

SCHERZO

Interviews with the notable musicians & fascinating personalities of our day

with **WESLEY FERREIRA**

MARK NUCCIO

As long-serving member of the New York Philharmonic and current principal clarinetist of the Houston Symphony, Mark Nuccio has performed under the baton of the world's most renowned conductors. A native of Colorado, Nuccio takes time out of his busy schedule to sit down and answer some questions.

What's the best part of your job?

Variety, the music, my schedule.

What's the hardest thing about being a musician? Working on the weekends when all your non-musician friends are off.

What embarrasses you the most?

Adulation.

What is your best habit, and what is your worst? Best - working out. Worst - eating crunchy food that is fattening (like chips/crackers).

What is your favorite form of exercise? Bicycling or golf.

Do you have an interesting way of looking at the world?

I generally feel that the world is good and am thrilled to be able to put smiles on people's faces through my music.

Who are the three people who have been the most influential to you?

My father and mother.

Gene Corporon - talked me into staying in music.

Ricardo Muti - what a musician! I have had the sincere pleasure to work with him many times and he is someone that I could listen to teaching music to any instrument/instrumentalist.

What is your favorite trait in a conductor?

Dedication to the music and not to themselves. I love when a conductor is focused on being the composer's advocate and has the musical abilities to back it up.

What musical recording would you recommend?

Kathleen Battle and Christopher Parkening, *Angel's Glory*. This is an album with INCREDIBLE phrasing from Kathleen. We all can learn on any wind instrument from her vibrato, breathing, and phrasing by listening to this.

What's your morning routine?

Exercise, practice, coffee, breakfast, work.

What is the last thing you do at night? Sadly, I usually try to make sure I have gone through my email.

What was it like to have a father who was a clarinetist?

An inspiration, and a convenience early in life. It was nice to be able to have him relate to what I was doing and even bounce ideas off of him. He was a leader and an inspiration to so many people as a teacher.

If you were given a million dollars right now, what would you do with it? I would first help my kids get set up in their lives, a safe place to live and reliable cars, pay my bills off, and then help students buy the necessary items to be successful... especially those with little means.

What's the best piece of advice you've received, that changed your life... and who gave it to you?

Mike Post, a famous LA music writer for sitcoms, told me when I was 23 that "it is not who you know or what you know, but rather what you do with who you know."

What was your most meaningful performance? Probably our concert in Pyongyang, North Korea (2008).

What's the worst performance experience you've ever had? Playing a concert with the Savannah Symphony in a shopping mall on Halloween.



CODA

If you weren't a clarinetist, what instrument would you want to play? **The trumpet... though I love the cello.**

If you had to choose a first name other than your own, what would that be? **Dominic. I gave the name to my son.**

If you joined the circus, what would you be doing? **Probably marketing the circus.**

If you could create a perfect day, what would you do? **Golf in the morning, an outdoor happy hour with my wife and a few couples, and an evening with my entire family.**

If you could cast someone to play you in a movie, who would it be? **Frank Sinatra, though it is a bit late.**

If you could rid yourself of one personal fear, what would that be? **I am a perfectionist and it drives me crazy. My car still looks brand new and it is nine years old. That comes with issues, I guarantee you.**