



The 2003 Carmine Caruso International Jazz Trumpet Solo Competition

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Dominick Farinacci, a 20-year-old NYC college student, captured first place honors and a \$10,000 prize at the **Carmine Caruso International Jazz Trumpet Competition**, held November 14 and 15, 2003 at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida. Finishing in second place and receiving a \$5,000 cash award was Florida trumpeter David Bijoy Champagne. Finalists Nathan Botts, Jason Palmer, and Gregory Rivkin all turned in fine performances in the competition, and were awarded \$500 stipends for their efforts. The competition final round was an exciting event that proved to be a riveting challenge for the final round judges Clay Jenkins (Eastman School of Music), Tiger Okoshi (Berklee College of Music), and John Swana (Criss Cross Recording Artist). The 2003 edition of this biennial competition, generously sponsored by the Herb Alpert Foundation and the International Trumpet Guild in the memory and spirit of master brass teacher and humanitarian Carmine Caruso, proved to be inspiring and insightful for all those in attendance at the two day event.



Dominick Farinacci

Dominick Farinacci, currently enrolled in the newly formed Institute of Jazz Studies at the Julliard School, is originally from Cleveland, Ohio, where he studied with local trumpet great Steve Enos and gained performing experience playing in the Fat Tuesday Big Band led by tenor saxophonist Ernie Krivda. His first prize-winning performance featured a stunning rendition of the jazz standard *Alone Together*, which highlighted his beautiful trumpet sound and mature harmonic expressiveness. Both the judges and the audience, who gave an enthusiastic response to his performance, appreciated his long flowing lines and great time.

Jacksonville trumpeter David Bijoy Champagne captured the second place honors with an impressive display of trumpet technique and showmanship. David closed his performance with a swinging, bluesy rendition of Duke Ellington's *In a Mellow Tone*, bringing the crowd to its feet for a standing ovation. He displayed a high level of charisma and joy in his performance, which connected well with the audience and made for an energetic set. David is an active performer in the North Florida area where he performs with the St. John's River City Big Band as jazz soloist, and works as Youth Orchestra Director of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida. David was the winner of the college jazz trumpet competition at the 1999 Florida Trumpet Festival, also held at the University of Central Florida.

All of the finalists worked with a great rhythm section of central Florida's finest local jazz musicians. Richard Drexler, the pianist for the competition, is currently the pianist for the Woody Herman Orchestra and a member of the Jeff Berlin Trio. Doug Mathews is bassist for the Sam Rivers Trio and the Sam Rivers Big Band. Drummer Danny Gottlieb, an alumnus of the Pat Metheny Group and currently playing with trumpeter Lew Soloff, rounded out the exciting rhythm section. Local trumpeter and composer Paul Butcher, also a preliminary round judge, composed an original tune, *Isabel*, which all the finalists were required to include in their set. Look for this tune to be included as a supplement in an upcoming *ITG Journal*. The other preliminary round judges were trumpeter Jerry Tyree and jazz saxophonist Rex Wertz.

Other events at the competition included a jazz clinic on the afternoon of Friday November 14th, which featured the three final-round judges and clinician Laurie Frink, soloing with, and clinicing, the UCF Jazz Ensemble, under the leadership of UCF jazz studies faculty Jeff Rupert. The band worked through several tunes, allowing the judges to improvise for the students and provided some great insights on the finesse of big band playing. Later on Friday, the US Army Blues Big Band, under the leadership of Chief Warrant Officer Chuck Vollherbst, performed with the UCF students in an open rehearsal/clinic. This provided a great opportunity for the students to perform side by side with the

great musicians of one of the US military's most renowned bands.

One of the highlights of the competition was the Saturday morning clinic on Carmine Caruso and his trumpet method by NYC recording artist, teacher, and renowned Caruso



UCF lab band clinic

authority Laurie Frink. Her recollections of Caruso's personal treatment of each student's problems and her down-to-earth explanations of Caruso's method proved to be inspirational for all in attendance.

After the final round performances Saturday afternoon, and the rendering of the judges' decision, the placements and prizes were awarded by ITG President Stephen Chenette, Past ITG President Leonard Candelaria, and event host John Almeida, professor of trumpet at the University of Central Florida. Particular thanks were given for the generous grant provided by Herb and Lani Alpert through the Herb Alpert Foundation. All of these sources of support supported this competition so that it can be a vehicle to showcase the talents of young upcoming trumpet artists. The large crowds in attendance at all of the events of the competition, and the high level of performance demonstrated by the finalists, were a great tribute to the memory of Carmine Caruso and his legacy.

The final event of the competition was the Grand Finale Concert featuring the final round judges, and the first and second prize-winners performing with the U.S. Army Blues Jazz Ensemble. After a notable opening prelude set by the UCF Jazz Ensemble, the Army Blues performed an energetic opening set before inviting Dominick Farinacci to the stage to perform a lively rendition of John Coltrane's *Impressions*. Next up was David Bijoy Champagne, who created excitement with several blues choruses on an arrangement by Army Blues trumpeter Craig Fraedrich entitled *Better Get Hit in Your Soul*. After each judge took a turn with a solo feature, the Army Blues closed this blockbuster concert with a stirring rendition of *Malaguena*. Army Blues trumpeter Sergeant Liesel Whitaker showed what chops are all about with a commanding display of lead playing at the end of a long, strenuous concert. It was a fitting ending to two days of great events and a highly successful addition to the legacy of the Carmine Caruso International Jazz Trumpet Competition.



Judges warming up at the clinic (L-R): Swana, Okoshi, Jenkins

Event host John Almeida and the University of Central Florida should be commended for hosting a well-organized, smooth-running event. The contributions of the UCF trumpet students in providing assistance to the artists and in providing entertaining performances made this a truly memorable experience for everyone.

Website:

[2003 competition page at University of Central Florida](#)

Source: Christopher Dolske