



Hall of Fame Inductee

Name: PAUL BRIDSON

Instrument: Trombone

Year Inducted: 2021

For the past 27 years Paul Bridson has served as lead trombonist for the Des Moines Big Band. However, his career as an improviser dates back to 1978 when he won an award at the Iowa High School Jazz Championships.

Following his graduation from the University of Iowa, Paul settled in Austin, Texas, where he and his brother started a songwriting duo that produced a string of titles like “Hose Down That Baby,” “Angry Peas” and “Too Much Fun.” Their work earned them the Children’s Song of the Year Award in the 1989 Austin Songwriters’ competition.

Paul returned to Des Moines in 1992 where he quickly established himself as a go-to trombonist for local and touring groups. In addition to his 17-year run with the Des Moines Big Band, Paul lent his trombone skills to the music of Taz Band, Hot Lunch, The Farmer Tan Funk Band, NOLA Jazz Band, Parranderos Latin Combo, Party Gras Jazz Band and the Max Wellman Big Band. Since 2010, he also has served as band manager and lead trombonist for the Turner Center Jazz Orchestra.

Paul’s versatility as a player has led to gigs with artists such as Sarah Vaughan, Red Skelton, Lawrence Welk, Tommy Dorsey, Kurt Elling, The Temptations, The Fifth Dimension, Frankie Valle, Paul Anka and Wayne Newton.

In addition to his playing career, Paul is an instructor at Drake University and active as a judge and clinician for area band festivals. Paul and his wife own Brainstorm Iowa, a local advertising and design firm. “Iowa is a perfect place to pursue my professional, musical and personal goals,” concludes Bridson, who is always anxious to see what the next call will bring!

