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Interview with the Greatest Trumpet Player in the World

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Interview with the Greatest Trumpet Player in the World

Author Bio

Charles Sternberg is majoring in Cinema Media Studies and minoring in Music. In his free time he enjoys watching movies and playing trombone.

Interview with the Greatest Trumpet Player in the World

FADE IN:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - EVENING

INTERVIEWER

With me on set today, I am pleased to welcome Robert Morgan, world renowned trumpet player and musician extraordinaire.

ROBERT MORGAN

It's a pleasure to be here.

INTERVIEWER

The pleasure is all mine. So, Mr. Morgan, you performed with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra from 1994 to 2017, is that correct?

ROBERT MORGAN

Yes.

INTERVIEWER

What was the audition process like in 1994?

ROBERT MORGAN

Well, actually, I first auditioned for an open position in the trumpet section in 1992. I didn't make it in, but I was not discouraged in the slightest. I was twenty-four at the time, so I knew I had my whole life ahead of me, still. When I got the news that I had not placed into the orchestra, I immediately increased the rigor of my practice pattern tenfold. I would start with three hours of focused rehearsal every morning after I woke up, then a short break for lunch and reading of music literature, during which I would go over finger dexterity exercises and mental scales constantly in my head. After lunch, I would practice for another three hours, this time switching to my left hand as a challenge. Right before bed, I would finish with a steaming cup of Egyptian chamomile herbal tea and an extra hour of rehearsal, this time playing as silently as possible, to the point where my sound was almost inaudible.

By the time the 1994 auditions were approaching, I was much more refined in every aspect of my playing. The audition took place in the Royal Albert Concert Hall. There were three judges, separated from me by a thin screen so that there was no prejudice in the selection process. The audition consisted of three aspects: scales (major, minor, and chromatic), a performance piece of my choice, and sight reading. Naturally, I executed each piece of the audition effortlessly, thanks to my training.

INTERVIEWER

In which chair were you initially placed?

ROBERT MORGAN

I started out as the fourth trumpet, but that didn't last too long. I quickly rose through the ranks.

INTERVIEWER

Your rise was unprecedented in the history of the group, and there has been a fair amount of controversy regarding the means by which you obtained the rank of principal trumpet player in just six months. What can you tell me about Lois Gilberto, the third trumpet at the time?

ROBERT MORGAN

Well, Louie was only there for a short amount of time after I joined. From the few rehearsals I spent next to him, I remember he had the obnoxious habit of tapping his foot loudly and off tempo all the time. His shoes were well shined, but he would never tell me which polish he used. He was let go from the group after he missed our performance in the Konzert Haus during the European Tour. Thank god I knew both of our parts, so I was able to cover the third trumpet for him.

INTERVIEWER

Why did Louis Gilberto miss the concert?

ROBERT MORGAN

As I recall, we were sharing a hotel room in first district of Vienna on that tour. When it was time to get up, I couldn't wake him. I splashed water in his face, and I even shook him, but it was no use. It was unbelievable, I've never seen such a deep sleeper. Eventually, I had to give up, because I figured that there was no use in me missing the concert when I had woken up on time.

After that concert, I moved up to take his position.

INTERVIEWER

When we asked him for comments regarding the incident, he claimed that he is a very light sleeper. He contends that you deliberately snuck out without waking him up so that he would lose his position. Do you care to respond to this, Mr. Morgan?

ROBERT MORGAN

Who can really say what happened that morning? It was so long ago, and we had all been drinking at the hotel bar the night before. To tell you the truth, I suspect that he was a drunkard by the way his pitch swerved up and down when he played. He was most likely just hung-over that morning.

INTERVIEWER

Let's move on. Can you tell me what happened to Eloise Ray, the second

trumpet at the time, shortly after Louis Gilberto was expelled from the group?

ROBERT MORGAN

Oh my, it's hard for me to remember so far back. Can you refresh my memory?

INTERVIEWER

There was an incident involving factory machinery.

ROBERT MORGAN

Oh yes, we visited an assembly line together where they mold brass into various instruments. Eloise reached out for something, and her fingers were crushed by a machine. It was a shame; she had just gotten her nails done in a beautiful shade of magenta the day before. When she got her hands out, all of her fingers were unusable. Unfortunately, you can't play trumpet without fingers.

INTERVIEWER

After the loss of her digits, she was forced to retire, and you became the second trumpet. She alleges that you pushed her arms toward the machine. What do you have to say about that?

ROBERT MORGAN

Nonsense! Why would I ever do that? We were on a lovely date.

INTERVIEWER

Don't you find it strange that tragedies befell all of the trumpet players in the orchestra that you interacted with?

ROBERT MORGAN

You forget that Wally is still fine and well.

INTERVIEWER

Wallace Murray, the fourth trumpet who filled in your position after you moved up to the third chair? He was never in the chair above you, so I think your point is hardly valid.

ROBERT MORGAN

I maintained my position in the trumpet section through a strict regimen of training. I don't like what you're insinuating.

INTERVIEWER

You don't have to like anything I say, Mr. Morgan. Lastly, I'd like to ask you about Klaus Stevens, the first trumpet player in the group who preceded you. What can you tell me about him?

ROBERT MORGAN

Klaus Stevens was a greasy man with a bushy white beard. He was quite the

opposite of myself; I was lean and skinny, and he was round and fat. As for his sound, it was weak, like that of a deflating balloon. His intonation was out of control, as were his eating habits.

INTERVIEWER

How did you react to his untimely death, which occurred so shortly after you became the second trumpet?

ROBERT MORGAN

Oh, that was so emotional for me. I felt such a strong bond with him, like a brother. What a shame that he choked on a Christmas sausage shortly after our winter concert. I guess he bit off more than he could chew.

INTERVIEWER

He died during a dinner at the Murano, at which several other members of the orchestra were present. Where were you when he died, Mr. Morgan?

ROBERT MORGAN

If my memory serves me correctly, I was in the restroom having an unpleasant experience myself. The rabbit tortellini did not bode so well with my sensitive stomach.

INTERVIEWER

After Klaus passed away, you became the principal trumpet player in the orchestra. Did you ever suspect that there was any foul play involved in the incident?

ROBERT MORGAN

Never! Never! It was a fine orchestra, not a fight club.

INTERVIEWER

Other members of the orchestra said they saw you touching Klaus' plate that night.

ROBERT MORGAN

Who told you that? Was it a trombone player? Yes, I sat next to Klaus that night, but he offered me to try a bite of his dish. Perhaps I forked an extra bit of sausage off his plate when he wasn't looking, but I can't really remember. If I did do such a thing, I apologize sincerely, although he never finished his dinner anyway.

INTERVIEWER

Did anyone ever challenge you for the position of first trumpet?

ROBERT MORGAN

Eloise returned at some point with prosthetic fingers, but she could not play well enough to surpass me. People in the orchestra fear me.

INTERVIEWER

Why is that?

ROBERT MORGAN

Because they know I will not stop at anything to be the best. They wish they could be me, but they can't.

INTERVIEWER

One last question for you, Mr. Morgan: Have you regretted anything that you've done in your journey to become the best?

ROBERT MORGAN

Everything I have done, I have done for the love of music. It was done for the sake of the ensemble. Weak players must be weeded out so that the ensemble can perform at the highest level possible. To get to the top, you have to step over some others, and in the process they may get trampled. It's easy for you to sit there and criticize me, but I know you didn't become the number one interviewer at your network by being a considerate, friendly person. You had to beat your competition, and sometimes you really hurt them. Marathon runners elbow the people that get close to them in races. Soccer players aim for ankles when they slide tackle their opponents. Politicians drag the reputations of their opponents through the mud. The anchor before you who interviewed me two years ago. What was his name? Jonathan? Jacob? Jeff? What happened to him? Why isn't he interviewing me today? I recall he was wearing a sharp red tie with a paisley pattern that day. His wife called before the interview to let him know that their son had skinned his knee on the playground and was crying for his daddy. Are you really a better interviewer than he was? When the next "great" interviewer comes close to you, what will you do to keep your job? Once you're on top, it's hard to give up.

The interviewer sits in shocked silence for a moment, mouth agape, unsure of what to say. His eyes stay locked on Morgan's eyes. He snaps out of it and puts a smile back on.

INTERVIEWER (Stuttering at first)

Isn't that something? Well, that's all the time we have for tonight. Thanks to Robert Morgan for coming on the show. Tune in next week when I interview Jeremy Carlan, the comedian, about what it was like joining the late night sketch show, Saturday Night Live, in 1984.

FADE OUT.

The End