

## UT grad plays with renowned orchestra

Abigail D. Malik Special to the News Sentinel

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Jeremy Wilson plays trombone with the Vienna Philharmonic at their performance on Monday night at Centre College's Norton Center for the Arts.

When friends of trombonist Jeremy Wilson saw him perform Monday night with the world-renowned Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, it was a rare opportunity for everyone.

Wilson, a McMinnville, Tenn., native and 2005 University of Tennessee-Knoxville graduate, has been a member of the Vienna Philharmonic, arguably the world's greatest orchestra, for three years. He's currently the only American member of the orchestra.

An orchestra that rarely performs in the United States outside of Carnegie Hall in

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New York City, the Vienna Philharmonic came to Danville, Ky.,'s Centre College as part of the festivities of the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games currently underway in nearby Lexington.

Nearly 20 friends and former teachers traveled to see Wilson perform, many from Knoxville. Wilson said the occasion was as special for him as it was for them.

"It'll be an emotional event," Wilson said a few days before the performance. "All of the people who are coming played an important role in my music career."

Don Hough of Knoxville, professor emeritus of trombone at UT's School of Music, traveled to Danville to see his former star student perform.

"The experience of seeing Jeremy play in the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra is incredible for me," says Hough, who has also seen Wilson with the Vienna Philharmonic play in Carnegie Hall. "Having him in that orchestra is an amazing thing."

Hough attended the show with several music faculty members from UT. Hough says Wilson was an exceptional student.

"During his sophomore year, I told my colleagues, 'Jeremy Wilson is a phenomenon,'" he says. "I never dreamed I'd get to teach that level of talent."

In the past three years, Wilson has performed in more than 350 operas, which, Hough notes, is a lifetime of performances.

"It's unbelievable," Hough says. "We're very proud of him. And throughout all of this, you'll not find a nicer person."

Hough recalls Wilson's ascent into the Vienna Philharmonic three years ago: in 2007, Wilson auditioned for an International Trombone Association competition. Ian Bousfield, Vienna Philharmonic principal trombonist, heard the recording and invited Wilson to try out for the orchestra.

Wilson won his audition, making it through four rounds with a committee of 26 people. There is a two-year probationary period for new members of the Vienna Philharmonic before they are formally admitted; Wilson was voted in after just one year.

Joe Christian of Knoxville also traveled to Kentucky to see his friend play. The two played together in several ensembles, including the UT Pride of the Southland Marching Band and UT's trombone choir.

Christian and Wilson met in 1998 under competitive circumstances, when Christian was a senior at South-Doyle High School, and Wilson was a sophomore at Warren County High School in McMinnville. Both made the Tennessee All-State Band that year, and after auditioning for chair placements in the band, Wilson ended up first chair, and Christian second chair.

"For a while, I was upset that a sophomore had beaten me," says Christian, who now works at the University of Tennessee College of Law. "But in retrospect, coming in

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second place to a future member of the Vienna Philharmonic isn't so bad."

Chris Sharpe, a current UT student, also traveled to Kentucky to see Wilson, his former trombone teacher.

"It seems amazing to me that just four years ago Jeremy was starting graduate school, and now he's been in one of the greatest orchestras in the world for more than three years," Sharpe says.

Like Wilson as an undergraduate, Sharpe is currently studying music education and trombone performance at UT.

Before returning to Austria, the Vienna Philharmonic played at Carnegie Hall in New York on Sept. 29 and 30, Oct. 2 and today.

Abigail Malik is coordinator for media information for Centre College.



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