

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation

THE AMERICAN TUBA SONATA:
A SURVEY OF WORKS WRITTEN
BETWEEN 1959 - 2019

James Cipriano, Doctor of Musical Arts 2023

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The purpose of this project is to explore the sonata repertoire written for tuba and piano by exclusively American composers. The musical selections occupy three distinct time frames during my educational and professional career and have been presented in three recitals in line with those periods. They were organized in the following manner; works that were standard repertoire for university students in the 1990s, works that appeared early in the 21st century that now hold a place in the standard repertoire, and works that have been composed within the last ten years:

American Tuba Sonatas dating from 1959-1976

Walter Hartley - *Sonata for Tuba and Piano*

Louis V. Pisciotta - *Sonata for Tuba and Piano*

Alec Wilder - *Sonata No. 1 for Tuba and Piano*

Bruce Broughton - *Sonata for Tuba and Piano*

American Tuba Sonatas dating from 1998-2007

Stephen Rush - *Tuba Sonata*

Anthony Plog - *Tuba Sonata*

Barbara York - *Sonata for Tuba and Piano: "Shamanic Journey"*

John Cheetham - *Sonata for Tuba and Piano*

American Tuba Sonatas dating from 2014-2019

Quinn Mason - *Sonata for Tuba and Piano: "Darkplace"*

Ian Lester - *Sonata: "Hades: God of the Underworld"*

Frank Lynn Payne - *Short Sonata*

Andrew Lewinter - *Sonata for Tuba (or Bass Trombone) and Piano*

THE AMERICAN TUBA SONATA: A SURVEY OF MUSIC BETWEEN
1959 - 2019

by

James Cipriano

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since its invention in 1835, the tuba has served as the brass instrument bass voice of the orchestra and concert/military band ensembles. After decades of instrument evolution from the serpent to the ophicleide, there was finally a suitable bass voice brass instrument that was able to blend with and support the brass section. The tuba gained rapid acceptance in the Romantic era orchestra, and composers such as Liszt, Wagner, and Berlioz were among the instrument's early champions. The tuba to this day maintains its place as the lowest brass voice in the modern orchestra. While quickly finding acceptance as an ensemble instrument, the solo repertoire was much slower to develop. There is no Dvořák tuba concerto, or Bartók tuba sonata. It wouldn't be until 1953 when a composer of international stature would write a concerto for the tuba, the *Tuba Concerto in F Minor* by Ralph Vaughan Williams. The instrumental sonata is a form that composers have used for centuries to display an instrument's virtuosity; the following year saw the instrument's first sonata written by a composer of repute, the *Sonata for Bass Tuba and Piano* by Paul Hindemith.

Before these pieces, many of the solo compositions published for the tuba were either theme and variations types of pieces, transcriptions, or music that otherwise would underscore the stereotypical caricature of a slow and lumbering instrument. In his autobiography *Mr. Tuba*, Classical Music Hall of Fame tubist Harvey Phillips commented:

Before 1950, the tuba as a solo instrument played sea chanteys and polkas-themes with variations and characteristic novelties, destined to be played, if at all, on a program of "a summer band concert in the park." They were at best a curiosity, an entertaining feature, a light distraction from the "real" band selections on the program. In fact, hardly a solo for brass existed that was not a theme and variations. Every piece was worked under the same formula: theme, cadenza, variations, and closing. One of the most popular is "Solo

Pomposo," which is often the first tuba solo challenging the developing high school tubist. It was mine.¹

The compositions of Vaughan Williams and Hindemith were to usher in a renaissance of solo composition. American tubist Harvey Phillips was an active performer in the mid to late 20th-century and was the spearhead for the compositional movement in the United States. He commissioned a great number of solo pieces for tuba throughout his career, ranging from concerti, chamber music features, and sonatas. The modern instrumental sonata is a form that evolved from the Baroque period trio sonatas, pieces for two or more instruments and continuo. In the Classical period, composers further codified the normal and expected devices of the modern form. The sonata as a work is generally more collaborative between the instruments, in contrast to the concerto, which exists to display a performer's virtuosity. Starting with Phillips' efforts, the sonata repertoire for tuba soloists continues to grow.

¹ Harvey Phillips, *Mr. Tuba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 397.

Chapter 2: Recital No. 1 - November 22, 2022

Sonata for Tuba and Piano (1967) - Walter S. Hartley

Walter Sinclair Hartley (1927-2016) was born in Washington D.C. and attended the Eastman School of Music for all of his degrees, receiving a PhD in composition in 1953. Some of his teachers were Burrill Phillips, Thomas Canning, Herbert Elwell, Bernard Rogers, Howard Hanson and Dante Fiorillo.² He taught piano and composition at the National Music Camp, today known as the Interlochen Arts Camp. Later he taught at Fredonia State University, Fredonia, NY until his retirement. He then moved to Charlotte, NC and held a one-year composer-in-residence position with the Music Department at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. With over 300 acknowledged works, Hartley was a prolific composer of wind music, especially for the saxophone and the tuba, even composing his *Double Concerto* for solo saxophone, tuba and wind octet. Hartley's personal thoughts on writing for the tuba are interesting to hear:

The Tuba as solo instrument, or as soloist in an ensemble, should essentially and ideally be a melodic bass. It is particularly suited to obbligato [sic] (melodic accompaniment of another melody) or other contrapuntal treatment...The most generally useful melodic range in tubas (contrabass tubas in CC or in BBb) is A² to A; the high baritone and contrabass register should be used sparingly, especially for younger players...Melodies conceived for higher register instruments or voices...tend to be unsatisfactory, for reasons of harmonic balance, when transcribed for the tuba.³

² "Walter Hartley," Walter Hartley, accessed June 11, 2023, <https://www.walterhartley.com/#bio>.

³ Gary Bird, *Program Notes for the Solo Tuba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 45-46.

The *Sonata for Tuba and Piano* is one of Hartley's most extensive solo works. It's composed in four movements with the third proceeding *attacca* into the fourth. It's a twelve-tone work, but that isn't to say it's not tonal. Hartley described his own style as "freely tonal and broadly based on classical forms"⁴ (Fig. 1).



Figure 1: Prime version of the tone row from *Sonata for Tuba and Piano*.⁵

The row is the major unifying force of this piece. Hartley uses the prime version in a number of different presentations. The first sounds of the work are the unaccompanied solo tuba in a marcato and declamatory style marked *forte*, then piano enters three bars later marked *piano* and *legato*. The opening *Andante* of the first movement serves as a recitative for the solo tuba for 21 measures before erupting into an *Allegro agitato* that eventually concludes the movement after exhausting its energy. An interesting treatment of the row occurs as the music transitions from the end of the first movement into the start of the second. Hartley presents the first four notes of the row retrograde in the last two measures of the first movement. Hartley transposes these notes and then uses them as the basis of the melody to start off the scherzo-like second movement *Allegretto grazioso* in the piano (Fig. 2).

⁴ "Walter S. Hartley (1927-2016)," Home Page of Ken Drobnak, accessed June 11, 2023, <https://redevelop.drobnakbrass.com.conc8/index.php/features/ITEA-Historian/itea-lifetime-achievement-recipients/walter-hartley>.

⁵ Walter Hartley, *Sonata for Tuba and Piano* (Bryn Mawr: Theodore Presser Company, 1967), 5-6.

2. Allegretto grazioso (♩ = c. 66)

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is for Tuba, in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The bottom staff is for Piano, in grand staff (treble and bass clefs), 4/4 time, with a dynamic marking of *p*. The music shows a melodic figure being passed between the instruments.

Figure 2: Treatment of the row between movements I mm. 77-78 and II mm. 1-4.⁶

The tuba and piano exchange this figure and fragments of the longer melody throughout the movement. The slow *Adagio sostenuto* third movement treats the row with a series of different rhythmic permutations using a theme and variations construct, but doesn't alter much the order of notes, relying on the prime version for much of the melodic exchange between the tuba and piano. The movement ends with the piano presenting the row very slowly over a pedal point of row's first note B in the contrabass octave. The piano sustains a decaying chord that proceeds directly into the tuba's first entrance of the fourth movement *Allegro moderato, con anima* (Fig. 3).

4. Allegro moderato, con anima (♩ = c. 120)

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is for Tuba, in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a dynamic marking of *p marc.*. The bottom staff is for Piano, in grand staff (treble and bass clefs), 4/4 time, with a dynamic marking of *p*. The piano part features a sustained chord with a decaying effect, indicated by a dashed line and the number 8 below it.

Figure 3: Opening of the fourth movement of Hartley's *Sonata*, mm. 1-5.⁷

⁶ Hartley, *Sonata*, 6.

⁷ Hartley, *Sonata*, 13.

Hartley had some concerns regarding the fourth movement's technical execution:

A solo tuba must be extremely well played to avoid untoward associations in the listener (foghorns, large ruminant animals, etc). Perhaps the most dangerous passage I have written in this respect is the beginning of the Finale of my *Sonata* (1967) which could easily become ridiculous unless lightly and cleanly articulated.⁸

Most of the melodic material of the movement proceeds in this sequential rising and falling manner set up by the first tuba entrance, and is often imitated by the piano throughout. Not until about the halfway point of the movement does Hartley remind us of the unifying tone row. The movement concludes in a thrilling manner with the tuba and piano softly alluding to the opening measures of the movement before both loudly and authoritatively stating the prime row one final time to close the piece out.

Sonata (1961) - Louis V. Pisciotta

Not much has been written about Louis Victor Pisciotta (1924-2011). Born in Manhasset, NY, Pisciotta would go on to attend Juilliard where he studied piano. He later went to University of Nebraska to study organ and would eventually complete a doctorate in composition at Indiana University. Pisciotta was the choir director of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church Manhasset, in New York and served on the faculty of Queensboro Community College.⁹ His limited compositional output was mainly focused on vocal music, but there are a few surviving instrumental pieces. He had a *Violin Sonata* premiered in 1991 in Vermont where he was a member of the Consortium of Vermont Composers. His *Sonata* for tuba dates from 1961 and was premiered by Ivan Hammond at Indiana University in 1962. New York City tubist Toby Hanks in

⁸ Bird, *Program Notes*, 47.

⁹ "Louis Pisciotta," Brattleboro Reformer, accessed June 11, 2023, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/brattleboro/name/louis-pisciotta-obituary?id=26848808>.

the liner notes for his compact disc recording *Sonata* stated “It utilizes 20th century materials in a predominantly lyrical style and has an extremely challenging piano score.”¹⁰

Pisciotta’s *Sonata* is in three movements with the second proceeding immediately into the third. The majority of the melodic material between tuba and piano is quite lyrical, with occasional passages in a more *marcato* style for added contrast. The first movement is marked *Allegro* and follows the typical sonata movement form with the expected exposition, development, and recapitulation. Pisciotta’s key relationships are where some “20th century materials” enter into play. The music very quickly establishes B minor as the tonal center of the movement and indeed the first theme is in the tonic key. After a transition to the second theme, those with a Classical/Romantic era ear might expect one of three possible key areas: the composer might stay in the tonic of the movement, or move to the relative major of a minor key, or maybe the key of the dominant. Pisciotta eschews all of these options entirely, and instead tonicizes the second theme a tritone away into F major. When this theme returns in the recapitulation, as anticipated in traditional sonata form, Pisciotta remains in the B minor tonic of the movement (Fig 4).

The second movement *Sostenuto* really demonstrates Pisciotta’s primary background as a vocal composer. This movement is a very slow recitative for tuba. The tone clusters at the opening of the movement in the piano remind us we are listening to a mid-20th century piece of music, and interject between the tuba’s solo lines, growing more dense and insistent as the music progresses. The movement is one long crescendo of intensity between the soloist and pianist, and both parts become more and more active rhythmically as if to emphasize their points of a debate. After a quick repose of soft dynamics and relaxed gravity to conclude the second movement, the

¹⁰ Toby Hanks, “Louis Pisciotta,” Liner notes for *Sonata* by Toby Hanks, Planesong PS101, 1996.

music transitions without break to an explosion of technical arpeggiations in the piano that signal the arrival of the third movement *Vivace* in D major tonality that listeners could reasonably expect, D major being the relative major to the opening movement's B minor. However, Pisciotta doesn't commit fully to major tonality; instead he rollicks back and forth between parallel major and minor tonality, another typical device of 20th century music (Fig 5). Another 20th century aspect of Pisciotta's writing is his melodic construction and contours. Often he calls for wide, disjunct, and angular phrases using difficult melodic intervals. This compositional device is especially apparent throughout the third movement (Fig 6). All of these aspects of the movement Pisciotta develops before coming to a rousing and emphatic conclusion.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Tuba and Piano. The first system, labeled 'C', covers measures 32-40 and is in C major. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and slurs. The tuba part has a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings like *pp* and *8*. The second system, labeled 'Q', covers measures 199-207 and is in D major. The piano part continues with similar rhythmic patterns. The tuba part has a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings like *pp* and *8*.

Figure 4: Key relationships of the second theme of Pisciotta’s *Sonata*, mm. 32-40; 199-207.¹¹

The image shows the beginning of a musical score for Tuba and Piano. The tempo is marked 'Vivace' with a quarter note equal to 126. The score is in 2/4 time. The piano part features a complex rhythmic pattern with slurs. The tuba part has a melodic line with slurs.

Figure 5: Tonality ambiguity to start the third movement, mm 1-3¹²

¹¹ Louis V. Pisciotta, *Sonata* (1961) (n.p.: Sound Ideas Publications, 1989), 3-13.

¹² Pisciotta, *Sonata*, 20.



Figure 6: Angular melodic construction in the third movement, mm. 8-14.¹³

Sonata for Tuba and Piano (1959) - Alec Wilder

Alexander (Alec) Lafayette Chew Wilder (1907-1980) was born in Rochester, NY and studied composition at the Eastman School of Music. He found early success as a songwriter and arranger in New York City in the 1930s, writing many popular songs for singers such as Mildred Bailey, Cab Calloway, Bing Crosby, Ethel Waters, Mabel Mercer and in the 1940s, Frank Sinatra. He would later publish a book titled *The American Popular Song 1900-1950*.¹⁴ In the 1950s, Wilder met tubist Harvey Phillips in New York and they quickly became the best of friends. Of all of the composers that Phillips was able to commission and convince to write pieces for him, it was Wilder who wrote the most music for him. Wilder's style as a concert hall composer was eccentric and defies characterizations. It was “jazzy”, but not jazzy enough for jazz artists to take seriously. It was “classical”, but not nearly avant-garde enough for classical musicians based on developments in art music in the second half of the 20th century. Only much later in life did he start to find acceptance as a composer. Gunther Schuller, author of the Grove Music Online biography of Alec Wilder stated succinctly:

An unclassifiable ‘American original’, Wilder drew on a wide variety of personal musical influences. In his best works he was able to forge a style uniquely his own, distinguished by those elements he most cherished in other composers: an absence of clutter, honest sentiment, unexpectedness, singing melodies and sinuous phrases.¹⁵

¹³ Pisciotta, *Sonata*, 20.

¹⁴ “Alec Wilder,” Grove Music Online, accessed June 13, 2023, <https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.30309>.

¹⁵ Grove, “Alec Wilder.”

Written for his good friend Harvey Phillips, Wilder's *Sonata* is in four movements and displays all of the characteristics that make his music his own. The first movement *Moderato* is legato throughout and opens with a two measure piano introduction whose theme returns regularly in the movement. The tuba sings through three different legato sections and the movement closes with the soloist combining elements of the first two melodies to bring the music to a graceful conclusion. In the *Allegro* second movement we see the dualities of Wilder's jazz and classical writing. It's brisk and scherzo-like music; in one passage the piano maintains a jazzy ostinato reminiscent of Tin Pan Alley while the tuba executes a straight eighth note pattern (Fig 7).

The image shows a musical score for Tuba and Piano. The Tuba part is in the bass clef and features a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs, marked *mp*. The Piano part is in the treble and bass clefs and features a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets and slurs.

Figure 7: Juxtaposition of elements in Wilder's Sonata second movement, mm. 7-10.¹⁶

Not to exclude the tuba from jazzy moments, Wilder in a contrasting slow interlude gives the tuba a more burlesque style of melody (Fig 8).

The image shows a musical score for Tuba and Piano. The Tuba part is in the bass clef and features a melodic line with eighth notes and slurs, marked *mp*. The Piano part is in the treble and bass clefs and features a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. The tempo is marked "Swing (♩ = c. 72)".

Figure 8: Jazz influenced tuba melody, Wilder's Sonata second movement, mm. 28-30.¹⁷

¹⁶ Alec Wilder, *Sonata* (1959) (Newton Centre: Margun Music, 1963), 6-7.

¹⁷ Wilder, *Sonata*, 8.

Tubist and educator Gary Bird in his book *Program Notes for the Solo Tuba* calls the third movement *Andante* of Wilder's *Sonata* the "spiritual core of the work... There are clear motivic and emotional links to the first movement."¹⁸ Not only the first movement, there are also moments that evoke the second movement. Wilder quotes the first movement opening piano solo at the emotional high point of the third, approximately two-thirds of the way through the music (Fig 9).

The image displays two musical excerpts for Tuba and Piano. The left excerpt, labeled 'Tuba' and 'Piano', shows the first three measures of the first movement. The piano part begins with a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand, marked with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The right excerpt, also labeled 'Tuba' and 'Piano', shows measures 79 and 80. The piano part features a more complex, arpeggiated texture in both hands, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Both excerpts include a tuba part, which is mostly silent in the first excerpt and has a few notes in the second.

Figure 9: First movement quotes in *Andante*, Wilder *Sonata*, mm. 1-3; mm. 79-80.¹⁹

Additionally, Wilder quotes a jazzy piano figure of the second movement interlude (Fig 10).

The fourth movement *Allegro* serves as a tour-de-force for tuba and piano and is a stark contrast to all of the lyrical writing that precedes. Muscular, angular arpeggiations are traded between the instruments throughout the brief movement before ending decisively with a moment that feels like Wilder is slamming the door shut on the piece.

¹⁸ Bird, *Program Notes*, 113.

¹⁹ Wilder, *Sonata*, 14.

Figure 10: Second movement quotes in *Andante*, m 55; mm. 40-41.²⁰

Sonata (Concerto) for Tuba and Piano (1976) - Bruce Broughton

Bruce Broughton (b. 1945) is a prolific composer of music for film and television. Born in Los Angeles, CA and a graduate of the University of Southern California, Broughton quickly became an established and respected figure in musical Hollywood. His career television series credits include the music for *Gunsmoke*, *Hawaii Five-o*, *Dallas*, and *Jag*. He has been nominated for and received multiple Emmy awards for his television work and soon after starting his television career he became in demand as a composer for movies. His film credits include *Harry and the Hendersons*, *Tombstone*, *Young Sherlock Holmes*, and received an Oscar nomination for *Silverado*. Also the composer of many concert works, he has this to say regarding the balance between writing for the concert stage and for the cameras:

I don't kid myself that I will ever become famous as a concert composer. I don't think Stravinsky's reputation has anything to fear because I'm hot on his heels. But I do feel that it is important to write concert music for myself - to write foreground music and not just always background music...I just get tired of writing the Schubert piano accompaniment parts and not ever hearing anybody sing...I work on music that *I* want to hear and pieces that people will ask for...I like to write music for anything and everything, because they all have different interesting problems to solve, they all keep me from being bored, and they all go out to the people.²¹

²⁰ Wilder, *Sonata*, 12.

²¹ Michael Schelle, *The Score: Interviews with Film Composers* (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 1999), 113.

He has taught film composition at the University of Southern California and the University of California Los Angeles.

Broughton's *Sonata* is in three movements and dates from 1976. It exists in two forms, the first being the original version for tuba and piano. Upon the initial positive reception, Broughton then orchestrated the work and it became the *Concerto for Tuba and Wind Orchestra*, leading to more performance opportunities. This new version was premiered in 1978 at the third International Tuba Euphonium Symposium Workshop in Los Angeles. In addition to the Vaughan Williams and Hindemith pieces, Broughton's *Sonata* is one of the most extensively performed, studied, and recorded works in the serious tubist's repertoire. The first movement *Allegro Moderato* opens with a rhythmic cell in the left hand of the piano, and this cell drives an insistent motor rhythm throughout the movement. He uses it throughout the first theme area when the tuba enters, and also to signal the retransition into the recapitulation of the movement. Interestingly enough, as important as this rhythmic cell is to the drive of the music, the tuba never takes it up until the very final measures of the movement (Fig 11). The second movement *Aria* is a lyrical song for tuba and piano throughout. It's reminiscent of unrequited love; Broughton plays with the listener's emotions through extensive use of mode mixture. At a key moment leading towards the movement's climax, Broughton presents the opening motif in major mode in the piano while the tuba answers in parallel minor (Fig 12). The constant misdirection of major or minor tonality leaves the music with an uncertain feeling that desperately seeks resolution, which only finally arrives to close the movement. The last movement *Allegro leggero* is spirited and makes serious technical demands of both performers. Broughton keeps the music moving forward with rising and falling sequences for the duration of the music in both parts, and uses the device to bring the music to a spectacular conclusion (Fig 13).

Allegro Moderato ♩ = 138

Tuba

Piano

Figure 11: Rhythmic cell, Broughton's *Sonata* first movement, mm. 1-2; mm. 109-110.²²

Tuba

Piano

Tuba

Piano

Figure 12: Mode mixture, Broughton's *Sonata* second movement, mm. 24-28.²³

²² Bruce Broughton, *Sonata (Concerto) for Tuba and Piano* (Boca Raton: Masters Music Publications, Inc., 1978), 1-9.

²³ Broughton, *Sonata*, 11-12.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Tuba and Piano. The first system covers measures 224-233. The Tuba part is in the bass clef, and the Piano part is in the grand staff. The Piano part starts with a forte (f) dynamic and a 'secco' marking. The Tuba part has a melodic line with various articulations. The Piano part has a complex accompaniment with many accidentals and dynamic markings.

Figure 13: Sequences, Broughton's *Sonata* third movement, mm. 224-233.²⁴

²⁴ Broughton, *Sonata*, 23-24.

Chapter 3: Recital No. 2 - April 24, 2023

Tuba Sonata (1998) - Stephen Rush

Stephen Rush (b. 1958) is currently a distinguished Professor of Music at the University of Michigan and also serves as the director of the Digital Music Ensemble. He studied at the Eastman School of Music with Gunther Schuller, David Liptak and Samuel Adler. His website biography further expands upon Rush's accomplishments:

Rush's compositional output includes seven operas, chamber music (some of which is standard repertory), orchestra work and over 150 scores for dancers. His compositions have been recorded and performed worldwide by the Warsaw and Detroit Symphonies and members of the New York and Cleveland Philharmonics, and recently, classical ensembles in Spain, Korea, and Switzerland. As a performer, Rush has presented his multi-media work in Japan, Europe (Florence, Berlin, and Budapest, etc.), Latin America, and India... Stephen Rush works frequently as a jazz musician, performing with Roscoe Mitchell, Henry Grimes, Steve Swell, Eugene Chadbourne, the late Peter Kowald, and his own New York based trio Yuganaut, with Tom Abbs and Geoff Mann...²⁵

Rush's *Tuba Sonata* dates from 1998 and the composer offers the following program notes in the published score:

Tuba Sonata was written in the year 1998, the year I "went up" for tenure at the University of Michigan. I felt it was important that I used my musical energy at that time for something that would be blatantly healing and loving, and specifically directed toward my family. Toward that end, I ventured to write a piece for my son, Peter. This work is a departure from my more experimental work of late, and is a kind of "retrospective" in terms of syntactical and formal approach.²⁶

The *Sonata* is written in three movements, each proceeding directly into the next uninterrupted.

The *Heroically* marked first movement begins exactly as described, with a bold fanfare-like statement from the tuba and piano, followed by a contrasting *cantabile con moto* lyrical section.

What follows musically is an extended section of mixed and compound meters for the duration of the movement. Rush uses some creative treatment for the rhythm; to open this section the piano

²⁵ "Biography," Stephen Rush: Composer, Pianist, Author, accessed June 16, 2023, https://stephenjrushmusic.com/?page_id=2.

²⁶ Stephen Rush, *Tuba Sonata* (New London: Tuba-Euphonium Press, 2004), n.p.

plays an oscillating figure marking the pulse of the rhythm while the tuba sustains a single note. The tuba will change notes every four measures, but the piano remains unfaltering in its ostinato (Fig 14).

The musical score for Figure 14 shows two staves: Tuba and Piano. The Tuba staff is in the bass clef and plays a single note that changes every four measures. The Piano staff is in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and plays a rhythmic ostinato. The tempo is marked 'mp'.

Figure 14: Rush's use of rhythmic ostinato in the first movement of *Sonata*, mm. 23-26.²⁷

Later in this section there's another unique use of rhythm between the tuba and piano. It's rare for composers to use two different beat groupings between parts, but Rush does so here between the tuba and piano, while maintaining the same hemiola feeling of rhythm across the 3/4 measures of this passage as he does earlier in 6/8 meter in the Figure 14 passage (Fig 15).

The musical score for Figure 15 shows two staves: Tuba and Piano. The Tuba staff is in the bass clef and plays a rhythmic figure that changes every four measures. The Piano staff is in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and plays a rhythmic ostinato. The tempo is marked 'mp'.

Figure 15: Rush's beat grouping relationship in the first movement of *Sonata*, mm. 54-57.²⁸

The movement eventually concludes with another *cantabile* passage evocative of the opening measures before transitioning into the second movement *Adagio*. The second movement proceeds

²⁷ Rush, *Sonata*, 3.

²⁸ Rush, *Sonata*, 6.

passacaglia-like in that the tuba and the right hand of the piano repeat the same four measure motive four times in this short movement (Fig 16). The first statement is rather sparse in texture, while each subsequent statement grows in intensity and density in the piano left hand.

The image shows a musical score for Tuba and Piano. The Tuba part is written in the bass clef, and the Piano part is written in the treble and bass clefs. The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The Tuba part consists of a four-measure motive repeated four times. The Piano part consists of a four-measure motive repeated four times, with increasing intensity and density in the piano left hand. The score includes a triplet in the final measure of the Tuba part.

Figure 16: Second melodic statement, second movement Rush's *Sonata*, mm. 135-138.²⁹

After a brief transition, the music then proceeds directly into the third movement *Allegro*. Here Rush recalls themes and ideas from the first movement. This is also a movement of extended sections using mixed and compound meters, and the concluding section of the piece sees the return of the same kind of writing that starts in m. 23 of the first movement, with sustained notes in the tuba and an oscillating ostinato in the piano, this time written in 7/8 for the duration of the 30 measures of this section. The work concludes with a forceful rhythmic and melodic figure with the tuba and piano doubled in unison and octaves.

Tuba Sonata (2006/07) - Anthony Plog

Anthony Plog (b. 1947) was born in Glendale, CA. and studied trumpet with Thomas Stevens and James Stamp at the University of California, Los Angeles. He began his career as a performer with the San Antonio Symphony and Utah Symphony, and was a founding member of

²⁹ Rush, *Sonata*, 14.

the Summit Brass Ensemble, an organization formed in 1986 composed of the premier brass instrument players in the United States.³⁰ He then turned to composition full-time and has held teaching positions at the University of Southern California, the Music Academy of the West, and Indiana University; and overseas positions at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, the Malmö Academy of Music, the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, the Norwegian Academy of Music, and the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg.³¹ He still lives and works in Freiburg, Germany.

Plog's *Tuba Sonata* was written for a consortium led by Dr. Janet Tracy, who also premiered it in 2006 at the South Central Tuba/Euphonium Conference at University of Texas at Austin.³² The composer offers the following notes in the printed score:

The *Sonata for Tuba and Piano* begins calmly and lyrically, and this opening theme sets the mood for the entire piece. It is followed by a sprightly second theme, and the opening theme brings the movement to a close. Movement two is a playful Scherzo, and the use of the mute throughout this movement provides yet another color for the tuba. Towards the end of the movement a single line is passed back and forth between the tuba and piano. A reflective quality permeates the third movement, and is interrupted in the middle by a short, nervous *allegro vivace* featuring mixed meters. This slow movement leads directly to the fourth movement, whose opening motif has already been stated in the first movement. This time the motif is short, tense, and is developed in a variety of different ways. A final ostinato coda is based on a fragment of a tuba theme from the first movement.³³

As Plog states, the two main themes of the first movement *Calm and flowing* exhibit significant contrast in style (Fig 17). On display in the *Presto* second movement is one of the hallmarks of Plog's melodic writing; extensive use of quick, scalar, and meandering chromatic passages. He employs the same technique in his other popular solo pieces for tuba, the *Tuba Concerto* and *Three Miniatures*. The section Plog alludes to in his program notes is like a relay race hand off as

³⁰ Jeremy Seth Crawford, "The Tuba Sonata by Anthony Plog: Preparation And Performance Through the Lens of His Repertoire For Solo Tuba" (DMA diss., University of Alabama, 2014), 5, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

³¹ "Biography," Anthony Plog, accessed June 17, 2023, <https://anthonyplog.com/about/biography>.

³² Anthony Plog, *Tuba Sonata for Tuba and Piano* (Vuarmarens: Editions BIM, 2006), n.p.

³³ Plog, *Sonata*, n.p.

the melody dovetails between the two instruments (Fig 18). The third movement is marked *Slow and with freedom*; the outer slow sections function as a recitative with the aforementioned “nervous” middle section interjecting, disturbing the otherwise relative calm of the music.

Figure 17: Thematic contrast, Plog’s *Sonata* first movement, mm. 3-7; mm. 36-40.³⁴

Figure 18: Melodic dovetailing, Plog’s *Sonata* second movement, mm. 28-31.³⁵

³⁴ Plog, *Sonata*, 3-5.

³⁵ Plog, *Sonata*, 13.

The third movement proceeds *attacca* into the fourth. The mood between movements changes dramatically from broad and expressive to abrupt and clipped. Plog reimagines the first theme melody from the first movement the same way; at first presented softly and lyrically and now transformed to its new terse identity (Fig. 19).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Tuba and Piano. The top system shows a melodic line in the Tuba part, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Piano part provides harmonic accompaniment. The bottom system is marked 'Allegro (♩ = 100-116)' and 'f', showing a more rhythmic and intense version of the melodic material. The Tuba part in the second system features a series of eighth notes, while the Piano part has a more active accompaniment.

Figure 19: Melodic transformation, Plog’s *Sonata*, first and fourth movement, I mm. 68-68; IV mm. 1-7.

The final ostinato Plog refers to is based on the first four notes in m. 36 as seen in Figure 17. This phrase is exchanged eight times at the same pitch level with increasing ferocity before Plog finally quotes the first movement passage literally to conclude the work.

Sonata for Tuba and Piano “Shamanic Journey” - Barbara York

Canadian-American composer Barbara York (1949-2020) was born in Manitoba, Winnipeg and attended McGill University. After graduating, York worked in the theater and would later move to Kansas City in the summer of 1993. She would find work as a collaborative pianist, elementary school teacher, and accompanist for school choirs. Once she was asked to perform with tubist Michael Fischer at a recital at Pittsburg State University. She then became

fascinated with solo tuba and thus embarked on her career as a composer for tuba. York composed over 40 works involving the tuba or euphonium to include concerti, sonatas, duets, and chamber music. She spent the last years of her life living in Pittsburg, KS, working as a collaborative pianist with the university and at conferences sponsored by the International Tuba Euphonium Association. York became an American citizen in 2017.³⁶ She had this to say about working with low brass players in a series of interviews for the International Tuba Euphonium Association Journal:

“Low brass players are some of the best people I’ve ever met. They’re a great community, they really are. They’re laid back, and they’re funny. They drink beer, you know-they’re great. They’re kind. They’re mutually supportive.”³⁷

York’s *Sonata for Tuba and Piano “Shamanic Journey”* is in three movements and was born out of a consortium project in 2007 led by Brian Doughty, owner of Cimarron Music Press. The consortium resulted in four new works from York: the *Sonata for Tuba*, the *Sonata for Euphonium “Child’s Play”*, a *Sonata for Horn*, and *Suite: “Dancing with Myself”* for either horn or euphonium, tuba, and piano. The *Sonata for Tuba* is written in memory of Canadian tubist John Griffiths, who died in 2007. It is a programmatic work, and here is the story in the composer’s words printed in the published score:

John Griffiths was in many ways a “Shaman of the Tuba.” He spent a lifetime pushing the envelope of what could be done on the tuba and exploring the vast realms of his own musical consciousness to bring back information and inspiration to share with others.

As I was writing this piece, John passed away. I had already been having some rather mixed imagery for the piece and had already planned to subtitle it “Shamanic Journey.” On one hand I was seeing the opening measures as the voice of the Guide/Facilitator of Consciousness that invites one on a journey into the netherworld of consciousness to

³⁶ “Biography,” The Barbara York Project, accessed June 18, 2023, <https://www.barbarayork.com/biography>.

³⁷ A.J. Beau, Gail Robertson, Travis Scott, “The Barbara York Project,” *ITEA Journal* 48, no. 2 (Winter 2021): 52.

explore and bring back inspiration for others. On the other hand, I was also hearing it as the voice of the mythical Charon, the ferryman that takes one across the River Styx to the land of the dead. As I finished the piece, and in light of John's death I began to feel that perhaps those two images were not so incompatible.

In the 1st movement we hear the voice of the Guide/Charon calling us (and John) to undertake yet another journey into the realms of Consciousness. The 2nd movement depicts the somewhat tumultuous boat ride across the waters of the "between worlds", a place where we have been before, one that is energetic, even unpredictable and somewhat unsafe, but still familiar and not particularly frightening in that respect.

In the opening measures of the 3rd movement we hear again the voice of the Guide/Charon, calling to reawaken us from our journey. But this time, for John, it is not to reawaken him back into the world from which he has come, the world he has shared with us. This time it is to set him on the farther shore, the culmination of his last Shamanic journey, the one from which he will not return to us.

Some may find the last section of the 3rd movement to be placed a little high in the tuba range. To be honest, that is still somewhat of a compromise in its homage to John Griffiths. John would have probably taken the melody in its original key and simply played it an octave higher. However, for the sake of better writing and in deference to the rest of us poor mortals who are not so daring and such workers of miracles, I have at least pushed the envelope within reasonable limits.³⁸

The first movement opens with the Charon motive in the tuba underneath piano arpeggiation (Figure 20).

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of the Charon motive. The top staff is for the Tuba, and the bottom staff is for the Piano. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 63. The tuba part begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The piano part provides accompaniment with arpeggiated chords, marked piano (*p*).

Figure 20: Charon motive, York's *Sonata*, mm. 1-4.³⁹

A shaman is someone who can communicate with the spirit world, sometimes through an altered state of consciousness. The end of the opening section concludes with a tremolo in the tuba before

³⁸ Barbara York, *Sonata for Tuba and Piano "Shamanic Journey"* (New London: Cimarron Music Press, 2007), n.p.

³⁹ York, *Sonata*, 1.

a *subito* transition to a section of anxious energy fraught with uncertainty, our shaman’s first vision into the spirits. Another tuba tremolo transitions into the shaman’s second vision, one more stable and the music is reminiscent of Romantic Era writing with its broader phrase structure. Charon’s theme returns to reset our journey, and the shaman’s visions grow even wilder as the music builds vehemently towards the movement’s conclusion. York’s tone painting of the second movement’s “tumultuous boat ride” is evident when the tuba makes its first entrance at m. 8 (Fig 21).



Figure 21: York’s tone painting in the second movement, mm. 8-12.⁴⁰

Here we have this rising and falling melody in the tuba and piano right hand, separated canonically by one beat, that feels like waves crashing against the hull of our rider’s vessel, rocking them to and fro throughout the movement. There’s one section of extended lyrical writing in the middle that makes us feel the journey has smoothed out, but it’s fleeting at best because York returns the boat to choppy waters fairly quickly. York mentioned familiarity in her notes about the second movement, and comparing Figures 20 and 21, we see the short piano chords in the second movement left hand match the chords that open the work in the piano right hand. Charon’s theme opens the third movement and calls his passenger again to begin the final portion of their journey. What follows is a *dolce e legato* tender, lyrical melody for the tuba as Charon’s traveler begins their transcendence. York again employs sublime tone painting; the melody and

⁴⁰ York, *Sonata*, 7-8.

tessitura continue to rise high above the staff for the tuba as our passenger's spirit rises and disappears into the afterlife. Griffiths was known for having excellent control of his upper register, and this is York's final *hommage* to the great Canadian tubist (Fig 22).

The image displays a musical score for Tuba and Piano, consisting of two systems. The top system shows the Tuba part with a melodic line that rises significantly above the staff, and the Piano accompaniment with chords and a triplet. The bottom system shows the Tuba part with a melodic line that continues to rise, and the Piano accompaniment with chords and a triplet. The score includes performance instructions such as 'rit.', 'molto rall.', and 'Joyfully - accel. poco a poco al fine'.

Figure 22: Extreme upper tessiture, York's *Sonata* third movement, mm. 39-42.⁴¹

Sonata for Tuba and Piano - John Cheetham

John E. Cheetham (b. 1939) was born in Taos, NM and received a Bachelor and a Masters degrees from the University of New Mexico, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition from the University of Washington in 1969. Shortly after, he took a position teaching composition at the University of Missouri-Columbia where he remained until his retirement in 2000. He has written pieces for band and orchestra, instrumental solo, chamber groups, and choir and now devotes his time to his composition commissions. Cheetham has received commissions from

⁴¹ York, *Sonata*, 19-20.

many prestigious universities, respected institutions and music organizations including the Kentucky Derby Museum, the Gaudete Brass, Texas Tech University, the Summit Brass, the Atlanta Symphony Brass, the Central Oregon Symphony Assoc. and the Air Force Band of the Midwest.⁴²

The *Sonata for Tuba and Piano* is in three movements and was written in 2000. *Sonata* was the product of a commission by tubist David Kutz with the assistance of the Zeta Chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. Kutz gave the world premiere at the International Tuba and Euphonium Conference in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Tubist David Zerkel in the liner notes for his recording *American Music for Tuba - Something Old Something New* states “The work is characterized by the factors that make all of Cheetham’s music for brass compelling to listen to, an accessible harmonic language, undeniable rhythmic energy, and melodic material that engages the listener.”⁴³ The first movement *Moderato* has a buoyant and jaunty character that plays rhythmic games with the performers. After a straightforward section announcing the main melody in a pulse of one beat per measure in 3/8 meter, Cheetham states the same melody in the tuba against what feels a bit like a quarter note pulse accompaniment in the piano (Fig 23). Cheetham uses this section to prepare an extensive development of this two beats against three beats feeling between tuba and piano, lasting almost 60 measures before a brief retransition to the opening main melodies of the movement. The second movement *Lamentoso* is a melancholy song for the tuba, with an accompaniment that trudges along slowly in the piano (Fig 24).

⁴² “About John Cheetham,” Booneslick Press, accessed June 24, 2023, <https://booneslickpress.com>.

⁴³ David Zerkel, “*Sonata for Tuba and Piano*,” Liner notes for *American Music for Tuba - Something Old Something New*, by David Zerkel, Mark Custom Recording 5348-MCD, 2004.

67

Tuba

Piano

ff

ff

dim.

dim.

p

p

Figure 23: Rhythmic complexity, Cheetham's *Sonata* first movement, mm. 67-77.⁴⁴

Lamentoso ♩ = 72

Tuba

Piano

p

cresc.

cresc.

simile

(cresc.)

f

dim.

(cresc.)

f

dim.

Figure 24: Main melody, Cheetham's *Sonata* second movement, mm. 1-6.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ John Cheetham, *Sonata for Tuba and Piano*, (Columbia: Boonslick Press 2003), 3-4.

⁴⁵ Cheetham, *Sonata*, 11.

There's a second statement of this sad song that's slightly more active rhythmically in both parts. What follows is an interlude in 7/8 meter before Cheetham once again returns to the emotional weight of the movement to close it out. The third movement *Giocosso* embodies the “undeniable rhythmic energy” that Zerkel suggests. Cheetham's music here captures the spirit of musical theater, with its syncopated “show-biz” accents that help propel the music's forward motion (Fig 25).

The image shows a musical score for Tuba and Piano, measures 21-33. The score is in 2/4 time. The tuba part starts at measure 21 with a dynamic of *mp* and includes markings for *cresc.* and *f*. The piano part also starts at measure 21 with a dynamic of *mp* and includes markings for *cresc.* and *f*. The score continues through measures 22-33, with dynamics ranging from *mf* to *p*.

Figure 25: Main melody, Cheetham's *Sonata* third movement, mm. 21-33.⁴⁶

There's a feeling of exuberance and vitality that remains throughout the movement as Cheetham repeats this melody in different transpositions and further develops melodic and rhythmic fragments between the tuba and the piano. Cheetham gives the tuba a cadenza towards the conclusion that recalls motives from the movement, before ending the piece with exhilarating technical passages for both players.

⁴⁶ Cheetham, *Sonata*, 15-16.

Chapter 4: Recital No. 3 - October 13, 2023

Sonata for Tuba and Piano: 'Darkplace' - Quinn Mason

Quinn Mason (b. 1996) is originally from Shreveport, LA and studied composition at Southern Methodist University Meadows School of the Arts and the University of Texas at Dallas. Currently he is a conductor and composer based in Dallas, TX; his website offers some further biographical information:

He recently finished a successful tenure as Artist in Residence of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra for the 2022-2023 season. He also served as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Classical Roots composer in residence in 2022 (the youngest composer appointed to that role) and as KMFA's inaugural composer in residence...His orchestral music has been commissioned and performed by over 130 professional, regional, community and youth orchestras in the US and Europe, including the San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra...and numerous others...

As a conductor, Quinn has guest conducted numerous orchestras, including the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, West Virginia Symphony Orchestra...In April 2023, he debuted with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center and he also served as the Houston Ballet Orchestra's youngest ever guest conductor. Quinn studied conducting at the National Orchestral Institute with Marin Alsop and James Ross, and with Christopher Zimmerman (Fargo-Moorhead Symphony), Kevin Sütterlin (Fox Valley Symphony), Miguel Harth-Bedoya (Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra) and Will White (Harmonia Orchestra)...

Quinn has studied composition at the SMU Meadows School of the Arts, with Dr. Winston Stone at University of Texas at Dallas and has also worked closely with renowned composers David Maslanka, Jake Heggie, Libby Larsen, David Dzubay and Robert X. Rodriguez.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ "About Quinn Mason," Quinn Mason Conductor/Composer, accessed June 26, 2023, <https://www.masonianmusic.com/about>.

Mason's *Sonata for Tuba and Piano 'Darkplace'* was written in 2019 and dedicated to tubist Evan Zegiel, who also premiered it. It's in three movements and the composer has this to say about the work:

This tuba sonata was a unique and interesting challenge, both from a compositional and philosophical standpoint. The piece was born out of an unusually introspective time in my life, one where I was reflecting on my life and career so far in a not so positive way. It also so happens that a member of my high school band had passed away very suddenly around this time; he was a tubist and it struck me in particular because he was younger than me with his life ahead of him, but just like that....he was gone. Thus the subtitle, 'Darkplace'. I knew I wanted to write a piece of music that encapsulated these feelings perfectly and I wanted to use an unusual instrument to convey these thoughts. Compositionally, I've never written for the tuba in a solo context like this, so here was a chance to explore the different colors and capabilities of this expressive instrument. Thus, I was really pleased when I received this commission from Evan Zegiel, a good friend of mine and an enthusiastic champion of my music since we were both met at the Brevard Music Center in 2018. This sonata is dedicated to Evan with the utmost respect and admiration.⁴⁸

The character of Mason's *Sonata* is deeply ruminative, and not written like a typical instrumental sonata, normally with fast outer movements and a slow central movement. All of the movements convey the emotions of a devastating life event, on top of the other sentiments Mason was already feeling, and the raw emotions of grief and anguish come through in the music. The first melody of the tuba in the first movement *broodingly, yet reflective* is a slow descent into despair resolving to a sorrowful minor cadence (Fig 26). The music then turns slightly upward as the antagonist begins to process their feelings, but it's somewhat short-lived and the composer closes the movement with the same morose descending melodic motion that opens the work. The second movement *with tranquil movement* opens with an extended expressive melody in a major key, as if to say we're on the path to recovery. But as anyone who's experienced tragedy knows, there are good days and bad days. Towards the middle of the movement the music gets angrier,

⁴⁸ "Sonata for Tuba and Piano 'Darkplace' (2019, rev. 2021)," Quinn Mason Conductor/Composer, accessed June 29, 2023, <https://www.msonianmusic.com/tuba-sonata-darkplace>

and we continue to process what’s happening in our lives, and again this movement closes as it opens in major, as if to remember those happier moments. The final movement *dreaming* sees us further along on a path to recovery in our healing journey. The music opens with another extended section in major mode, but halfway through there’s a *fortissimo* catharsis employing Mason’s angriest writing of the piece that finally gives way toward acceptance and the end of the grieving process. We look forward to better times ahead (Fig 27).

The image shows a musical score for Tuba and Piano, measures 7-17. The score is in 4/4 time. The Tuba part is written in the bass clef and features a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *pp*. The Piano part is written in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and features accompaniment with dynamics *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Figure 26: Emotional melody, Mason’s *Sonata* first movement, mm. 7-17.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Quinn Mason, *Sonata for Tuba ‘Darkplace’*, (Dallas: Masonian Publications 2019), 1.

The image shows a musical score for Tuba and Piano, measures 35-41. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'tragic' with a quarter note equal to 60. The piano part features a 'fff' dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The tuba part has a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The second system includes markings for 'rall.' and 'octave optional' for the tuba, and 'rall.' for the piano. The piano part has an '8va' marking for the right hand in the second system.

Figure 27: Catharsis, Mason’s *Sonata* third movement, mm. 35-41.⁵⁰

Sonata: “Hades: God of the Underworld” - Ian Lester

Ian Lester (b. 1994) is originally from Royal Oak, MI. He received a Bachelor’s degree in euphonium performance from Oakland University in Michigan, a Master’s degree in composition from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and a Doctorate of Musical Arts in euphonium performance from UM-KC. “His music focuses on melodic and rhythmic structure, drawing inspiration from sources such as film music, synthwave, and music of the 20th and 21st Century, just to name a few.”⁵¹ Lester won the Mirari Brass Quintet’s Call of Scores in 2021 for his *Three Episodes for Brass Quintet* and in 2023 was named a winner of the R. Winston Morris Composition Award for tuba/euphonium ensemble for his piece *LIMINAL SPACES*.

⁵⁰ Mason, *Sonata*, 10.

⁵¹ “Biography,” Ian Lester Composer/Performer/Teacher, accessed June 26, 2023, <https://www.ianlestermusic.com/bio>.

Lester wrote his *Sonata: “Hades: God of the Underworld”* in 2017 and it is four movements long. Lester offers performers two versions, one for bass tuba and one for contrabass tuba. He wrote these program notes published in the written score:

The winner of the 2017 Pershing’s Own U.S. Army Band Composition Competition, *Sonata for Tuba “Hades God of the Underworld”* was inspired by a friend’s request to “write something low” for tuba. Instead of utilizing the lower tessitura of the instrument as one would expect, I warped this idea of lowness by using Hades the Greek God of the underworld as the basis for this programmatic work, with the idea that this underworld is the lowest imaginable realm. A stylistic change and a new aspect of Hades characterizes each movement. The first movement “Hades Rising” depicts the Greek God emerging from the underworld to wreak havoc. The second movement “The Unseen One” is one of a few translations of “Hades” and contains a simple, yet beautiful melody in the solo line. The third movement “Dance of the Dead” creates a twisted, ominous atmosphere heavily inspired by Franz Schubert’s *Erlkönig*. The final movement “Wrath of Hades” displays the catastrophic capabilities of the God by showcasing both the soloist and pianist in an aggressive finale.⁵²

In the first movement *Hades Rising*, Lester depicts Hades’ emergence using an ascending four note dotted-rhythm kernel that reappears several times throughout the movement (Fig 28).

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Tuba and Piano. The first system (measures 9-10) shows the Tuba part with an ascending four-note dotted-rhythm kernel (G2, A2, B2, C3) and the Piano part with chords and a bass line. The second system (measures 11-15) shows the Tuba part with a melodic line and the Piano part with chords and a bass line. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

Figure 28: Rising motive, Lester’s *Sonata* first movement, mm. 9-15.⁵³

⁵² Ian Lester, *Sonata “Hades God of the Underworld,”* (New London: Cimarron Music 2018), n.p.

⁵³ Lester, *Sonata*, 1.

An extended cadenza in the middle of the movement further develops this rising motive. The “simple, yet beautiful melody” in the second movement *The Unseen One* is characterized predominately by another dotted rhythm (Fig 29).



Figure 29: Tuba melody, Lester’s *Sonata* second movement, mm. 7-11.⁵⁴

For a work that depicts the underworld, this music of the second movement is unusually cheerful and in major mode throughout. Perhaps this is to give listeners the feeling of “out of sight, out-of-mind” and that maybe we don’t want to acknowledge how much evil exists in the world. In contrast to the first movement, the general melodic shape is to pull the music downward throughout the phrases before resetting at each cadence. Schubert’s famous art song *Erlkönig* tells a story of a father riding through the forest at night trying to save his son from the Erlking, a mythical elf that kills children who stay in the woods too long. The father is unsuccessful, and Lester’s third movement *Dance of the Dead* draws a few points of inspiration from Schubert. Both are set in the key of G minor, both feature repeated phrasing, and both feature constant triplet figures throughout the music in the piano’s right hand (Fig 30).

⁵⁴ Lester, *Sonata*, 6-7.

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The top system shows measures 23-26, and the bottom system shows measures 27-30. In both systems, the Tuba part is written in the bass clef, and the Piano part is written in the grand staff. The Piano part features prominent triplets in the right hand. Dynamics include accents and 'ff' (fortissimo).

Figure 30: Example of right hand triplets, Lester’s *Sonata* third movement, mm. 23-30.⁵⁵

In the final movement *Wrath of Hades*, Lester displays aggressiveness through the piano writing, with its running eighth notes, marcato accents, and low tessitura in the left hand (Fig 31).

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The top system shows measures 61-64, and the bottom system shows measures 65-69. In both systems, the Tuba part is written in the bass clef, and the Piano part is written in the grand staff. The Piano part features running eighth notes in the left hand and marcato accents in the right hand. Dynamics include 'ff' (fortissimo).

Figure 31: Fourth movement aggressiveness, Lester’s *Sonata*, mm. 61-69.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Lester, *Sonata*, 9.

⁵⁶ Lester, *Sonata*, 14.

The movement opens with this piano figure and it will reappear throughout the movement. The tuba's soaring melodies serve to remind us that once the beast that is Hades is unleashed, there's no escaping his fury.

Short Sonata - Frank Lynn Payne

Frank Lynn Payne (1939-2022) was born in Asheville, NC and studied piano and harpsichord at the University of Arkansas.⁵⁷ He earned a master's degree in composition from North Texas State University, now called the University of North Texas; and a doctorate in composition and musicology, also from North Texas State. He taught theory and composition at Oklahoma City University until his retirement in 2002. He has written a number of works for tuba and euphonium and is credited with writing the first original piece for the tuba quartet as a chamber group, his *Quartet for Tubas*. In correspondence with tubist Kent Eshelman, Payne had this to say about his compositional process:

I just write music that I want players and listeners to be involved in. Not music that can be assigned terms "like," "dislike," or "that's interesting." For me, music is not for idle hands or idle minds. It is a living substance that we incorporate into our very beings. I fear that too few people today understand or even try to understand that aspect of music as it is certainly not a commercial venture. I want to be a slave to the Hindemith concept of *Gebrauchsmusik*, i.e., music to be played and listened to rather than music for music's sake. I don't write "art" music!⁵⁸

The *Short Sonata* dates from 2014 and was premiered by Kent Eshelman, tuba professor at Baylor University School of Music, at the 2014 International Tuba-Euphonium Conference. The composer had these notes to say about this piece:

The Short Sonata for Tuba and Piano came together over a period of years morphing from one form to another. All three movements are "tonal" but certainly not in a "key." Indeed, the tonal progressions are based in large part on Paul Hindemith's observations of step-progressions. The second movement contains strong elements of dissonance which by

⁵⁷ Kent Eshelman, "In Memoriam, Frank Lynn Payne," *ITEA Journal* 49, no. 4 (Summer 2022): 17.

⁵⁸ Eshelman, "In Memoriam", 18.

repetition begin to sound “normal” to the ear. The third movement contains elements of minimalism along with the strong flavor of a rondo.⁵⁹

Short Sonata is in three movements and is reminiscent of Payne’s other works for tuba. This music contains elements of dissonant harmonic progressions resolving to consonance, melodic writing that is simultaneously smooth and angular, and an unrelenting sense of rhythm that sometimes aims to confuse the listener regarding meter. The first movement *Floating* is dominated by the Lombard rhythm, also known as the Scotch snap, using short-long note lengths within the beat. Set in 6/8 meter, the tuba is the first to establish this pattern over a somewhat rhythmically inconclusive accompaniment in the piano (Fig 32).

The image shows a musical score for Tuba and Piano, measures 3-9. The score is in 6/8 time. The Tuba part is in the bass clef and starts with a forte (f) dynamic. The Piano part is in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and starts with a piano (p) dynamic. The Tuba part features a Lombard rhythm (short-long note lengths) and a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo) in measure 9. The Piano part features a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) in measure 9. The score is marked *poco a poco cresc.* (poco a poco crescendo) in measure 9.

Figure 32: Rhythmic complexity, *Short Sonata* first movement, mm. 3-9.⁶⁰

The two instruments seem to be competing for rhythmic supremacy and only convincingly come together during the movement at occasional hemiolas, surprising moments of a feeling of three beats per measure in a two beat meter. More rhythmic ambiguity pervades the second movement *Drifting*. Here the music is set in 3/4 meter, implying a duple division of the beat. Yet in this slow

⁵⁹ Frank Lynn Payne, *Short Sonata*, (New London: Potenza Music 2014), n.p.

⁶⁰ Payne, *Short Sonata*, 1.

movement it's not until a third of the way through the music does Payne write in the first duple division of a quarter not into two eighth notes in measure 12 (Fig 33).

Figure 33: Metric ambiguity, *Short Sonata* second movement, mm. 9-15.⁶¹

The piano with its constant triplets in the accompaniment leads us to believe we are in 9/8, and this duality of duple and triple beat divisions culminates in the tail end of the movement with the tuba melodically moving between the different rhythmic moods. The third movement *A Very Fast Rondo* quickly lays out Payne's rondo refrain motive and minimalist elements (Fig 34).

Figure 34: Refrain melody and minimalist cell, Payne's *Short Sonata*, mm. 1-4.⁶²

⁶¹ Payne, *Short Sonata*, 7.

⁶² Payne, *Short Sonata*, 9.

The piano repeats a four note cell that's developed in the accompaniment throughout the movement. The tuba states the refrain melody of the rondo, and this melody will appear in two higher transpositions before returning one final time one octave higher to set up the work's conclusion.

Sonata for Tuba (or Bass Trombone) and Piano - Andrew Lewinter

Andrew Lewinter (b. 1966) is currently based out of Eugene, OR and is originally from Scotch Plains, NJ. An accomplished horn player, he studied at Northwestern University before leaving school early to pursue a career as an orchestral horn player. In 2016 he started composing on a more regular basis and has this to say about his compositional process:

In 2016, I decided to start composing music. I wrote music as a kid but stopped after high school. Since I played the horn professionally for a lot of my life, the first goal I set for myself was to write a sonata for horn and piano. As a first project, I decided to extensively review theory, form, and counterpoint, using many books, scores, and a lifetime of playing and listening to classical music as my guides. My piece would use common practice harmony and standard classical forms, such as sonata-allegro form... After writing the Horn Sonata, I continued composing, and stuck with tonal harmony and standard classical forms, although my compositional style continues to develop. Tonal harmony is a musical language that allows me to express the widest range of emotions and western classical music's traditional structures provide guide rails within which I can be creative.⁶³

Lewinter's *Sonata for Tuba (or Bass Trombone) and Piano* was written in 2018 and was premiered at the University of Oregon by tubist Michael Grose. The work is very archetypal in structure, the melodic writing and harmonic language wouldn't be totally out of place in a 19th century instrumental sonata. The first movement $\text{♩} = 100$ has all of the trappings a listener could expect from traditional sonata-allegro form. It opens with a melancholic first theme melody for the tuba in a minor key (Fig 35) that gives way to a more optimistic second theme in relative major for the exposition's second theme (Fig 36). The normal form paradigms of development

⁶³ "About," Andrew Lewinter, accessed June 26, 2023, <https://www.andrewlewintermusic.com/about.html>.

and recapitulation follow; Lewinter quotes the main themes throughout the development several times and when they return for the recapitulation, the first theme returns in original minor key form and the second theme Lewinter presents in the parallel major.

Figure 35: Exposition first theme, Lewinter's *Sonata* first movement, mm. 5-8.⁶⁴

Figure 36: Exposition second theme, Lewinter's *Sonata* first movement, mm. 33-37.⁶⁵

The second movement $\text{♩} = 66$ features a main melody that evokes French *cabaret* (Fig 37). This melody is central to the overall character of the music and returns on three separate instances. In

⁶⁴ Andrew Lewinter, *Sonata for Tuba or Bass Trombone and Piano*, (Eugene: Self published 2018), 1.

⁶⁵ Lewinter, *Sonata*, 6.

between each statement Lewinter disturbs the relative calm with contrasting moments of increasing angst and drama before closing the movement with the third and final statement of the main theme. The last movement $\text{♩} = 116$ opens with rather pressing minor mode melody (Fig 38) that eventually gives way to a contrasting melody that is much more jaunty and buoyant (Fig 39). This movement again has the hallmarks of sonata form. The themes are transposed and developed throughout the movement before an emphatic conclusion to the work.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Figure 37. Each system consists of a Tuba staff and a Piano staff. The first system shows the Tuba playing a melody with triplets and a dynamic of *p*. The Piano accompaniment features triplets and dynamics of *p* and *mf*. The second system continues this texture with similar rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

Figure 37: Cabaret-like melody, Lewinter's *Sonata* second movement, mm. 3-11.⁶⁶

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Figure 38. Each system consists of a Tuba staff and a Piano staff. The first system shows the Tuba playing a melody with a dynamic of *mp*. The Piano accompaniment features a dynamic of *ff*. The second system continues the theme with similar rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

Figure 38: Exposition first theme, Lewinter's *Sonata* third movement, mm. 4-11.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Lewinter, *Sonata*, 27.

⁶⁷ Lewinter, *Sonata*, 40.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Tuba and Piano. The first system consists of two staves: a Tuba staff in bass clef and a Piano staff in treble and bass clefs. The Tuba part features a melodic line with slurs and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Piano part has a dynamic marking of *pp* and provides a harmonic accompaniment. The second system continues the same instrumentation, with the Piano part becoming more rhythmically active, featuring sixteenth-note patterns in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

Figure 39: Exposition second theme, Lewinter's *Sonata* third movement, mm. 78-85.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Lewinter, *Sonata*, 46.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In the mid 20th century, American musicians were on the forefront of many of the advancements in Western art music. So it comes as no surprise that Harvey Phillips would be the catalyst for new original music for the tuba. In his autobiography *Mr. Tuba*, Phillips recalled a meeting he had with Vincent Persichetti, his theory teacher while studying at Juilliard, on the subject of a lack of serious tuba literature:

When compared with the libraries of solo material for other instruments, the tuba came up short. It was upsetting to hear other instruments practicing great music by master composers while the tuba was stuck with “Beelzebub,” “Asleep in the Deep,” “Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep,” “Down in the Deep Cellar,” “Solo Pomposo,” etc. While these works are entertaining and offered the young tubist performance challenges, none had the artistic stature of music performed by other instruments.⁶⁹

Persichetti’s response?

...so you want better music to play on your tuba. Well, let me ask you, Harvey, do you think violinists are going to do anything about it? Do you think flutists are going to do anything about it? You’re the one who wants better music for the tuba, so you’re the one who has to do something about it.⁷⁰

Thus Phillips’ lifelong mission to expand the tuba repertoire was born in 1951 as a Juilliard first-year student. American composers cumulatively have since written dozens of sonatas for the tuba, and at the most recent International Tuba Euphonium Conference in 2023, tubist David Zerkel premiered another new *Tuba Sonata* by New Jersey-based composer Amanda Harberg. American composers have and will continue to have influence over the tuba solo repertoire expansion for years to come.

⁶⁹ Phillips, *Mr. Tuba*, 74.

⁷⁰ Phillips, *Mr. Tuba*, 75.

Appendix A – Program Information

Recital No. 1

James Cipriano - Tuba
Rebecca Willett - Piano

November 26, 2022. 7:30PM

Program

Sonata for Tuba and Piano (1967)

Walter S. Hartley (1927-2016)

- I. Andante
- II. Allegretto grazioso
- III. Adagio sostenuto
- IV. Allegro moderato, con anima

Sonata (1961)

Louis V. Pisciotta (1924-2011)

- I. Allegro
- II. Sostenuto
- III. Vivace

Sonata for Tuba and Piano (1959)

Alec Wilder (1907-1980)

- I. Moderato
- II. Allegro
- III. Andante
- IV. Allegro

Sonata (Concerto) for Tuba and Piano (1976)

Bruce Broughton (b. 1945)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andante moderato
- III. Allegro leggero

Recital No. 2

James Cipriano - Tuba
Seung-Hye Kim - Piano

April 22, 2023. 7:00PM

Program

Tuba Sonata (1998)

Stephen Rush (b. 1958)

- I. Heroically
- II. Adagio
- III. Allegro

Tuba Sonata (2006/07)

Anthony Plog (b. 1947)

- I. Calm and flowing
- II. Presto
- III. Slow and with freedom
- IV. Allegro

Sonata for Tuba and Piano "Shamanic Journey" (2007)

Barbara York (1949-2020)

- I. ♩ = 63
- II. ♩ = 84-88
- III. ♩ = 63

Sonata for Tuba and Piano (2000)

John Cheetham (b. 1939)

- I. Moderato
- II. Lamentoso
- III. Giocoso

Recital No. 3

James Cipriano - Tuba
Shanshan Xie - Piano

October 13, 2023

Program

Sonata for Tuba and Piano: "Darkplace" (2019)

Quinn Mason (b. 1996)

- I. broodingly, yet reflective
- II. with tranquil movement
- III. dreaming

Sonata: "Hades: God of the Underworld" (2018)

Ian Lester (b. 1994)

- I. Hades Rising
- II. The Unseen One
- III. Dance of the Dead
- IV. Wrath of Hades

Short Sonata (2014)

Frank Lynn Payne (1937-2022)

- I. Floating
- II. Drifting
- III. A Very Fast Rondo

Sonata for Tuba (or Bass Trombone) and Piano (2018)

Andrew Lewinter (b. 1966)

- I. ♩=100
- II. ♩=66
- III. ♩=116

Appendix B - Project Rationale

At first it may appear that the organization of the recitals is arbitrary. When assembling the repertoire for this project, I decided to arrange the pieces to line up with specific periods of my educational and professional career. I was 48 years old when I started the DMA degree and consider myself a non-traditional student. One could almost think of this recital series as an “old standards”, “new standards”, and “future standards” presentation of performances. There are also some personal connections to the repertoire choices I made. The first recital featured works that I knew and performed during my undergraduate and master’s degree work concluded in 1998. I performed the Wilder and Broughton pieces during that time. Calling the Pisciotta work a standard is a bit of a stretch I acknowledge. I studied with Toby Hanks at the Manhattan School of Music, and he recorded the Pisciotta for his 1996 compact disc release *Sonata*. Toby passed in 2022 and I wanted to honor his memory by performing this piece. In my opinion it’s an underrated work for tuba. The second recital I organized around music that was written and became standard repertoire after I finished at the Manhattan School of Music. The first of these works was composed the year before I joined the Army music program. I performed the Cheetham at two regional tuba conferences during my military career and I was a member of the commission consortium for the York piece while I was the tuba instructor at the Army School of Music. The Plog was required repertoire in the semi-final round at the XVII International Tchaikovsky Competition tuba division. For the final recital, I wanted to focus primarily on emerging composers and included some of the newest sonatas written within the last ten years. Mason, Lester, and Lewinter are all building a strong national reputation. Mason through his residencies with orchestras performing his music, Lester through his success in composition contests, and finally Lewinter through his music’s commercial recordings.

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