



## Ivano Ascari



### **BIOGRAPHY**

After graduating from the Parma Conservatorio, Ivano Ascari began the musical career as Principal Trumpet in the Bolzano Symphony Orchestra performing many of the important concertos.

In the meantime Ivano was regularly popping over to Paris to study with one of the great teachers of the trumpet Pierre Thibaud.

Such was their enthusiasm for brass music that Ivano and fellow trumpet player Giordano Fermi formed the Verona Brass Ensemble with an unusual nonet line-up – 4 trumpets, 4 trombones and tuba without conductor – although small combinations and the inclusion of organ and percussion or even solo voices and chorus were also possible. The musical combination required entirely new pieces. The quality of the VBE inspired many fine pieces and an annual Verona Brass Festival was created not only to showcase the talents of the Verona Brass but also other notable ensembles from all over Europe and US.

On leaving the Orchestra, Ivano became professor of Trumpet and Trombone at the Conservatorio in Riva del Garda [lake Garda] and subsequently took up a similar position at the Conservatorio in Trento. This gave him more time to concentrate on a solo career.

His taste for collaboration with composers later led to Ivano's quest for new repertoire for trumpet when beginning his CD marathon. This marathon began when Ivano was asked to give a lecture recital at the International Trumpet Guild Conference held in America. He needed a 'calling-card', so he had the idea of producing a CD. The first CD was born.

A long series of collaborations with composers from all arts and parts followed on. More invitations from the ITG ensued. More CDs ensued.

One of the highlights of the valuable collection of new works, which has now swelled to almost a hundred, is a concerto by the Greek composer Dimitri Nicolau. Ivano was able to rekindle his liason with the Bolzano Symphony Orchestra when he performed and recorded the Concerto with them.

At about the same time he was soloist and adviser to the jury for the 2005 'Due Agosto' International Composers' Competition (in that year for trumpet and orchestra).

Quite apart from music, Ivano gained a Doctorate in Economics from the University of Parma; his thesis concerned the 'Bread Politics' in the dukedom of Guastalla (Northern Italy) in the second half of the Eighteenth Century.

In the 1950s an archaeologist did an excavation in Sanzeno (Trentino, Italy). It was not until 2010 that another archaeologist Dr Rosa Roncador re-examined certain fragments which had originally been discovered that it was realized that these were remains of an instrument called the Karnyx [similar to three such finds unearthed in Limoges in France]. When a new karnyx was brilliantly and painstakingly constructed by Alessandro Ervas the result was a two meter long brass 'trompette de guerre' played vertically with the player's head tilted right back. The mouthpiece is roughly the size of that of the trombone but more difficult to negotiate. The bell is in the shape of a wild boar's head

with extra long ears. The whole effect of the Karnyx when played en masse would have been to strike fear in the minds of the enemy (rather like the Scottish bagpipes).

Ivano was the obvious candidate to play such an instrument; he was asked by the archeologist Dr Roncador who had discovered the Karnyx to do so.

As the Karnyx was in the process of construction we speculated that the properties of the conical tube would give a limited harmonic series of only 5 notes (rather like a military bugle). However, some freak acoustical phenomenon allows it to produce 21 (in tune) notes including some semitones clustered round the 3rd, 4th and 5th harmonics and a diatonic scale of pedal tones below the 1st harmonic [E flat].

The first 'performance' of the 'new' instrument was held in the Sanzeno Rhaëtian Museum in 2012 for which Ivano, being Ivano, had asked several composers to write.

Since then, it has attracted considerable archeological, technical and musical interest and a steady flow of conferences continue to be devoted to it.

A second Karnyx is being fashioned from bronze – the original choice of the Celts.

Because Ivano enjoys long-distance cycling and as a result is in very good shape, one would not suspect, on first encounter, his preoccupation with food.

He has a particular (self-confessed) weakness for 'zuppa inglese' known in english as 'trifle' [the recipe will be supplied on request].

When Ivano and professor Emeritus Robert Nagel [The Robert Nagel] correspond with each other, they have replaced platitudes of fond farewells with the world Gelato. How sweet!

Anyway, Enjoy!!

*by Peter Anthony Monk M. Mus. [Lond.], 1er prix Liège*



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