

The Tuba: Contrabass, Bass, and Tenor

by

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ABSTRACT

Three recitals were performed in lieu of a dissertation.

Recital #1: Milestones in Tuba and Euphonium Repertoire

Three Miniatures for Tuba and Piano (1990) by Anthony Plog (b. 1947); *Encounters II for Solo Tuba* (1966) by William Kraft (b. 1923); *Concert Piece for Tuba and Piano* (1995) by Libby Larsen (b. 1950); *Sonata for Tuba and Piano* (1980) by Trygve Madsen (1940); *Fantasia for Euphonium* (1974) by Gordon Jacob (1895-1984). Amy Ige, piano.

Recital #2: The 6/4 CC Tuba as a solo voice

Grand Duet (1959) by Galina Ustvolskaya (1919-2006) arr. Brendan Ige; *Postcards V for Solo Tuba* (world premiere) by Anthony Plog (b. 1947); *Capriccio for Solo Tuba* (1980) by Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933); *Three Furies for Solo Tuba* (1993) by James Grant (b. 1954). Amy Ige, piano.

Recital #3: Tuba and Euphonium in Different Settings

The Liberation of Sisyphus (1990) by John Stevens (b. 1951); *Sonata for Tuba* (1987) by Bruce Broughton (b. 1945); *Brillante for Two Euphonium and Piano* (1987) by Peter Graham (b. 1958), James Long, euphonium; *Morceau Symphonique* (1902) by Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911); *Tropix for Two Tubas and Percussion* (2018) by Evan Zegiel (1994) and Brendan Ige (1992), Evan Zegiel, tuba, Anthony DeMartinis, percussion. Amy Ige, piano.

Recital #1 Program

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Recital #1 Program Notes

Three Miniatures for Tuba and Piano (1990)

by Anthony Plog (b. 1947)

Anthony Plog has played trumpet in the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the San Antonio Orchestra and the Utah Symphony. He was playing extra trumpet with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the age of nineteen. Plog began writing exclusively for brass instruments but now writes for many different media like opera and band and has taught at University of Southern California and Indiana University, as well as many other international schools and currently lives in Freiburg, Germany.

Three Miniatures for Tuba and Piano was written for Daniel Perantoni, or “Mr. P” as his students call him, who teaches at Indiana University. He was given the lifetime achievement award by the executive board of T.U.B.A (now ITEA). He is a founding member of Summit Brass, Symphonia, and the St. Louis Brass Quintet. *Three Miniatures for Tuba and Piano* can be heard on his album, “Daniel in the Lion’s Den.”

Plog has five works that he has written that he has entitled *Three Miniatures*. One for horn, flute, trombone, tuba, and trumpet. These compositions span from 1990-2007. *Three Miniatures for Solo Tuba* was the first of the five compositions in 1990, the same year that Plog wrote *Four Sketches for Brass Quintet*.

Three Miniatures was composed for tuba and piano but there is also a wind band accompaniment. Plog originally intended to write a set of pieces for all brass instruments that included an unaccompanied postcard, a three miniatures, a nocturne with strings, and a full concerto. Plog hasn’t yet composed the postcard for unaccompanied tuba that would complete the set.

Three miniatures is seven minutes and length and has three movements. It follows a typical fast-slow-fast form. Metric complexity and unpredictable form are some of the hallmarks of Plog’s voice. Plog remarked in one interview he was upset because a critic commented that “a big failing of his was that a listener had no idea of the form of any of his music.” What upset Plog was that, in his mind at least, the big failure of his music (at least the music on that CD) was that the form was TOO easy to hear.

The first movement entitled *Allegro Vivace* opens with an angular theme that is the basis of the movement. This theme is transposed many times throughout the movement. Both the first and third movement follow a general ABA form with recapitulation of the opening themes occurring toward the end with chromatic flourishes. The first movement has many metric changes and the B section is in 6/8 but alternates between 6/8 and 3/4 delineated by accents in the piano. Understanding and bringing this out is crucial to the success of the movement.

Interestingly, Plog has commented that performers always take the first movement much faster than he ever anticipated and it has created something new out of the movement.

The second movement, *Freely*, makes use of the half step to build tension. The piano and tuba alternate with phrases that should sound more like free improvisation than metered phrases. Some of the phrases even have no meter. *Freely* also transposes the initial theme but when it seems like the recapitulation should occur, the music chromatically descends and goes *attacca* into the last movement, *Allegro Vivace*.

The last movement has a particularly barbaric B section! Care should be taken in creating contrast when the notes are marked with both *staccato* and *marcato*. The A section could be described as *furioso*. The ending of the piece concludes with a treacherous sixteenth note run in the upper tessitura of the tuba, as well as a technically challenging piano part.

Encounters II (1966)
by William Kraft (b. 1923)

William Kraft is an American composer, conductor and percussionist. He attended Columbia University in Chicago. He was percussionist (1955-1961), principal timpanist (1962-1981), as well as assistant conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra (1969-1972). He was also the founder, director and composer-in-residence of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra's New Music Group. In 1990, Kraft was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society Arts Hall of Fame.

Encounters II was written "very especially for Roger Bobo." Roger Bobo was born in Los Angeles in 1938. He played principal tuba from 1964-1989 in the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra where he and Kraft met. He was also resident conductor of the Topanga Symphony Orchestra. Bobo recorded this work twice.

Kraft writes:

"Encounters II was written for Roger Bobo in December 1966, and premiered at the 'Encounters' concert series in Pasadena in 1967. The first thing Roger and I did was spend a day together, during which we engaged in a creative interplay of ideas and exploration of the instrument's possibilities. The resultant work was, as Roger described it in the liner notes of his second recording of the piece, 'higher, lower, faster (probably louder or softer) than any previous work for tuba.' From the multitude of techniques that evolved, I chose those which I felt were best suited for a piece that was basically expressive along relatively traditional lines. Certain exploratory techniques were eliminated to suit the aesthetics of the piece – an aesthetic wherein I wanted to show the truly musical possibilities of the instrument without delving into effects for their own sake. I wanted to undertake the challenge of writing a set of variations for a solo player in which he would create the illusion of accompanying himself, sometimes by use of various dynamic levels, sometimes by varying pitch registrations, and especially by utilizing the voice

while playing.” Collaboration between performer and composer was a huge part of the creation of this work.

This work has five main sections that go slow-fast-slow-fast-slow. Extreme written dynamics occur from *pppp* to *fff*. The multiphonics in this work pose an interesting challenge. I have chosen to play with the different colors of head voice and chest voice. The multiphonics can sound truly haunting, atmospheric and alien when performed well. The lowest written note in this work is C an octave below the lowest C on a piano. Since this note is not acoustically possible to play, this note is often performed by using some form of a tongue slap or flutter tongue.

This work is a true tour de force for the tuba. The range is expansive and the extended technique difficult to execute with command. The ending of the work is different than the other four sections. There are much less dynamics and extended techniques. The work finally comes to rest with a morendo on a pedal C.

Concert Piece for Tuba and Piano (1995)

Libby Larsen (b. 1950)

Libby (Elizabeth) Larsen was born in 1950. She is one of America’s most performed women composers and has written about 400 works in various genres. She grew up with five sisters and went to a Catholic school where she sang Gregorian chant and wrote songs for classmates. She also listened to stride and boogie-woogie piano. While in high school, she also sang in a rock band. Larsen has chosen not to work in academia and prefers working independently because she prefers solely collaborating with performers and getting her works performed. She has described composition as “placing sounds in order in time and space” and is greatly influenced by the sound of spoken American language.

This work was written for Mark Nelson. Mark Nelson has been a pioneer in new works for the tuba. He has commissioned over 30 new works for the tuba that have become standards over time. He currently teaches at Pima Community College in Arizona where he has been assistant dean. If not for the work of tuba players like Mark Nelson, our repertoire would be very limited. Great thanks go to the pioneers of tuba solo repertoire.

Concert Piece for Tuba and Piano is in ABA form. It is six minutes in length. Larsen is very specific with articulation and careful attention to detail is important on this front. The piece make frequent use of glissandi that ascend two octaves and in some cases two octaves and a major third. The middle section marked “quietly” uses intervallic motivic material from the fast sections in a more lyrical manner that should be played “as if deeply breathing.” The fast A sections of the work can be described as a fierce and sassy dance.

Careful consideration was taken to include a woman composer’s work in a recital with the theme “Milestones in Tuba and Euphonium Repertoire.” This is a work that is and should

very much be in the canon of tuba repertoire. This work has not yet been recorded on an album and that may be a future project for me.

Sonata for Tuba and Piano (1980)

Trygve Madsen (1940)

Trygve Madsen is a Norwegian pianist and composer who was born in 1940 and started playing piano at the age of six. He composed his first songs at the age of nine. He has interest in the Russian composers like Prokofiev and Shostakovich and also works of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Richard Strauss, and Ravel. He also has an interest in jazz music. These influences can be heard in this work. Madsen's music can be found on 32 compact discs and 8 of them are dedicated to exclusively his music. His music is performed as test pieces at many music conservatories.

This work was written for Roger Bobo. In 1961, he gave the first tuba recital in Carnegie Hall. Roger Bobo was instrumental in the development of the repertoire for solo tuba. He remarked about his program for the first tuba recital at Carnegie Hall, "There wasn't much to choose from."

This work was written in three movements. The first movement opens with tuba alone that states the main theme of the sonata. This theme comes back in the cadenza of the first movement as well as the third movement. The movement concludes with this theme being stated one octave lower. Madsen uses a lot of ten bar phrases in this movement.

The second movement is a sprightly scherzo. The piano is very much the star of this movement, playing cascading lines across harmonic motion in the tuba. The third movement is one of ingenious craft. Madsen uses the main themes of both the first and second movement fusing them with a new main heroic theme. The piece concludes with a pensive restatement of the original theme until the heroic theme of the third movement interjects and ends the work on a high note.

Tonight, this work will be performed on the euphonium. This work is a tool of great pedagogy for the euphonium. It is often in the middle-lower tessitura of the instrument, a register often overlooked by developing euphonium players. In my opinion, the sonata element of collaboration is more easily communicated on the euphonium because of the smaller nature of the sound; It can more easily come off as accompanimental during passages where piano has huge and intricate solos and not muddy the phrasing.

Fantasia for Euphonium (1974)

Gordon Jacob (1895-1984)

Gordon Jacob was born in 1895 and is an English composer. He has written many textbooks on orchestration including *Orchestral Technique*, *How To Read a Score*, and *The Elements of Orchestration*. He was once recorded saying “The day melody is disregarded, you may as well pack up music all together.”

This work was written for Michael Mamminga, a euphonium player from America who earned a Fulbright scholarship to study brass band in Britain. Michael Mamminga taught in the Richardson Independent School District for 36 years, 33 years as the fine arts coordinator. Mamminga has also helped make known two typographical errors in the cadenza of the published edition of the work. The high D natural is actually a high D flat and the G natural that follows is actually in E flat. Famous euphonium player and pedagogue, Brian Bowman writes of this in an article where he consults the original manuscript to confirm this.

Professor Fritz Kaenzig calls this work “the Vaughan Williams for the euphonium” (referring to the Vaughan Williams Tuba Concerto). This is a very apropos statement. They are both English composers and Gordon Jacob was in fact taught by Vaughan Williams. Both pieces also work on the same stylistic approaches to playing. A light and energetic style, and a florid sense of phrasing through rather intricate and technical slow melodies are to be captured in great performances of both these works.

The fantasia in western art music holds connotations of an improvisatory style. This is very apparent in the slow parts of this work. Balancing the marked tempo with the aspects of improvisation is a challenge present. In many recordings, performers go significantly slower than the marked tempo in the opening slow section. The fast movement makes use of a variety of articulations. However, these are a lot different than the interpretation that would be used in the Larsen. These are more buoyant. A lot of the accents and staccati in the Larsen could afford to be more metallic in nature.

The muted slow section provides an interesting color change before the final cadenza into the ending of the work. Metal mute will be used tonight, but a wooden mute would be an interesting experiment and possibly more appropriate as it would provide a softer, more velvety timbre. This work was originally written with wind band accompaniment but was scored for orchestra in 1982. This work can be heard with piano on one of Professor Fritz Kaenzig’s former students, Mark Fisher’s, compact disc, *EuFish*.

Recital #2 Program

Recital #2: The 6/4 CC Tuba as a solo voice

Grand Duet (1959) by Galina Ustvolskaya (1919-2006) arr. Brendan Ige

Postcards V for Solo Tuba (world premiere) by Anthony Plog (b. 1947)

Capriccio for Solo Tuba (1980) by Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933)

Three Furies for Solo Tuba (1993) by James Grant (b. 1954). Amy Ige, piano.

Recital #2 Program Notes

Introduction

Tubas can be divided into two categories: bass tubas and contrabass tubas. Bass tubas include the F and Eb tubas. Contrabass tubas include the CC and BBb tubas. In modern tuba recitals, the bass tuba is the primary tuba used. This tuba is often used because, while it doesn't grant the player any extra range, it tends to be more secure in the upper register than the CC tuba. This security is due to the fact that since the bass tubas are higher pitched instruments than the contrabass tubas, they are lower in their overtone series for the higher pitches. Modern tuba repertoire can be very difficult to play on the contrabass tuba because it tends to go very high. When in the upper register, the notes on a single fingering are only a whole step to a half step apart. Truly audiating the exact pitches to be played is crucial for accuracy.

Adding to the difficulty of tonight's performance is that these selections will be played on the 6/4 contrabass CC tuba. There are different sizes of tuba, from 3/4 all the way to 6/4. These are general sizes that are not codified and vary from brand to brand, but 6/4 tubas are generally the largest tubas available on the market. They are often more difficult to play in a nimble manner because of their larger size. The higher register can be flat if the player is not careful. Most tuba players who use contrabass tubas for solos use 4/4 or even 3/4 CC tubas. These tubas generally have a more easeful response than 6/4 tubas.

Why?

I have two vivid memories that I'd like to discuss before getting to the very short answer of why I have chosen to do this recital on the 6/4 CC tuba. The first memory is at the International Tuba Euphonium Conference in 2014. Professors Fritz Kaenzig and Chris Blaha performed a recital on only CC tubas. This was my favorite performance at the conference. Prior to that point, I had heard one famous player perform the Vaughan Williams on CC tuba. It wasn't my favorite performance. I had my doubts that CC tuba could be played well as a solo instrument, and strongly preferred the bass tubas. Professor Kaenzig and Dr. Blaha's performance swayed me. This was the summer before coming to study with Professor Kaenzig at the University of Michigan in the fall. I was truly inspired and moved by the artistry present.

The second memory that inspires this recital is of performing in a masterclass with a very, very famous player. He looked at me rather condescendingly and asked "Why are you playing this on CC? Do you own an F tuba?" (He knew I was a DMA student at the University of Michigan and it was known from previous interactions that I had advanced and been runner up in professional auditions.) Perhaps if I had played better, he would not have responded that way in a public forum. I sat there for a brief moment and responded, "I play it on the CC tuba because I

like the sound.” I believe this is the best and most viable reason to choose to play a particular instrument for a piece of music. I do not believe the difficulty of execution or any other reason should be the reasoning for one’s choice of instrument. I have chosen repertoire for which I believe the more voluptuous, voluminous full tone of the big CC tuba is appropriate. Although this makes the program far more difficult, I defend and believe in the choice. I love the sound and timbre of this tuba on these works.

Grand Duet (1959) by Galina Ustvol'skaya (1919-2006) arr. Brendan Ige

I have been at the University of Michigan for six years and have never performed a solo transcription for a degree recital (I have performed many transcriptions for other types of performances here). I have a staunch belief that if you do not continue to play music that has been written for your own instrument, composers will not write music for your instrument. In my opinion, one should only do a transcription for three reasons. The first reason is pedagogical. It can be very informative to the styles of those eras and give greater context to your study. The second reason is if the transcription creates a chance for collaboration between instruments that have limited choices of available repertoire. I have enjoyed working with saxophone players on piano trio transcriptions, for example. The final reason is if one truly feels that their voice can bring something to the work that is new and desirable in the context that the work was written. This work is a work that I feel sounds even better sung on the tuba than sung on the cello.

Galina Ustvol'skaya was born in St. Petersburg and studied with Dimitri Shostakovich¹ but Shostakovich once wrote to Ustvol'skaya that “It is not you that are under my influence but it is I who am under yours” (regarding composition). He was also convinced that her music would achieve worldwide renown. Ustvol'skaya, on the other hand, did not appreciate Shostakovich. In a 1994 letter she denounced her teacher, Shostakovich. That Shostakovich had proposed to her at least one time (most sources think more) may give us a clue as to what may have been going on. No sources ever confirm or deny any allegations (including Ustvol'skaya) but her music is still rarely performed in Russia due to this letter that she wrote regarding him. All capitalizations and underlined words have been left intact from the original source.

“I am writing these notes to finally assert the TRUTH about my relations with Dmitri Shostakovich. To state the TRUTH about Shostakovich himself as a composer and a person. I am not writing anything in detail. Details could have far-reaching consequences. It is high time to move on from the steadfast, stupid point of view on Shostakovich.

On my part I would like to say the following: never once during the years, even during my studies at the Conservatory which I spent in his class, was Shostakovich’s music close to me. Nor was his personality. I would be even more candid: I bluntly refused to accept his music, as in the following years. Unfortunately, Shostakovich’s personality only deepened my negative

¹ Ustvol'skaya.org- Official website to curate her memory

attitude towards him. I do not feel it necessary to further dwell on the subject. One thing remains clear: it would seem that such an outstanding figure as Shostakovich was not outstanding to me. On the contrary, it was painful and killed my best feelings. I begged God to give me strength to create and now too I ask God the same.”²

Ustvol'skaya was called “The Lady with the Hammer” by music critics. She despised that title even though it was good for marketing. This *Grand Duet* was written for the famed cellist, Mstislav Rostropovich, and although there is an element of truth to the reference of a hammer in her music, I do disagree with the reference to her as the “Lady with the Hammer.” Her music includes stark contrast, and the hammer-like sounds bring profound beauty to the simplicity of the more *espressivo* sections at the very end of the duet.

I have chosen to do some of the double stops as multiphonics, some as grace notes, and have chosen to omit some. The double stops that were half steps were better served on the tuba as grace notes. In the first movement, the octave double stops really resonate on the tuba and serve the music. Some of the other double stops were in rhythmic ostinato parts on intervals that did not ring as true with multiphonics due to the overtone series of the tuba. Arpeggiating these double stops would cause the rhythmic drive of the line to be lost. For these double stops, I have chosen to use the most melodic notes and preserve the rhythmic clarity.

I have decided on different octave displacements for various sections. Much consideration was given to preserve the melodic contour of each line. I never change octaves in the middle of a phrase and if I do choose to change octaves I have always made sure that if a timbral change needs to occur, it still happens. There are parts of this work that are played at pitch, one octave down, and even two octaves down. These decisions were made to choose the register of the tuba that best communicated the effect of the work as it was written for the cello. When making an arrangement, choice of register may be the most important of the decisions that have to be made.

The duet is primarily based on the half step. Movement one of this work opens with a gripping and biting major seventh leap (descending half step displaced by an octave) followed by a half step resolution of this theme to F#. “Grand” is an appropriate description of this duet because the whole duet leads to a meditative moment at the end where the theme we hear in the beginning is played lower, slower and much more calmly. It is almost as if this tumultuous journey of all the remaining movements leads to the granting of this theme’s peace.

² Letters from Ustvol'skaya

Unaccompanied Tuba

The second half of this recital is comprised of all works for unaccompanied tuba. I have never seen this done before. This choice stems from an artistic belief that I hold. The instruments that are regarded in classical music as primary “solo instruments” could all get up and perform a recital of unaccompanied music rather naturally. One of the most versatile is the piano. It is so natural for pianists to play unaccompanied that those works are simply called “solos,” not works for “unaccompanied piano.” I wish to hold myself to the standard of great artists on those instruments. One day, I would like to perform a recital of all unaccompanied music and be able to be commanding the entire time.

Postcards V for Solo Tuba (2020) by Anthony Plog (b. 1947)

Anthony Plog has played trumpet in the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the San Antonio Orchestra, and the Utah Symphony. He was playing as an extra trumpet with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the age of nineteen. Plog began writing exclusively for brass instruments, but now writes for a variety of media, such as opera and band, and has taught at the University of Southern California and Indiana University, as well as many other international schools. He currently lives in Freiburg, Germany.

This work was written for me and I have enjoyed collaborating with Tony very much. Every composer has a different way of collaborating, and Tony was always open to suggestions and went out of his way to elicit them. He was very concerned about creating a quality product unique to his compositional voice that I was also enthusiastic about. He treated me with a respect that I have found uncommon in artists of age and stature. He consistently puts his ego aside in pursuit of the music. I could write extensively on the good nature of this human, and urge people to seek him out for future collaboration.

This work is in five parts. Tony would send sketches to me and ask me my opinions on them. He took the ideas that I liked best and crafted beautiful music filled with “emotion and humor.”³ Much of this work is based around the pitch C. The fourth movement is a personal favorite of mine and includes singing (not multiphonics). This movement was almost omitted by Tony, but I begged him to keep it in! It is so full of zest and humor.

Another part of the process that is of note is his exploration of the lower register of the tuba in the third movement. I mentioned to him that I would love for him to explore that register and for that movement, he wrote down to a low G, lower than any note I have seen used in his solo works for tuba.

³ Anthony Plog's program notes

Capriccio for Solo Tuba (1980) by Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933)

Capriccio for Solo Tuba was written in 1980 after a commission was made by the Warsaw Symphony Orchestra for “music for an upcoming celebration.” “Time got away” from Penderecki and there were only a few days left to complete the piece; he wrote it in two to three hours. The opening motif came to him while sitting in his chair and the piece was performed a few days later (I would not want to have been that tuba player).

Micky Wrobleki did an interview with Penderecki on this work in the *ITEA Journal* in Volume 28, Number 2 in the winter of 2001. Penderecki offers much context for the work that is insightful. He gives exact tempi for many of the sections that are far from how tuba players typically perform the work. **While I do believe research of the works one is playing as well as the composer’s intention behind the work is important, I also believe that once a composer writes a work, especially an unaccompanied work, in a lot of ways the work is at the mercy of the performer’s artistry. In a similar vein, once a performer performs the work, what the audience gleans from the performance is their own. This performance is an homage to my teachers, past and present, and my performance tonight will try to reflect their artistic intentions, not Penderecki’s artistic intentions.** However, it is still interesting to see Penderecki’s intentions and time was spent bringing his intentions to life in lessons and practice. In a different performance, I look forward to trying to bring this version of the piece to life.

Below are excerpts from the article:

“There should be a variety of tempi throughout the piece.

The first tempo, marked ‘Scherzo ala Polacca’ should not be played too fast. Penderecki prefers a stately tempo in the beginning of approximately M.M. = 120 - 124. The tempo should remain rather steady until the marked *rallentando* at the bottom of page five. It should be noted that this (as should be the case with all of the other rallentandi/ritardandi) should be taken very literally. In other words, they start EXACTLY where they are printed in the music. Penderecki was VERY particular about this matter.

The second tempo marking is actually a mistake in the part. Starting at the top of page six, Penderecki prefers it MUCH faster than it is marked (a tempo). Instead, the composer would like this section to be played at M.M. = 144 -152. This tempo should be kept until the *leggiero* on the fourth system from the top of page six. At this point, Penderecki would like the performer to begin setting up for the upcoming *Tempo di Valse* with a slight holding back of the tempo.

The third tempo, marked *Tempo di Valse*, should be taken as such. Not only should it be played in the “tempo” of a waltz,” but it should also be performed in the “style of a waltz.” This is very important to the composer, because there is (for those who know the piece) a fair amount of humor in this particular section. The fourth tempo marking, located at the third system from the bottom of page six, “a tempo,” is a mistake in the part. It should actually be marked Tempo I. The waltz is over...

The fifth tempo marking is not in the printed part. It comes at the recapitulation (starting at the top of page seven). It should be marked slightly faster than Tempo I. The printed “a tempo” in the second measure of the fifth system from the bottom of page seven, is an actual “a tempo.” Starting with the pick up notes at the end of the second system from the bottom of page seven, there is an unmarked *accelerando* to the end of the piece. From this point to the end, “ya don’t look back.”

Three Furies for Solo Tuba (1993) by James Grant (b. 1954)

I emailed James Grant asking if he had “any comment on form, harmonic language or his composition process that would be notable” regarding the work. This was his response:

“Hi, Brendan, please call me Jim — thanks for writing, and my condolences on playing the Furies.

I can tell you that you probably have far more astute comments and observations than I do about the music! It was my first piece for unaccompanied tuba, and I was excited by all the possibilities technically as well as musically. So I did not hold back! Congrats on finishing up your DMA with Fritz, truly one of the Great Ones. I believe he was the second human being to take on the Furies—a dubious distinction, for sure. Please send him my very best. When is your recital? Will it be streamed? I’d love to hear you play!

Cheers from snowy Ontario, best of luck, be sure to prepare appropriately for the inebriated section.

Jim”

Something that I have learned from my process of going through these DMA recitals is not to be afraid to reach out to the composers about their pieces! They love talking about them. Sometimes these conversations will even result in new pieces being born. (This was the case for *Postcards V for Solo Tuba*.)

Fury I is given the description *decidedly jocular*. This is reflected in the capricious nature of both the motivic material and form. This is the only movement that is not in a general ABA form. It is much more free form and the themes are established early and then rapidly changed, morphed and made (frankly) more difficult. Fury II is given the subtitle *very clean, gently inebriated*. I think it is wise to list this movement with the subtitle *very clean, gently inebriated, very clean* due to the recapitulation at the end of the work. The gently inebriated section of this work gullumps, gallops, hiccups, burps and maybe even falls asleep before getting its second wind and rallying at the recapitulation. Fury III is my very favorite movement of unaccompanied music for tuba. It's rollicking with no room to breathe for the performer or the audience member (if performed effectively).

Recital Program #3

Recital #3: Tuba and Euphonium in Different Settings

The Liberation of Sisyphus (1990) by John Stevens (b. 1951)

Sonata for Tuba (1987) by Bruce Broughton (b. 1945)

Brillante for Two Euphonium and Piano (1987) by Peter Graham (b. 1958), James Long, euphonium

Morceau Symphonique (1902) by Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

Tropix for Two Tubas and Percussion (2018) by Evan Zegiel (1994) and Brendan Ige (1992), Evan Zegiel, tuba, Anthony DeMartinis, percussion. Amy Ige, piano.

Recital #3 Program Notes

This is the most interesting and eventful recital I have ever put on in my life. I hope that it is the most interesting and eventful recital of my career. I don't want to imagine what could be more of those two adjectives. With COVID-19 and quarantine my program has changed and two of my pieces had to be recorded in my living room with a cheap microphone and amplified electric keyboard.

I have come to the theme of this recital because the pieces all have a variety of accompaniments that I have performed with. There are also many different examples of accompaniments in this program. Changes to accompaniment were made to certain pieces that will be discussed in the program notes.

The Liberation of Sisyphus (1990) by John Stevens (b. 1951)

Sisyphus was punished by Zeus for his trickery and hubris. His punishment was to roll a boulder up a mountain and have it come tumbling back down when he reached the top for all of eternity in Hades. I have always enjoyed this tale of Greek mythology because it reminds me of playing music. One prepares for a performance and then when the performance is done, starts from the bottom and pushes the boulder up again, raising standards and trying to do it better. I have always told myself to find joy in pushing the rock. This piece is the programmatic depiction of Sisyphus being liberated from this fate.

John Stevens, retired professor of tuba at the University of Wisconsin- Madison, depicts Sisyphus' liberation with a series of compositional techniques. Octatonic scales throughout the work make the piece feel dreamlike in nature. The piece is separated into four parts. The first part is what I consider an introduction of Sisyphus. It is a long, mournful virtuosic cadenza. The second part has elements of notated swing rhythm in the accompaniment and complex notated rhythms in the solo part that cause it to sound improvised. These elements along with the mood of the octatonic scale creates the impression of Sisyphus' oppression. The third part is some sort of battle scene or conflict and violent glissandi, a faster tempo and large slurred leaps support this conclusion. Finally, the fourth part is Sisyphus' liberation. The beautiful melodies and final high C at the end signify Sisyphus' liberation. In terms of high range endurance, this is truly one of the hardest works in the canon. So many people have missed the high C at the end that John Stevens has said that it is optional to just play G instead of C. This is not effective because there is already a high A in the exposition. I think it is better to just try to play the C and fail and have the rock come tumbling back down. Sisyphus was punished for his hubris, after all.

I have performed this piece many times and it is very significant to me. My favorite performance was in the year that John Stevens retired (2014), as a soloist with Bowling Green State University's Euphonium-Tuba ensemble at the International Tuba and Euphonium

Conference. Roger Bobo, one of the greatest tuba virtuosos of all time, was the first person to record this piece. In his recording for the final high C he uses an Alexander tenor tuba (euphonium) with a tuba mouthpiece. I have always aspired to this recording. At the International Conference I asked him to be in the audience and he came and at the end found me and said “You played better than I recorded it but I can tell you listened to my record.” He was wrong; I didn’t play better than he recorded it, but it is a memory I will treasure forever.

This piece was intended for four tubas, four euphoniums and soloist. It is interesting to note differences in performing it with piano and performing it with tuba-euphonium ensembles. The biggest difference in the tuba-euphonium ensemble setting is that you have to play a lot louder. If playing with tuba ensemble, I do have to train my loud high endurance or the rock will come tumbling back down for sure.

Sonata for Tuba (1987) by Bruce Broughton (b. 1945)

Bruce Broughton is known widely for his film scoring of movies such as *Silverado*, *Tombstone*, and *The Rescuers Down Under*. He has been nominated twenty-four times for an Emmy and has been awarded ten. This particular piece was first a concerto for tuba and twenty-four winds written for Tommy Johnson, one of the most recorded tuba players of all time due to his status as a top movie and television recording freelancer. Later, Broughton arranged this work into a Sonata with piano and then reworked it into a concerto that could be played with a full orchestra. This recording is for tuba and amplified keyboard effects.

Broughton’s cinematic flair comes through in each of the movements. The harmonies are interesting yet accessible. Each movement centers around one particular key with modal excursions. Most recordings of this work go significantly under the tempi marked or start at the tempi marked and then drag. I believe the work loses a lot of energy and intention when played this way. When played slower, the second movement loses its structural significance because it sounds faster by comparison than it should be. I have chosen to try to record these works at the tempi marked without losing too much style or panache.

I have chosen three different effects for each of the movements. The primary reason is that the amplified keyboard piano setting was not flattering and I’d rather do something different than a cheap imitation of what something is supposed to be. The effects were simply chosen by selecting an effect viscerally that I felt enhanced the mood being portrayed in a fun way. I do think these effects could be perceived as effective, comical, or both!

The first movement has many repeated notes and light articulations. The keyboard setting for this was some sort of “electric bass.” I do not think it sounds like a bass but it is effective. I have always seen this piece as a moderate gallop through the desert on camels. In the more lyrical sections, the camera pans out and you see the majesty of the desert. The accompaniment helps keep the camels moving along.

The second movement, Aria, sounds alien to me. It is the most harmonically complex of the three movements. The keyboard effect is supposed to be “strings” and once again, doesn’t really sound that way. It gives the impression of a nineties horror film at times and at other times, is truly beautiful. This is the only movement that deviates from sonata form. The third movement always reminds me of gears, some sort of perpetual motion that is excited and ambivalent. The vibraphone setting does resemble a vibraphone here and it is fun. The playful 6/8 feel is greatly enhanced by going the marked tempo. While this is not how I imagined my final DMA dissertation going, I am happy because I never would have done something like this if not for quarantine.

Brillante (1987) by Peter Graham (b. 1958)

Brillante is a theme and variations on “Rule Britannia.” It was composed by Peter Graham as a duet for the Centenary concert in 1987. Peter Graham is a Scottish composer who studied with Edward Gregson. He writes a tremendous amount of British brass band music. *Brillante* was premiered by the touring euphonium virtuoso duo, The Childs Brothers. This duo consisted of Nick and Robert Childs, some of the finest European euphonium players of that era.

This piece is significant to me because it is the first work I ever performed on euphonium. I was invited by current DMA colleague, James Long, to be a guest artist with the Dublin Silver Band. When I performed this piece for the first time, it was in front of a British-style brass band as originally intended. British-style brass band includes many instruments not often seen in the American-style band such as the cornet, flugelhorn, (cylindrical) baritone, and tenor horn. There are no trumpets or horns in a traditional British brass band. Some of my best memories playing euphonium are performing this work.

This work was later adapted to be a solo work. This is interesting because pieces are not usually adapted from duets to become solos. *Brillante* follows the form of most theme and variations. It opens with an exposition and small cadenza followed by the theme. After that, there are triple-tonguing, double-tonguing, and lyrical (in minor) variations.

The accompaniment used in this recording is piano. As in *The Liberation of Sisyphus*, the biggest difference in playing in front of the ensemble is projection. Another issue more present in *Brillante* is the issue of working with the conductor. With music at such high velocity ten beats per minute too fast or too slow can be very technically jarring. I practiced so that I could perform this at a wide variety of tempi to succeed in front of a conductor.

Morceau Symphonique (1902) by Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

Morceau Symphonique was originally written for trombone and piano for the Paris Conservatory’s annual trombone class competition. Alexandre Guilmant was an organist and wrote primarily organ music. This led to the decision to use organ as the accompaniment to this

work. Much of this piece actually suits the organ better than the piano. The sustain of the organ lends itself to some of the more sparse writing in the opening and some of the cadences sound like beautiful amens, which makes sense as Guilmant was a church organist for thirty years before his appointment to the Paris Conservatory as organ professor in 1894. He also helped to found the *Schola Cantorum de Paris*, a rival to the Paris Conservatory, in 1894.

While this work is originally written for the trombone, *Morceau Symphonique* is a major staple of the euphonium repertoire. It is often assigned at a younger age but is a deceptively difficult piece with many challenges present regarding range, intonation and clear articulations. Many recordings of this piece exist by great artists such as Ron Barron (trombone) and David Werden (euphonium). While euphonium is not my primary instrument, tuba players almost always teach both tubists and euphoniumists and it is my belief that to teach I must have learned.

This piece can be cleanly divided into two parts. A lyrical section and a quicker section in sonata form. The Paris Conservatory had many test pieces from this time and all are quite difficult. They all usually utilize the full range of the instrument with both lyrical and technical styles. The first part centers on Eb minor and the second Eb major. In the quick section, there are excursions to Bb, F and Ab in the development. The piece ends with hints of Eb minor coming back and chromatic sequences culminating in Eb major.

Tropix (2018) by Evan Zegiel (1994) and Brendan Ige (1992)

Tropix is indeed a piece by two composers. I composed my part and Evan composed his part over mine. This process has proved incredibly fruitful for us and we have plans to make many more duets this way. Part of this process that I felt was successful is that the person who starts the composition piece composes what resembles a bassline. When I sent this piece to Evan, I had certain harmonies that I heard over my bassline. It was exciting to see the places that the harmonies were the same and where he took a completely different approach!

The bassline I composed has elements of reggae basslines as well as chiptune, an electric form of music often used for video games. Some people even remark that this work sounds like something out of Mario Kart. Evan has remarked at one point that elements of metal and rock were evoked. This fusion of styles creates something truly unique and accessible. The inspiration for my bassline came from my childhood days living in Hawaii. One picture I have often had in my mind while performing this piece, a very intoxicated Sebastian, the crab, (from The Little Mermaid) doing a wild, back beat dance.

Tropix was originally composed as a tuba duet with percussion being added in later. It can and has been performed both ways. It is much easier to perform this work with percussion to help drive the piece forward. This piece is in sonata form. The development section takes some chromatic excursions, modulating by half a step at times and utilizing the tritone for unique flavor.