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The Scales of Justice | From the Courtroom to Concert Hall

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THE SCALES OF JUSTICE

From the Courtroom to the Concert Hall

Known around Kilpatrick as the tennis extraordinaire, Senior Counsel and member of our nationally recognized Trademark and Copyright Team, **Chris Bussert** is no stranger to finding success outside of his law practice. What many don't know—and what Chris recently rediscovered—is his passion for music.

Growing up, Chris had a keen ear for music that materialized as a natural ability for the double bass. Though he opted not to pursue a musical career, even with strong encouragement from his peers and teachers, Chris continued to play double bass throughout, and after, college. He became a fixture in various community orchestras throughout the Midwest, including the Carmel Symphony Orchestra, Lafayette Symphony Orchestra, St. Joseph Symphony Orchestra, Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Heights Symphony Orchestra, and the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra. In fact, Chris and New York-based retired partner **Fred Whitmer** once shared the stage in the Indiana All State Orchestra back in their high school days, as Fred was a gifted violinist.

Despite his impressive musical resume, Chris set aside his double bass when he started his career with Kilpatrick on May 1, 1985.

37 years later, Chris bumped into Calvert Johnson, a fellow Kalamazoo College Graduate, at an alumni function. Calvert is not only the former head of Agnes Scott's music program but was also a mentor to star student—and now Kilpatrick partner—**Lauren Ralls.** Once Calvert learned of Chris' musical prowess, he suggested that he perform at the Big Canoe Christmas Concert.

Dusting off his instrument after a long hiatus, Chris set out to relearn his former skills on the double bass and performed once again at the 2022 Big Canoe Christmas Concert.

At this performance, Chris played alongside John Lawless, Director of Percussion Studies at Kennesaw State University, who "lit the fire" when he floated the idea that Chris try out for the Georgia Symphony Orchestra (GSO).

In early 2023, Chris sent an email to the GSO positioning himself as a double bass section member. Then, in August, Chris heard back... he had been invited for an audition and needed to be ready in just two weeks.

In panic mode, Chris dived into intensive practice. Post-audition, the conductor cryptically told Chris, "I think we're going to have work for you." Chris read that as meaning a call might come in a decade and resumed normal life. Surprise! Only two weeks later, an acceptance letter to join the GSO had arrived.

Come early 2024, Chris graced the stage for his first GSO performance, standing among seasoned, professional musicians. Nearly 50 personal hours of preparation preceded the concert which featured Mozart and Johannes Brahm pieces. The show went off without a hitch.

Post-concert, a sentiment emerged from Chris: "I missed it. I thoroughly enjoyed doing this again."

Looking ahead to May, Chris will tackle Beethoven's Ninth with the GSO. The legal eagle doubles again as a musical ace, proving that passion knows no expiration date.

Chris Bussert
Senior Counsel
Atlanta

Related People

Christopher P. Bussert

t 404.815.6545

cbussert@ktslaw.com