think about starting a family. We lived in an apartment – real estate is so expensive in New Orleans – plus the schools are awful and the city is, let’s face it, dangerous. When we parked our car, we’d actually look up and down to see if anyone was on the street and then run for our gate as fast as we could.

“Meanwhile, in Cary where we moved, our neighbors didn’t even lock their doors, even when they were out of town. This blew our minds. Another funny thing – as everyone knows, New Orleans is very vulnerable to flooding. When it rains, you really have to pay attention – your car can float away. The first year we were here, whenever it rained, I’d still get up in the night like an idiot to check the street. Raleigh was a whole different world. Both of our daughters (high school junior Nichole and UNC-CH sophomore Grace) were born here at Rex Hospital.”

\* \* \*

Twenty years later, Paul is still happy about the way things turned out. “It’s like Willie Mays said, ‘You want me to run around this beautiful ball park and play baseball and you’re going to pay me too? I don’t have to pay you?’ Playing in an orchestra is a pretty good job. Some musicians end up jaded, but I’m not one of them. I love what I do – it’s always challenging, always interesting, always different. Playing in an orchestra is never routine.”

If there’s a downside, Paul notes, it might be this: “You can never rest on your laurels – you’re only as good as your last gig. And the trumpet, all the brass really, is so exposed. It’s so painfully obvious when you aren’t perfect. The trumpet sound is produced by buzzing your lips. And there’s a finite amount of time you can do that well. The muscles get tired. So you really need to stay in shape, keep up the chops. There’s no such thing as a day off.”

In late March of this year, Paul proved his chops are just fine. With guest conductor Stefan Sanderling and pianist Marc-André Hamelin, Paul was featured in Shostakovich’s Piano Concerto No. 1. Looking completely relaxed and switching between a C trumpet and a B-flat trumpet, he played his part flawlessly. Those things that won him his first job – rhythm, clarity of attack and tone – would win him any job today. Mr. Hamelin remarked after the first concert, “I’ve played this work many, many times, with many, many trumpet players. What a pleasure to play with one like Paul Randall, who is not only technically brilliant, but who has a sense of humor and understands the interplay between the piano and the trumpet in this work.”

Symphony Music Director Grant Llewellyn knows what he has in Paul. He says, “There are a handful of musicians in a symphony orchestra who have a direct role in characterizing the identity of the group. The principal trumpet should be one of those players and is in our orchestra,” he says. “He leads the brass section and is a soloist in his own right. Paul Randall is that rare combination of expert instrumentalist, natural musician and cool customer. Each of these elements is impressive in itself, but when combined, they make for an exceptional artist and a great colleague. Whether playing solo in front or within the orchestra, Paul’s trumpet is always worth the ticket price. For the music director, it is equally invaluable to have someone rock solid laying it down in front of the brass, day in, day out. We are indeed fortunate to have Paul in North Carolina.”

\* \* \*

For all his prodigious talent, off the stage Paul seems very much the guy next door. He’s a devoted dad who follows his daughters’ many activities avidly, enjoys cooking for the family (see sidebar for Paul’s delicious Red Beans and Rice, Emeril style), loves playing tennis with a regular bunch of friends, and always has cold beer in the fridge. He listens to all kinds of music – blues, Latin, jazz, symphonic and is hard-pressed to name favorites. “Really,” he says, “I like to listen to just about anything.” He confesses to



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watching “The Girls Next Door,” a reality show about Hugh Hefner’s girlfriends. He and his daughters find it hilarious. “We’re big fans,” he laughs.

He also enjoys mowing the lawn because “it’s sort of a mindless task. I just walk around with the mower and think about other stuff – anything that might be bothering me or that needs sorting out.”

Paul teaches as well – a few private students. And while he still thinks of Irv Sarin as the most influential musician in his life and a personal hero, he doesn’t emulate his prodding, exacting teaching style. “Sometimes I wish I could be that kind of teacher for my students. But I’m not like that. A student might come in and say, ‘Well, I couldn’t practice, I had a lot of homework,’ and I’ll just say, ‘Yeah, that’s ok, I understand. I get it. My daughters have the same problem.’ Once in a while, if I’ve really had it with a kid, I might get forceful, but I’m usually not that way at all. I’m happy if they just keep playing.”

Paul has a workman-like approach to his life – whatever is on the Symphony schedule is fine with him. “I’ve been playing for 30 years, so I’ve played a lot of stuff. That said, it’s a thrill to play the few pieces here and there that I haven’t played.” Norman Smith, Paul’s early mentor in New Orleans, left the orchestra world in part because, he said, he didn’t want to be just a part player for his whole life. “As for me, Paul says with a shrug, “I’m perfectly happy with that!”

And yet, that competitive streak instilled by Irv Sarin back when Paul was just a boy in a grade-school band, has never quite left him. “My happiness is tied to how I am playing. If I’m not playing well, I’m in a foul mood – mad at everyone, angry with myself, don’t want to talk. When I’m playing well, life is great. A musician in the Cleveland Orchestra once said to a new player, ‘the only pressure you’re going to feel is the pressure you put on yourself.’ It’s true. But that’s the toughest pressure there is.”

