

My parents were amateur classical vocalists. They started me on piano at age 8, and informed me that I would add either clarinet or cornet at age 10. Since it is clear that reeds are pointless instruments, what remained was cornet.

Up through high school, the cornet was rewarding enough, sometimes in competitions, to continue playing it, and when I could finally major in music at university, on trumpet, I chose to emphasize it over piano, an instrument that requires 10 fingers -- on each hand.

I've played in marching bands, concert bands, wind ensembles, brass quintets, symphony orchestras, Baroque orchestras, orchestras for a fair amount of musical theater -- and big-bands. [I urge the adoption of the hyphen in "big-bands," because without the hyphen in print many people interpret "big band" to be anything from a mega rock group to a large ensemble that has no strings.] I've also directed choirs.

I was injured as a trumpeter in 1988, which put a halt to just about everything to do with trumpet, including my efforts in The Austin Wind Symphony under Randol Bass, Swing Time of Austin, The Nash Hernandez Orchestra, and The Moonlight Express. In that year, I was offered teaching work at ACC. I've been working at recovering the trumpet ever since, playing almost exclusively lead trumpet in big-bands, and been a jack of many -- not all -- trades in the ACC Music Department to this day.

Either that, or I picked up the trumpet for the first time last week; memory's getting fuzzy.