

# SOULO MUTE

Marian Stewart



**M**ike Jarosz, founder and inventor of Soulo Mute is a professional trumpet player who holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music performance from University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA where he studied with renowned trumpeters George Rabbai, Rick Kerber, and Dennis Wasko. Mike has performed with a variety of great artists including Maynard Ferguson, LL Cool J, Los Lonely Boys, Frankie Valli, Jennifer Lopez and Will Smith. He is currently touring with "The Midtown Men", a 60's review show featuring the original NY cast of Broadway's Jersey Boys.

Jarosz first got the idea to make his own mute in 1997 after seeing George Rabbai perform with an old Finch mute. Mike fell in love with the sound and was determined to replicate it. He then experimented making mutes and even developed a few prototypes. As is the case with many of life's fancies, he put his mute-making goals aside to focus on performing. Fate brought him back to his project in March of 2009 when Jarosz seriously injured his neck while practicing and was unable to play trumpet for three months. It was during this time of healing that Mike developed the Soulo Mute and prepared the first prototype for testing.

Mike called upon some of his professional trumpet player friends including Jay Webb to test the prototype. Mike and Jay met as undergraduates at The College of New Jersey. They fast became friends and even transferred to University of the Arts together. Not only was Jay instrumental in testing the Soulo Mute, but he also continues to promote it at trade shows. Jay can be seen on the Soulo Mute website performing in a video which demonstrates the mute.

The Soulo Mute is comprised of a hard plastic, foam lined, vented casing with three metal clips, which allow for two settings. The mute can be used in an open or closed position that allows for greater variety than most standard mutes. Jay Webb as well as others who tested the mute agreed that it sounded like a "soulful" bucket mute, but was much easier to play. For this reason, as well as how perfectly suited the mute is for the solo trumpet artist, the name "Soulo" was chosen. Trumpeters often wonder in which category to place Soulo and according to professionals like Wayne Bergeron and the Academy Awards trumpet section, they use Soulo whenever the music calls for a bucket.



In addition to its mellow sound, Soulo Mute offers other advantages over the standard bucket mute. At 2.2 ounces, Soulo Mute weighs half that of other bucket mutes. It can also be put on with one hand, allowing for faster changes. Perhaps the most important advantage of the mute is that it plays freely without any back pressure. This lack of pressure also results in perfect intonation throughout the range of the instrument. Soulo Mute is entirely made in the U.S.A and Jarosz handcrafts each one personally.

Soulo mute has gained much popularity recently due largely to word of mouth, but also as a result of the good work of Jarosz's wife and business partner, Elena. The pair were married in 2007 and Elena, who has an MBA from Temple University, handles the majority of the business end of Soulo Mute. Elena is an integral part of the growing business and stellar reviews from

prominent trumpeters have certainly led to much of their recent success:

Roger Ingram, Jupiter Music Performing Artist: "Awesome colours and pitch...this mute works beautifully! I introduce it as the 'Hannibal Lector' mute... audiences love it and so do I!"

Jens Lindemann, Internationally renowned soloist: "I like this mute very much! It makes a lovely sound in all registers and I very much enjoy the clip mechanism that attaches it to the bell of the trumpet!"

Wayne Bergeron, Concord Recording Artist and Yamaha Trumpet Artist: "I'm totally diggin the mute! I've used it in the pit

and also used it on a solo on the TV show King of the Hill. They wanted a distant covered sound. It worked great! I've been using it as a bucket mute as well. Thanks again for the great mute!"

Dan Jacobs, Performing Artist: "I have owned and used the Soulo mute for about 3 months with great success. I've used it in all types of settings, from big band, small groups and recording. It's become my favourite mute!"

Markus Bebek, Assistant Principal Trumpet at the Frankfurt/Main Opera in Germany wrote a review of Soulo Mute in Sonic magazine where he declared: "What sets it apart from all the other mutes is that 'something' that can't easily be described; that something that every trumpet player needs to be able to play quietly and suddenly increase volume without force. Or to be able to play a muted solo in an orchestra without having to play quietly."

Other trumpeters who are using Soulo Mute include Chris Botti, Dan Jacobs, Kiku Collins, Adam Linsley, Josh Lawrence, George Rabbai, Harry Kim and Chris Tedesco. Herb Alpert was also seen playing with a Soulo Mute on a CBS Sunday morning special that aired recently and the 2010 trumpet section for the Academy Awards consisting of Chris Gray, Rick Baptist, Warren Luening and Rob Schaer all used the Soulo Mute.

Such recent reviews and positive press have set into motion plans to make a trombone version of the Soulo Mute. Mike Jarosz has a prototype underway and is working with local trombone professionals to perfect it. He hopes to have Soulo Mute for Trombone available for purchase by the middle of 2011. For more information or to purchase a Soulo mute, visit their website at [www.soulomute.com](http://www.soulomute.com)



Soulo Mute at the Oscars.