



INTERNATIONAL

TROMBONE

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Celebrating 50 Years (1972–2022)

CYCLIC JOURNEY

An Interview With
Trombone Virtuoso
Marshall Gilkes



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ON THE COVER

Marshall Gilkes photo by www.tommoorestudios.com

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2022 ITA Legacy Circle Award Recipient



Dorothy "Dottie" Ziegler: Pioneering Champion of the Trombone

Dorothy Ziegler. Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin), August 23, 1950

By Douglas Yeo

When Dorothy Ziegler walked to the platform of the Eastman Theatre during the Eastman School of Music's commencement ceremony on May 2, 1943, she was empty-handed. By the time she left the stage a few seconds later, she held three documents: a Bachelor of Music degree (with distinction), a performer's certificate in trombone, and a performer's certificate in piano.

This extraordinary achievement—one of many in her life—stands tall in the history of the trombone, and the story of Dorothy Ziegler, a 2022 International Trombone Association Legacy Circle Award recipient, still speaks to us today.

Dorothy Miriam Ziegler, or "Dottie," as she was known to her friends, was born on July 20, 1922, in Muscatine, Iowa, on the shores of the Mississippi River. Her family moved to Aledo, Illinois, where her father, Elmer Ziegler, was conductor of the local high school and community bands, her mother played oboe, clarinet, and piano, and her brother played tuba and drums. When Elmer started an all-girl band in town, no trombone players signed up, so Dorothy—then 7 years old—switched from violin to trombone so she could play in the band.

In 1939, Dorothy enrolled in the Eastman School of Music, where she studied trombone with Emory Remington. A year later, when she was 18, Leopold Stokowski chose her to play principal trombone in his All-American Youth Orchestra, which, after rehearsals and concerts in Atlantic City, New Jersey, toured South America and made several recordings. The orchestra's low brass section included Solomon Charles Gusikoff, one of several members of the Philadelphia Orchestra whom Stokowski asked to mentor the young musicians; Edward Kleinhammer, who had already signed his contract to join the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as its bass trombonist (a position he held until 1985) after the AAYO's tour; Thomas Cramer, who taught trombone for 37 years at Oberlin Conservatory; and tubist Phil Cadway Silverman. When the orchestra returned home to New York City at the conclusion of its tour, Dorothy greeted First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.



All-American Youth Orchestra low brass section, July 1940: (left to right) Dorothy Ziegler, Solomon Charles Gusikoff, Edward Kleinhammer, Thomas Cramer, Phil Cadway Silverman (tuba)

Dorothy Ziegler (far right) with Eleanor Roosevelt and Leopold Stokowski. Rock Island (Illinois) Argus, September 19, 1940

First Lady Welcomes Aledo Director's Daughter



While at Eastman, Dorothy majored in both trombone and piano. Her first public trombone performance as a college student came in November 1939, when she played Arthur Pryor's *Valse de Concert: Thoughts of Love*. She was frequently accompanied by Emory Remington's wife, Laura Wilbur Remington, and Dorothy performed Carlos Salzedo's *Pièce Concertante* with the Eastman-Rochester Symphony, conducted by Howard Hanson, as part of a graduation recital in January 1943 for students who were finishing their performer's certificate. The performance was broadcast nationally.

In the summers of 1941 and 1942, Dorothy was a member of the Berkshire (now, Tanglewood) Music Center Orchestra, the training orchestra of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and a month before she graduated from Eastman, she won a position in the trombone section of the National Symphony in Washington, D.C., where conductor Hans Kindler appointed her the orchestra's first permanent female member. A year later, in 1944, she was appointed principal trombonist of the St. Louis Symphony, where, along with second trombonist Flori Lorr, the orchestra was recognized for being the only orchestra in the country with a trombone section composed principally of women.

In an interview shortly after her appointment, Dorothy said (*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, March 2, 1947), "I have always wanted to be first trombonist with a major symphony orchestra, and my ambition has been realized in the position I hold here." In fact, she was the first female principal trombonist of a major American orchestra. As was the case when she joined the National Symphony, Dorothy did not join the St. Louis Symphony as a "wartime replacement" (a woman hired to hold the chair of a man who was serving in the armed forces during World War II until he could return home and reclaim his position). Conductor Vladimir Golschmann hired her as a permanent member of the orchestra, and she stayed for two decades (1944–1964; 1944–1958 as principal trombone).

During her time in St. Louis, Dorothy found time to earn a master's degree in piano from University of Southern California, complete a performer's certificate in piano from the American Conservatory in Paris, and study conducting with Max Rudolph in Cincinnati. She was a frequent piano soloist and accompanist for singers around the United States, praised for (*Miami Herald*, January 8, 1968) "approaching the piano with decisiveness and complete involvement." In 1955, while still playing in the St. Louis Symphony, she became

9 Women in Symphony This Year; Golschmann Returns for Season



—By a Post-Dispatch Staff Photographer.
MISS DOROTHY ZIEGLER, left, principal trombone, and
MRS. FLORI LORR at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's
first rehearsal of the season.

Dorothy Ziegler and Flori Lorr. *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, October 31, 1944



Dorothy Ziegler. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*,
July 7, 1963



Dorothy Ziegler. *Miami (Florida) News*,
September 20, 1967


conductor and artistic director of the St. Louis Grand Opera Guild. In 1963, she was named conductor of the Kirkwood, Missouri, Symphony Orchestra. Still, amid her multifaceted, globe-hopping life, she said (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 7, 1963), “No matter what else is going on, I have to find time to practice every day.” And she did.

In 1964, Dorothy left St. Louis to become director of Indiana University Opera Theatre. But three years later, she moved to Florida, where she joined the faculty of University of Miami as director of the school's opera theater while continuing to play and teach trombone. A headline in the *Miami News* (September 20, 1967) summed up Dorothy's varied life when it declared, “Ziegler Zags from Trombone—to Opera.”

Dorothy Ziegler died on March 1, 1972; she was 49 years old. Following her death, trombonist Lewis Van Haney commissioned Donald White to write a new work for bass trombone and piano, *Tetra Ergon* (1972). The four movements of what has become one of the bass trombone's most popular recital works were dedicated to prominent low brass players that included Haney, tubist William Bell, Emory Remington, and Dorothy Ziegler. It should come as no surprise that the most difficult piano part in *Tetra Ergon* appears in the movement that is dedicated, “To Dottie.”

For her many accomplishments, the International Women's Brass Conference gave Dorothy Ziegler its 2012 Pioneer award. In addition, as a 2022 ITA Legacy Circle Award recipient, she once again stands alongside her teacher, Emory Remington, who received the same award in 2007.

When Dorothy and Flori Lorr joined the St. Louis Symphony, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* wrote (November 7, 1944), “Both Miss Ziegler and Mrs. Lorr feel that women should be judged on the same basis as men, that they should be accepted as musicians and not as novelties in the orchestra ... Miss Ziegler believes, however, that the time will come when there will be no question of the suitability of any instrument to feminine musicians.”

Thanks to pioneering women such as Dorothy Ziegler, that time is now. She, an individual who was uniquely gifted to do so many things at the highest level—trombonist, pianist, teacher, conductor, administrator, vocal coach—continues, 50 years after her untimely death, to inspire us. 

Douglas Yeo is trombone professor at Wheaton College, Illinois, and, for the 2022–2023 academic year, at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A frequent contributor to the *International Trombone Association Journal*, he was bass trombonist of the *Boston Symphony Orchestra* from 1985–2012 and was the recipient of the 2014 ITA Award. As this article was being prepared, an extensive search for high-quality photographs of Dorothy Ziegler was undertaken with the assistance of Larry Zalkind, professor of trombone at Eastman School of Music. Unfortunately, no such photos have surfaced. The photos in this article are taken from newspaper articles about Dorothy Ziegler.