

FACULTY CHAMBER RECITAL

DOES NOT PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS?

THE TUBA IN CHAMBER MUSIC



Kevin Wass
Tuba
Susan Wass
Piano
David Dees
Saxophone
Shane Kealy
Saxophone
Adam Camey
Saxophone
John Hazelwood
Saxophone
Lisa Rogers
Percussion
Lisa Garner-Santa
Flute
David Shea
Clarinet
James Decker
Trombone
Ian Rollins
Percussion
Kirsten Yon
Violin

Friday, February 20, 8 pm, Hemmle Recital Hall
Texas Tech University

Paul Hindemith: Sonata for Bass Tuba and Piano

Jim Self: Danças Para Um Amigo (2005)

for Tuba, Saxophone Quartet, and Percussion

Tim Jansa: Septet for Winds and Percussion (2008)

for Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trombone, Tuba, and Percussion

(PREMIERE PERFORMANCE)

PDQ Bach: The Only Piece Ever Written for Violin and Tuba

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Susan Wass, Piano
David Dees, Saxophone
Shane Kealy, Saxophone
Adam Camey, Saxophone
John Hazelwood, Saxophone
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Lisa Garner-Santa, Flute
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Ian Rollins, Percussion
Kirsten Yon, Violin

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20
8:00 PM
HEMMLE RECITAL HALL

Sonata for Bass Tuba and Piano (1955)
I. Allegro pesante
II. Allegro assai
III. Variationen: Moderato, commodo

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

Danças Para Um Amigo (2005)
1. Rapidinho
2. Vagaroso
3. Brincadeiras
4. Correrias

Jim Self (b. 1943)

-Intermission-

Septet for Winds and Percussion (2008)
I. Allegro molto
II. Slowly, with melancholy
III. Allegro misterioso

Tim Jansa (b. 1974)

World Premiere

The Only Piece Ever Written for Violin and Tuba (S. 9, 10, big fat hen)
I. Andante Alighieri
II. Shake allegro
III. Lento nice 'n' easyo
IV. Allegro, but not too mucho

P.D.Q. Bach (1807-1742)?
exhaustingly edited by Prof. Peter Schickele

**Faculty Chamber Recital:
Does Not Play Well with Others?
The Tuba in Chamber Music
Kevin Wass, Tuba, and Friends**

February 20, 2009

8:00 PM

**Hemmler Recital Hall
Texas Tech University**

This is a recital that has been over eight years in the making--I had planned to do my first chamber recital as part of my dissertation at the University of Michigan in 2001, but that project was put on hold when I gained employment at TTU. I have always been intrigued by the possibilities for the tuba in chamber settings beyond the typical tuba and piano, brass quintet, and tuba-euphonium quartet combinations. I think composers and other performers often assume that the tuba just isn't capable of fitting in to a smaller group so we are not asked to play chamber music very often. I decided my approach to righting this wrong would be three-pronged: I would learn about and champion the literature that already existed, I would commission new works, and I would involve as many of my Texas Tech colleagues as possible in new combinations of instruments. So here it is--everything from one of the most revered chamber works for tuba and piano to a brand new piece for what the composer even says is a surprising combination of instruments.

Sonata for Bass Tuba and Piano (1955)

Paul Hindemith (1895-1963)

This work is a true classic in the tuba repertoire, and it stands as a milestone looking both forward and backward. Tubists look at the Hindemith Sonata, published the same year as the Vaughan Williams Tuba Concerto, as the beginning of an explosion of serious recital repertoire that has continued unabated for over 50 years. For Hindemith, the Tuba Sonata was the last of a set of sonatas he wrote for solo instrument and piano, which started with a violin and piano sonata written in 1918 and included at least one sonata for every orchestral instrument. There are many (not just tubists!) who consider the tuba sonata to be among the finest of the entire set.

Hindemith indeed shows great foresight in his use of two instruments that seem acoustically incompatible. There was little existing repertoire for tuba and piano that he could use as an example, but he did have his experience of writing for piano with other brass instruments and other bass instruments. Immediately from the beginning of the sonata, Hindemith is working to create separation between the two voices. In register, duration, and even meter (the tuba is in 6/4 time, the piano is in 2/2), the separation could not be greater. As the sonata progresses, Hindemith combines the instruments carefully, bolstering the piano texturally when the tuba is at its loudest and lowest. He also takes advantage of an acoustic peculiarity of the combination of tuba and piano in the third movement cadenza. Listen for a chord ringing clearly in the piano that is not actually played; rather, it is the result of sympathetic vibration from the tuba's ascending patterns here.

While the repertoire for tuba and piano has grown substantially in the last 55 years, few if any have written as effectively for the combination as Hindemith does here. While the piano part is famously difficult, it is also filled with moments of almost humorous character and intricate counterpoint that give it a light and energetic feel. The tuba part is actually among the least technically demanding in the sonata repertoire for the instrument, hence the reason it is often played by younger players.

Still, the work is musically challenging with a “neo-tonal” structure that includes specially constructed tone rows (the opening of the third movement in the tuba is one example) yet still feels at “home” when the final notes of each movement are reached. The key structure is mediant based, with the outer movements in B flat and the second movement in D flat (similar to the Symphony in B flat for band, written only a few years earlier, which is B flat-G-B flat). Hindemith actually begins the third movement on D flat and uses the tuba cadenza to move back toward B flat, with the tuba’s last statement of the entire theme based in the tonic key.

In each of these ways, this sonata is a fitting end to Hindemith’s career as a sonata composer. It is like looking at a summary of his output in a single piece, with elements of neo-classicism, serialism, humor, tonality, atonality, and a key structure that hearkens back to simpler harmonic times.

Danças Para Um Amigo (2005)

Jim Self (b. 1943)

This is a piece that I first encountered through my role as chair of the Harvey G. Phillips Awards for Excellence in Composition for the International Tuba-Euphonium Association. “Danças” was nominated in the chamber music category in 2008 and was one of three finalists for the award in that category. The composer provides the following notes:

“Danças Para Um Amigo” (Dances for a Special Friend) was commissioned by and written for the Portuguese Tuba virtuoso, Sergio Carolino. It is for Solo Tuba, Saxophone Quartet and Vibraphone (with percussion). There are four contrasting movements. Rapidinho is a fast, odd-meter romp. Much of the movement is in 5/8 with much rhythmic overlapping between the instruments. It ends in a vamp and fade. Vagaroso is in a slow 11/8 meter with much contrapuntal interaction between the tuba and vibraphone. The saxophones play a more accompaniment role. Brincadeiras (scherzo) is a jazzy alla breve with lots of syncopation. There is an optional improvised section for the solo tuba and tenor sax with modal and augmented chord changes. The “groove” for this movement was inspired by the theme music to the US PBS Charlie Rose Show. The finale movement, Corrierias (chase), is a fast, driving virtuoso movement for all the instruments. The rhythm is a constantly changing 3/4- 6/8 feel propelling to a final double high Bb tuba note. “Danças” was written with the special talents of Sr. Carolino in mind. His ability to play technically challenging and improvisational music is very unique.

Jim Self (b. 1943) is a Los Angeles free-lance musician, a veteran of thousands of motion pictures, television shows and records, and tuba soloist on many prominent movies. His tuba was the "Voice of the Mothership" in Close Encounters of the Third Kind. He is Principal Tuba/

Cimbasso with the Pacific and Pasadena Symphonies, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra and the Los Angeles Opera and Opera Pacific orchestras. He holds a DMA from the USC Thornton School of Music where he is Adjunct Professor of tuba and chamber music. His compositions and arrangements include works for solo tuba, brass quintet, other brass, string and woodwind chamber music and for band and orchestra. Jim has produced many solo jazz and classical recordings.

Septet for Winds and Percussion (2008)

Tim Jansa (b. 1974)

While I have been part of several consortium commissions and have played numerous premieres as a soloist and ensemble member, this was the first piece that I commissioned on my own. I thought it fitting as a newly tenured faculty member to celebrate reaching this milestone with some of the people who, through their encouragement, inspiration, and friendship, helped me survive my first seven years at Texas Tech. While the instrumentation is a little strange, these are all people I enjoy playing and working with but just don't get enough chances to do so. They have all been fantastic at every step of this project, from immediately signing on when I pitched the idea last spring to being tremendously flexible as we tried to get seven busy schedules to line up.

Working with Tim Jansa has also been a joy. We've been in pretty constant email contact since we first met in June of 2007, and I have conducted performances of his "Meditation and Madness" with the TTU Tuba-Euphonium Ensemble several times in the last two years. This project seemed like something at once challenging and interesting to both of us, and Tim has been tremendously flexible and accommodating throughout the commissioning, rehearsal, and performance process. Tim supplied the following thoughts on the piece:

Once in a while, a composer has the opportunity to engage in a project that presents both specific challenges as well as the promise of developing and growing new skills. For me, this was exactly the case with the "Septet for Winds and Percussion".

When I was contacted by tubist Dr. Kevin Wass at Texas Tech University in December of 2007 – we had met earlier that year during the International Euphonium Institute 2007 at Emory University in Atlanta, GA – the possibility of him commissioning a piece was initially a mere afterthought, but quickly developed into a specific project idea: a piece in several movements for Kevin and a handful of his friends and fellow Texas Tech faculty.

The primary challenge for me was to reconcile the somewhat motley combination of instruments (flute, clarinet, saxophone, trombone, tuba, and percussion) to create a balanced and harmonious ensemble; the second was that I had never written for percussion in such an exposed, quasi solo role: my experience with percussion had been in a purely orchestral setting using the most common instruments, and solely for effect creation through rather ordinary techniques. The proposed score called for a much more varied and idiomatic approach toward overall instrumentation both for the winds but also, and especially, for percussion.

The initial trials and sketches turned out to be quite comical and sounded more like a poorly written soundtrack to a 1960s British television series, which prompted me to eliminate several of the original percussion instruments from the score, eventually settling on the final set. However, I soon realized that the score would call for an additional percussionist to produce the desired results. So the initial sextet quickly became a septet.

The “Septet for Winds and Percussion” is by far the ‘jazziest’ but also one of the most fun pieces of music I have ever had the pleasure of writing, and I hope the audience will enjoy it as much as I did composing it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Wass for his trust in my compositional skills and judgment; it has truly been a privilege and tremendous pleasure to write for and work with such a fine and professional group as this faculty ensemble from Texas Tech University.

Tim Jansa
February 2009

A native of Germany, composer Tim Jansa was born in Cologne in 1974. At age 8, his family moved to Nuremberg, Germany, where he attended public school, studied music and conducting under his mentor Kurt Karl, and attended classes at the Nuremberg Conservatory of Music. During this time, he wrote his first compositions for choral and orchestral ensembles, most notably his Mass in C-minor (1991).

Jansa’s compositional endeavors underwent a longer hiatus due to his undergraduate studies in English and Geography, emigration to the United States, and his eventual relocation to the Atlanta area after graduating with a Master’s Degree in German literature in 1998.

Since beginning his pursuit of a successful full-time career in the field of foreign language instruction and cross-cultural training, Jansa has completed a substantial number of compositions and commissions for a wide variety of ensembles, ranging from solo vocal and choral music, two string quartets, music for piano, orchestra and wind band, to brass ensemble, various chamber works for non-traditional instrumentation, and a symphony.

In addition to his teaching duties, Jansa is also spearheading a music exchange program between the sister cities of Atlanta, GA, and Nuremberg, Germany, which includes various concert performances of new music commissioned and performed by musicians from and on both sides of the Atlantic.

Tim Jansa lives in Atlanta, GA, and teaches at *Georgia State University*.

The Only Piece Ever Written for Violin and Tuba (S. 9, 10, big fat hen)

P.D.Q. Bach (1807-1742)?

Exhaustingly edited by Professor Peter Schickele

I had the great fortune (?) of being raised by parents who were devoted fans of the composer P.D.Q. Bach, and his greatest champion and alter ego, Prof. Peter Schickele. I have seen Prof. Schickele perform and conduct P.D.Q. Bach's works in concert several times and his "Definitive Biography" of the "last and least" of J.S. Bach's many children has a place of honor on my bookshelf at home. I'm not sure how I missed the existence of this piece until now, but I found it in the stacks of the TTU Library last fall while digging through the chamber music scores. While they are lengthy, I think you will agree that it was entirely necessary for me to include all of Prof. Schickele's notes regarding the piece:

The musical literature for tuba is quite extensive, and the literature for violin is, of course, even extensiver, but the number of pieces written for just those two instruments together seems to be the same as the number of people who believe that my Uncle Harry is the reincarnation of Alexander the Great.

Now the Bible tells us many things, but it does not tell us if David and Goliath, before their fatal encounter, ever sang together (or if they did, what they sang), but the pairing of violin and tuba would seem to be just as unlikely, and just as unbalanced, as a duet by those two apparently poorly-paired pugilists of yore would be, if indeed such a duet ever took place, the possibility of which, it must be admitted, seems remote.

And yet "The Only Piece..." doesn't sound that bad; in point of fact, it's surprising how well P.D.Q. Bach wrote for the tuba, considering that it had not yet been invented. Although actually, when you think about it, he didn't write any better for the violin, which had been around for a long time. The work is in your standard four-movement form, typical of the sonata da chiesa ("chiesa sonata"), which was extremely popular during the first half of the 18th century, but dead as a doornail by the end of it, when P.D.Q. got around to writing this example. (It must be remembered that during the last hours of his life, the so-called "Contrition" period, the composer was emulating the style of his father, Johann Sebastian Bach, rather than that of his contemporaries, Haydn, Mozart, and Johann Abraham Peter Schulz.) The usual order of movements is employed: slow (soft)-fast (loud)-slow (soft)-fast (loud), ensuring that the audience will not fall asleep, at least for long, and giving the players a chance to flaunt their soulful sensitivity as well as their keester-kickin' dexterity.

Written in 1807, a day or two before he died, the piece was in all likelihood not performed during P.D.Q. Bach's lifetime, and in even more likelihood during the years following, until the author of this note found the manuscript stuffed (and I mean stuffed) into the bell of a tuba on display in Das Sogenannteinstrumentemuseum (The Museum of So-Called Instruments) in Duschendorf-am-Rhein. The premiere, based on that manuscript, featured Nadya Tichman and Floyd Cooley, and took place somewhere in the Bay Area-I think it

was somewhere over in the East Bay, but I'm not sure-sometime towards the end of the 20th century. The manuscript of a substantially revised version (subsequently found, as a result of a routine X-ray, stuffed even further into the tuba) has been used for the present edition; it was first played by Dan Stevens and Nadia Raney at the Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth, Texas on July 28, 2001.

It may seem surprising that P.D.Q. Bach, history's most inert composer, took the trouble to revise one of his works, but, hey, the ending of *The Maltese Falcon* is surprising, too; sometimes that's just the way things are.

Recently someone, I can't remember who, told me that he had run across a reference to another piece for violin and tuba, by some other composer. It is precisely this kind of mendacious posturing that has caused the discipline of musicology to be of such little interest to today's blue-collar workers and C.E.O.'s alike; one can only hope that the nadir has been reached, and that someday it will be looked down upon as the low point it is, or was.

Professor Peter Schickele
University of Southern North Dakota at Hoople
September 19, 2002, just before supper