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#### It's Alive!!

Ilan Morgenstern, Bass Trombone  
David Gilliland, Piano  
University of Redlands Wind Ensemble  
Eddie Smith, Conductor

Ilan Morgenstern has been the bass trombonist with San Antonio Symphony since 2010. Prior to his appointment to San Antonio, Ilan held positions with the Houston Grand Opera, Jacksonville, and Kansas City orchestras. Ilan has also performed with the orchestras of Philadelphia, Detroit, Houston, Utah, and Virginia. Originally from Israel, Ilan joined the Israeli Defense Forces at the age of 18 and performed with the IDF band as service to his country.

His new debut album, *It's Alive*, features newly written and recorded music from composer Robert Denham. This collaboration between Ilan and Robert began 12 years ago, and some of the music on this recording was written specifically for Ilan. The first piece, "Sizzl," is just that – featuring many sizzling pedal notes and large interval jumps. Even in the slower section of the piece, Ilan creates a solid sound within the short spurts of large leaps.

The second piece, "The Kraken's One Day is as Another," is based off of a sea monster name The Kraken. The opening sound of the piano sets an eerie mood to the work as the soloist then enters with a low, slow bucket-filled sound. Again, Ilan with clarity and distinction, creates a sound that exactly fits the image of a sea monster meandering through water. Denham's writing of moving, rushing rhythms in the accompaniment while the solo plays slower rhythms allows for the listener to "hear" the sea monster as it swirls through the body of water.

The next selection, "Withering Grass," while written by the same composer, is a heartfelt change from the previous tracks. With its minor mode implications, the listener can hear the yearning through Morgenstern's playing that Denham is striving to create with an image of total life.

Denham's "Concerto for Bass Trombone and Band" is a light-hearted but serious concerto with sounds of humor and happiness. Morgenstern's sound fits superb to the title of the first movement "Four Inch



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Heels." His crispness to the staccatos in the lower register allow the listener to imagine a lady walking the streets in her bright red heels amongst the bustling traffic. The second movement "And Once Gone..." adds a somber tone to the concerto – something that is not heard in the first and third movements. With the weeping sound of the oboe, Denham creates a sadness with his slow, minor-moving chords. Morgenstern really lets the bass trombone speak from his heart through this emotional movement. "Don't Anger the Sacred Temple Gibbon" is the final movement for this concerto and is similar to the first movement in its oddity sounds. Denham's initial inspiration for this movement was King Louie from Disney's *The Jungle Book*. With its whirlwind sounds, one can imagine this music befitting for a temple in the jungle. With vocals from the ensemble and bizarre sounds, in general, Denham has created another picturesque moment within this concerto.

The next piece, "Mazing" could be partnered with the first track in its technicality and virtuosic leaps between registers. The talent of Morgenstern is really portrayed through this unaccompanied piece as it shifts between fast and contemporary techniques to slow and low lyricism.

The final selection on this album is my personal favorite. "Sarabande" is just simply peaceful and beautiful. Morgenstern's sound on the bass trombone with David Gilliland's sound on piano mesh so well that it really just makes you want to close your eyes, and listening to nothing but the composer's thoughts.

There are very few sounds in my mind that reoccur over and over. As a musician, I want the most beautiful sound to try to imitate – Ilan now has one of those sounds in my mind. Everything from his technical virtuosity to his slow baritone-like voice on the bass trombone is something to keep in my mind for a long time. Ilan's command of the instrument was remarkable and it shows that he is a fantastic musician. Robert Denham's compositions were able to showcase Ilan's musicianship at an impeccable level, and I hope to hear more from both these men in the near future.

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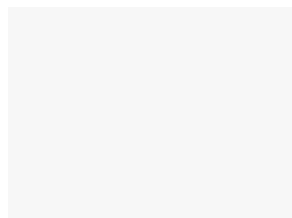
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