Cross Training for Tuba:
A Pedagogical Approach to Improving the Performance of Tuba Literature
Through the Use of Transcriptions

by

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ABSTRACT

The modern day tubist has an expanded collection of solo tuba repertoire that continues to grow in quantity and in difficulty, making it necessary to utilize all the tools available to improve musicianship and performance ability. In this capacity, the use of transcribed material serves as a vital method of cross training in order to develop skills which assist the performance of modern tuba literature. Rather than focusing on transcriptions solely to engage with musical eras that the tuba would not otherwise have access to, the tubist can use transcribed material as supplementary or even prerequisite repertoire.

This project examines a cross training style of studying transcriptions for the advancing tubist. Similar to how athletes cross train in two or more sports to improve their abilities, the tubist may cross train with transcriptions in order to improve the technical and musical skills required in modern tuba literature. Transcribed materials will be used to develop facility in the areas of technique, phrasing, and stylistic interpretation using three unique pieces of standard solo tuba repertoire; Krzysztof Penderecki’s *Capriccio*, the John Williams *Tuba Concerto*, and Anthony Plog’s *Three Miniatures*. 
DEDICATION

Dedicated with love to my mother, Sherry Netzer, who taught me how to dream; and to

my father, Virgil Netzer, who taught me how to work for my dreams.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I would like to express my deepest gratitude and admiration to my wife Marcie, who has always supported me. Without her love and kindness, I wouldn’t be where I am today. I would also like to acknowledge the chair of my committee Dr. Deanna Swoboda, who has always believed in me, especially during the times I didn’t believe in myself. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Boyd Perkins, who began and nurtured my commitment to performing on tuba. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. John Ericson and Dr. Jody Rockmaker for their guidance and assistance with this project.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the past half century, tuba literature has been evolving. The tubist of today has access to an ample amount of literature, and as time progresses there are greater technical and musical demands placed upon the performer. Such a large collection of material has not always been the case, as tubists have depended upon the use of transcribed material to address the technical demands and musical interpretation of solo repertoire.

One contributing factor to the late development of solo material for the tuba is the relatively young age of the instrument. The tuba and the euphonium are the youngest instruments in the modern brass family. The earliest conception of the tuba as the contrabass member of the brass family was the invention of the Bass Tuba in 1835, patented by William Wieprecht and Johann Moritz. It was superior to its predecessors, the serpent and the ophicleide, and by the time of the late Romantic period, became a popular orchestration choice for composers such as Wagner, Mahler, and Strauss.¹

Although popular in symphonic orchestration, many years passed before the tuba was considered a solo instrument. Solo tuba repertoire was minimal prior to 1950, and solo repertoire that was written for the tuba was typically a light hearted theme and variations composition.² One of the first major contributions to the solo tuba repertoire was the completion of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Concerto for Bass Tuba, in 1954. The work was a milestone for the tuba due to Vaughan Williams’ high esteem as a


² Harvey Phillips, Mr. Tuba (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 397.
composer. This success was immediately followed in 1955 with Paul Hindemith’s *Sonate for Tuba and Piano*. The work was the last in a series of sonatas Hindemith wrote to highlight wind instruments and piano, including (in order of composition) flute, bassoon, oboe, clarinet, horn, trumpet, trombone, English horn, and alto horn or saxophone.³

Further development of solo tuba literature began to progress with the efforts of tuba artists such as Harvey Phillips. Philips was monumental in commissioning works for tuba. In his autobiography, *Mr. Tuba*, he is quoted saying: “As I look back on my life as a dedicated tuba player and musician, my proudest achievement is the role I have played in helping to elevate the quality and abundance of tuba repertoire in all music disciplines and styles.”⁴

Phillips had a difficult time accepting the fact that previous tuba soloists never approached well-known Romantic composers about writing solo tuba literature. He notes that many of the great composers wrote challenging orchestral parts for the tuba, and therefore it is upsetting that they neglected to compose a tuba solo. Phillips used the success of Vaughan Williams and Hindemith, both renowned composers, as a catalyst to commission numerous works for tuba, commissioning over 200 works in his career.⁵

Another person who was a key proponent of the development of solo tuba literature was Roger Bobo. Among his many distinctions, Bobo is recognized as having performed the first tuba recital in Carnegie Hall and with performing twice on The Late

⁴ Harvey Phillips, 396.
⁵ Ibid, 397-399.
Night Show starring Johnny Carson. Composers were captivated by his playing, and thus composed works specifically for him, including William Kraft’s *Encounters II*, composed in 1966. The solo was deemed playable only by Bobo at first because of its exhaustive demands on the performer. The unaccompanied work contains a range of over five octaves, extreme dynamics, and atonal counterpoint using multi-phonics. Arguably, it is still one of the most difficult tuba solos today.⁶

In present times, the tuba has covered an enormous amount of ground in its acceptance as a solo instrument and, as a result, has a healthy collection of literature. In 1967, the *Encyclopedia of Literature for Tuba* was compiled by William Bell and Winston Morris. The amount of solo literature for the category of tuba and keyboard was documented at 388 solos. The latest collection from 1996 in *The New Tuba Source Book* contains close to 1,900 solo works with piano.⁷

With the luxury of an expanded collection of solo tuba repertoire that continues to grow in quantity and in difficulty, the tubist must utilize all the tools available to improve their musicianship and performance ability. The use of transcribed materials in this capacity serves as a vital method of cross training in order to develop skills which assist the performance of modern tuba literature.

The use of transcriptions is still common amongst tuba players. Transcriptions provide access to literature that the tubist would otherwise not be exposed. For example, without borrowing material the tubist is deprived of literature by great composers of

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Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras. The best use of transcriptions, however, is to go past using them as supplementary materials for past eras and use them instead as prerequisite pieces of literature that prepare techniques and styles which benefit the increasing technical and musical demands found in tuba literature. In this manner, the use of transcriptions can serve as a type of cross training for the tubist. Cross training is a term commonly used in sports as a way in which an athlete trains in two or more sports to improve fitness and performance. It is applied here to describe using transcriptions as a tool that is outside the realm of works written for tuba to help the performer train in order improve the performance of actual tuba literature.

Three unique pieces of standard solo tuba repertoire will be discussed; Krzysztof Penderecki’s *Capriccio*, the John Williams *Tuba Concerto*, and Anthony Plog’s *Three Miniatures*. Each composition incorporates a diverse spectrum of challenges that can be addressed through the use of transcriptions. This document will use transcriptions of J.S. Bach’s *Cello Suite No.4*, Frederick Chopin’s *Nocturne in E Flat Major*, Claude Debussy’s *Syrinx*, and the Domenico Cimarosa *Concerto for Oboe and Strings* to improve specifically the areas of technique, phrasing, and stylistic interpretation in the aforementioned tuba literature. It is important to note beforehand that the selected borrowed works provide a wealth of resources to aid improvement in the tubist’s ability to perform tuba literature, though they are not the only solution. The purpose of this project is to offer pedagogical solutions via transcribed materials, not to provide an exclusive list of works with which to train.
CHAPTER 2

TECHNIQUE

Technique on the tuba poses unique challenges, many of which are related to the size of the instrument. Articulation is difficult due to the size of the instrument. Dynamic control is demanding when playing in the extremes, very loud or very soft, and requires rigorous breath support and focus. Tone production in general can be perplexing due to the size of the tuba, which makes it exceedingly easy to change timbres throughout registers and even from note to note. The difficulties in producing a consistent sound throughout registers exacerbate the development of flexibility on the instrument.

This chapter will focus on the development of technical aspects of tuba playing. The main areas of focus will be on tone production, flexibility, articulation and speed. The aspects will be examined in this order because each skill is dependent on the skill that precedes it. Articulation and fast rhythmic passages are dependent on quality tone production and often flexibility. In the same manner, flexibility is inhibited without first developing consistent tone. Transcribed materials allow the tubist to further develop these skills past the use of technical exercises. To exemplify the way transcriptions augment a tubist’s abilities, common pedagogical approaches to improving technical skills will be discussed in order to demonstrate how transcriptions complement and supplement their development.

Before focusing on the development of individual areas of technical facility, it is important to note that many of the exercises and transcribed materials may be incorporated into a performer’s daily routine, in order to maximize musical and technical growth. Leading pedagogy supports that having a routine will prepare the performer for
the challenges to be faced in the literature they are expected to play.\textsuperscript{8} Inadequate routines lead to control issues, loss of range, and response problems.\textsuperscript{9} The need for an adequate routine is exemplified in “The Brass Player’s Cookbook,” a collection of essays from today’s foremost brass musicians that are geared towards teaching better performance on brass instruments. Out of this collection, six essays focus directly on developing a routine, and many others include elements to be incorporated into a daily routine.

The routines discussed in the “The Brass Player’s Cookbook,” and the ones developed by performers and pedagogues use different approaches to focus on the same technical areas of tone, flexibility, articulation, intonation, etc. One unique approach is brought about by Toby Hanks, former tubist of the New York Brass Quintet. Hanks’ article focuses on the necessity for a routine, similar to many others. He proposes a thirty to forty five minute routine each day to develop and maintain technical skills, while not becoming over dependent on the routine as a warm up. What is unique to Hanks’ article is how he stresses the need for a “balanced diet.”\textsuperscript{10} Playing a developed set of exercises to improve technical facility isn’t enough to be able to communicate technical elements to an audience as music. Hanks states that: “The various instrumental skills we learn are merely the tools we use. We must learn to use these tools effectively.”\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{flushright}


\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, 39.
\end{flushright}
Hanks urges the performer to engage with various types of music to further develop these tools into a useful musical language. His philosophy supports that cross training with transcriptions can serve a monumental role in the development of these technical skills. As stated in a masterclass segment of “Portrait of an Artist,” Arnold Jacobs points out that the role of an accompanying instrument such as the tuba would create deficiencies if the tubist only practiced what is typically expected. Tubists limit themselves by not seeking outside sources to “create challenge.” This chapter examines the ways tubists can develop different areas of technique and how cross training with transcribed materials can supplement building those skills. The use of transcriptions allows the tubist to supplement the daily routine, performing works that develop necessary skills for performing modern tuba repertoire.

**Tone Production**

The first aspect of tuba playing to be examined is tone production. When learning to play an instrument it is important to develop the best sound possible. The perfect shaping of a phrase or immaculate articulations with metronomic tempo will have little effect on the listener if the overall sound of the tone being produced is not pleasing. The tubist must strive for a full resonant tone in all registers. Every pitch must be centered with good intonation. No matter how challenging the solo, the tubist must use these concepts of sound as the foundation for everything to follow.

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When developing tone, long tones must be incorporated into the daily routine. Long tones increase control of tone and breath support. By creating a steady and consistent air stream, the tone will be unwavering and full sounding. Long tones give the tubist the opportunity to develop the concept of prioritizing air flow over air pressure. Air pressure increases when ascending on a brass instrument, however, the size and range of the tuba requires less pressure than all other brass instruments. The back of the tongue will come up, aiding in pressurizing air for higher pitches, although it cannot be engaged enough to close the throat. The lower register requires a large volume of air, a wider aperture, and a dropped, outward jaw. Method books such as the *Complete Arban’s Method for Tuba* and *Remington Warm Ups* support the use of long tones to develop consistency in sound by dedicating the very first exercises to their use. David Vining’s *Flow Studies* dedicates an entire etude book solely to the development of sound using long tones.

Along with developing consistency of tone in all registers, it is important to develop good intonation. One exercise that focuses on both tone consistency and intonation is the “Beautiful Sounds” exercise in the *Brass Gym*. This two octave exercise arpeggiates through every pitch, excluding the fourth scale degree in a major scale. By

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16 David Hickman, 106.

17 Ibid, 111.


performing this exercise in every key with a drone tone, the tubist will develop consistency in sound as well as intonation.

Lyrical playing, as found in the “Beautiful Sounds” exercise, is perhaps the most important tool in developing consistent tone. Lyricism teaches the use of smooth air to create the most pleasant sound possible. The use of transcriptions can be used to augment the development of tone through lyrical playing by providing the tubist with opportunities to play lyrical repertoire that they would not otherwise be exposed. Tubist and pedagogue John Griffiths encourages the tubist to “steal themes mercilessly,” in order to develop lyricism.

The use of transcribed etude books such as Guiseppe Concone Legato Etudes for Tuba and Guilio Marco Bordogni Complete Vocalises for Tuba provide the tubist vast exposure to lyrical playing. Daily work in these etude books is a vital tool in tone development. These transcriptions allow the tubist to fully engage with beautiful Italian vocalises. When beginning the use of these etudes, it is advisable to start with Concone etudes due to the simplicity of the melodies that provide the tubist with the ability to focus on consistent legato without having to work equally as hard in other areas of technique. These vocalises can be used in a variety of ways to develop tone, but are most beneficial in developing range and dynamic control.

Concone and Bordogni etudes can assist in overcoming the challenges involved in upper and lower register formation. Similar to how the “Beautiful Sounds” exercise

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20 Luis E. Loubriel, 50.

21 John R. Griffiths, 80.

allows the tubist to compare sound in different octaves, practicing these etudes up or down an octave gives the tubist an opportunity to develop tone consistency throughout all registers with lyrical playing. To avoid developing a different sound in each register, it is most beneficial for the tubist to break each etude in half. During the first half, the tubist may play the etude as written. Halfway through the etude the tubist can switch octaves, with the goal of keeping the same resonant tone as the middle register. More frequent comparisons between registers may be achieved by alternating octaves between each line.

The transcribed Concone and Bordogni etudes may be used in a similar fashion to develop tone production in relation to dynamic control. Consistency and beauty of tone in the extreme dynamic ranges is a challenge that requires specific focus. Soft playing especially can be one of the most challenging elements to overcome, which requires a proficient balance of air and embouchure at a minimal volume. Many players underestimate the amount of air flow necessary for the soft dynamic, resulting in weak tone and bad response. There may not be as much quantity of air as in loud playing, but soft playing still requires maximum air flow.\(^{23}\) Similar to alternating registers, using Concone or Bordogni etudes to alternate mezzo forte volumes with extreme soft or loud playing provides a lyrical and musical approach to widening a player’s dynamic range.

Along with routinely incorporating lyrical etudes into the tubist’s practice, it is beneficial to search for transcribed solos that demand mastery of lyrical playing in order to further develop skills contained in tuba literature. The control of tone within the context of lyrical playing is a vital tool in tuba literature, as a player must often maintain a singing vocal quality amidst challenging articulation and finger technique. An example

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\(^{23}\) David Hickman, 187.
of this is seen in Figure 1 at the opening of the Plog *Three Miniatures* second movement. The challenge of the soft and lyrical playing can be overlooked, as a young tubist may unknowingly sacrifice the dynamics and style of this movement, giving more of a focus to the extreme challenges of speed and articulation contained in the outer movements. The soft movement subsequently receives less attention, and the tubist struggles with consistent tone and control of the soft dynamic.

Figure 1: Anthony Plog, *Three Miniatures*, II, mm. 1-7.\(^{24}\)

\[\text{All musical excerpts are used with the permission of the publisher: www.editions-bim.com}\]

It is to the tubist’s advantage to seek a transcribed solo work in order to supplement and add focus to the issue of soft and lyrical playing. Chopin’s *Nocturne in E flat*, originally for piano, is a Romantic work that requires the tubist to be able to play as soft and as loud as possible in all ranges, regardless of the difficulties the melody poses to brass players. Seen in Figure 2 is a selection from Chopin’s *Nocturne in E flat*. Learning the vocal-like melody allows the tubist to develop tone control in extreme dynamics and ranges that greatly prepares the tubist for the demands found in the Plog. It is important to note that in Chopin and all following treble clef transcriptions, the author performs these pieces two octaves lower than written.

Another example of this delicate lyrical playing is found in the Oboe Concerto by Domenico Cimarosa. Seen in Figure 3 are the first three measures of the first movement. As the movement progresses, it continues alternations of extreme soft and full volume playing, as well as large register shifts. Cross training with this piece of early Classical music allows the tubist to focus on the reserved nature of the work, developing a gentle and consistent tone that is never abrasive. This quality requires more diligence to achieve a refined sound that further develops tone control that can be applied in the Plog.

Figure 3: Domenico Cimarosa, Concerto for Oboe and Strings, I, mm. 1-3.26

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25 G. Shirmer, 1894.

Flexibility

Following the development of tone production and consistency is the subject of flexibility. Flexibility involves moving around the entire range of the instrument in a facile way. Increased flexibility allows ease of playing throughout registers, which is conducive to consistent tone and agility, as well as increased range and endurance.\textsuperscript{27} All of these characteristics are a necessity with the ever more difficult challenges of today’s tuba literature. Seen in Figure 4 is a section extracted from the first movement of the John Williams \textit{Tuba Concerto}. The excerpt requires extreme flexibility, and is more idiomatic of string writing.

Figure 4: John Williams, \textit{Tuba Concerto}, I, mm 95-100.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure4.png}
\caption{John Williams, \textit{Tuba Concerto}, I, mm 95-100.}
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Concerto for Tuba by John Williams
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In order to develop the flexibility required for passages such as this, a player must include lip slurs in their daily routine. There are many sources for lips slurs, including the \textit{Brass Gym} by Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan, Remington \textit{Warm-Ups}, Bai Lin \textit{Lip Flexibilities}, and \textit{Lip Slurs for Tuba} by Deanna Swoboda. Lip slurs are extremely powerful tools to unifying sound and smoothly navigating the registers of a brass instrument. Lip slur exercises are based on the harmonic series of a brass instrument. As

\textsuperscript{27} Jane W. Hickman and Del Lyren, \textit{Magnificent Mendez} (AZ: Summit Records, 1994), 140.

a result, it is challenging for the player to make them sound musical instead of sounding technical.

Additionally, transcribed solos may be used in order to further develop flexibility in a more musical context. Cello suites are a paragon for developing flexibility within a musical framework. Seen in Figure 5 are the first lines from the Prelude from Bach *Cello Suite No. 4*, and although no slurs are indicated, the tubist should perform the piece slurred throughout to achieve fluidity. The piece opens with a two octave leap, followed by wide intervals moving in descending motion. Each succeeding measure has equally challenging and similar intervallic leaps. Before the tubist can begin to dissect this piece and create musical phrases, flexibility and accuracy must be impeccable. Former bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony Douglas Yeo insists that “If a student doesn’t have a facile technique, playing Bach Suites can be a frustrating enterprise.”29 Developing fluidity through the intervals in the Prelude prepares a tubist for flexibility and range demands, such as those found in the previous example from the John Williams.

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Equally, this study of wide intervals moving in quick succession prepares the tubist for the challenges in the Penderecki *Capriccio*. Seen in Figure 6 is an excerpt from page five of *Capriccio*. The combination of challenging flexibility with awkward intervals provides a great obstacle for the tubist. Having learned a piece such as the Bach *Cello Suite No. 4*, a performer will have ample flexibility in their abilities and will only need to focus on the accuracy of the wide intervals of the Penderecki *Capriccio*.

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30 Breikopft und Hartel, 1879.
Articulation Velocity

The last area of technique to be discussed is the area of articulation velocity. Before practicing tonguing exercises, it is important for all brass players to understand the often misunderstood role of the tongue. The tongue’s purpose is to refine notes. A common misconception is that the tongue itself produces sound, which leads to heavy and lethargic articulation. The performer must conceive of the tongue as a mechanism that only separates the beginnings and ends of notes in order to develop lighter and faster articulation. All styles of articulation benefit greatly with the development of a light and agile single tongue.

34 David Hickman, 133.
There are many concepts to deal with this challenge before working on articulation exercises. Arnold Jacobs urges a player to think about articulation on a wind instrument in the same way one thinks about diction in speech. There is a lack of ability to control the tongue by feeling, therefore the performer should not think of the tongue as muscle. Instead the tubist should control the tongue in the same manner as speech. One must use the tongue as fluidly and easily in playing, with the same dexterity as one might speak. To execute this approach, Jacob’s suggests using specific language, such as articulating with “tHO”, “tHA”, or “tU.” The small “t” allows for a quick up and down motion of the tongue, while the large “HO,” “HA,” or “U” provides emphasis on vowel sound, creating flow in the sound between articulations.\textsuperscript{35}

Another facet in consistent articulation is being sure to provide a continuous airstream while tonguing. A performer can become overly focused on the tongue which inhibits air flow, magnifying the difficulty in articulation. Inadequate air support results in articulations that place the tongue too high and very far back in the mouth. The tubist must focus on using a relaxed throat with flowing air while playing technical passages, otherwise the tongue hardens and the size of the embouchure decreases, which is detrimental to clean articulation.\textsuperscript{36}

There are many exercises that help develop consistent articulation. One of the most helpful styles of articulation exercises, found in many different variations, are the exercises that utilize short bursts of quick articulation that allow the performer to push their tempo before the tongue begins to drag. An example would be the “Tongue

\textsuperscript{35} Bruce Nelson, 55.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 55-56.
“Coordination” exercise found in the *Brass Gym*. This exercise alternates eighth notes with short bursts of sixteenth notes to develop efficacy of articulation. A constant stream of sixteenth notes can cause the tongue to fatigue quickly and slow by the end of a segment, creating bad habits and heavy articulation. By incorporating short durations of quick articulation the performer is able to push their tempo for a short period before the tongue fatigues, as the tubist only articulates two or four sixteenth notes at a time before playing an eighth note. This exercise could be compared to weight lifting, where adding more weight promotes the use of more sets with fewer repetitions. With this application, the tubist can challenge the tongue to execute quicker and cleaner playing in smaller segments with breaks in between.

When cross training with transcriptions to develop articulation, a player can focus on skill development that they would not have access to through tuba literature. Different types of music require different types of articulation to be agile and effective. Transcribed etudes from Kopprasch *Sixty Etudes*, originally for horn, Arban’s *Complete Method for Tuba*, originally for trumpet, or Allen Vizzuti’s *Advanced Etudes for Trumpet* allow focus on consistent tone with varied styles of articulations. Like the areas of tone and flexibility, daily focus should be spent on these etudes in order to develop consistent articulation.

One common problem that a tubist may need to overcome is that of heavy articulation. Often, works for tuba dwell on the bombastic style of playing. The first movement of the Hindemith *Tuba Sonata*, John Stevens *Triumph of the Demon Gods*,

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38 David Hickman, 140.
and countless large ensemble excerpts like *Ride of the Valkyries* or *Fountains of Rome* all instill a concept of heavier articulation. On the contrary, much of tuba literature requires fast and light articulations, which presents challenges for the tubist who has not given ample consideration to this performance practice.

These concepts are revealed in Anthony Plog’s *Three Miniatures*. This work has become a commonly requested piece for solo tuba competitions. Seen in Figure 7 are the opening three measures of the first movement:

Figure 7: Anthony Plog, *Three Miniatures*, I, mm. 1-3.  

All musical excerpts are used with the permission of the publisher: www.editions-bim.com

The rapid sixteenth notes occur through continuous meter changes, alternating between 3/8 and 4/8 time signatures. Because of the meter changes, single tonguing is often incorporated to execute the articulation. The movement is marked Allegro Vivace, which pushes the performer to use the fastest single tongue tempo they can manage. Because of the modern sound of the work it is common to incorporate heavy and aggressive articulation, however the opposite is necessary. One must take a light approach to the performance of this piece, with a more delicate and buoyant tonguing style in order to produce cleaner and faster articulation.

In order to supplement the concepts and exercises discussed previously, the tubist can focus on developing lighter articulations by studying the *Concerto for Oboe and Strings* by Domenico Cimarosa. Cimarosa was an admired 19th century opera buffa

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39 Anthony Plog, 1.
composer. His music consists of high energy and elegant writing. The concerto contains many passages that require light articulation.

The *Oboe Concerto* is an adaptation by Arthur Benjamin of the melodies from four of Cimarosa’s keyboard sonatas. The first movement is *Sonata 29*, the second is *Sonata 31*, the third is *Sonata 23*, and the fourth is from *Sonata 24*. A tubist is encouraged to listen to the performance of this piece on oboe in order to develop a concept of delicate sound that consists of crisp and light articulations. Since the movements originally exist as pieces for keyboard, a tubist may also refer to the sound of the piano, modeling on the short, percussive articulations of the piano strings. These sound models provide the tubist with alternate styles of articulation that may be adapted to the tuba. Seen in Figure 8 is an excerpt from the fourth movement of the Cimarosa that is very challenging, similar to the *Three Miniatures* due to the articulation combined with wider interval leaps.

Figure 8: Domenico Cimarosa, *Concerto for Oboe and Strings*, IV, mm. 64-68.

Concerto for Oboe and Strings by Domenico Cimarosa arr. Arthur Benjamin © Copyright 1942 by Hawkes & Son (London) LTD. Reprinted by permission.

The difficulties of articulation in the Plog are intertwined with the technical skill of flexibility. Brass players need to precisely place every pitch for successful performance. Note accuracy and flexibility within a passage can form a major inhibitor

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42 Domenico Cimarosa, *Concerto for Oboe and Strings*, 5.
to velocity and articulation. In a work such as *Three Miniatures*, the tubist must take time to focus on these elements aside from the articulations. Slurring through the passage until fluidity and ease is facilitated will greatly increase the ability to increase the tempo when articulating.

Focusing on flexibility and accuracy as a prerequisite to articulation and velocity is a skill that is also greatly developed in the Cimarosa. Figure 9 shows an excerpt from the second movement of the Cimarosa *Oboe Concerto*. This phrase is idiomatic for a woodwind or a keyboard instrument, where it is primarily a matter of finger dexterity. A brass player, however, must focus on embouchure flexibility. Cross training with a light Baroque style requires the tubist to work diligently to make the line sound effortless. Though it consists of rapid articulation, it is most important for the performer’s embouchure to be able to accurately execute the pitches. It is important to practice the entire passage slurred, to develop accuracy and fluidity in the embouchure before adding articulation. When the line can be slurred effortlessly, the tongue can then be added in. Tension destroys the competence of performing, so by eliminating the hassle of searching for all of the pitches, the performer can be less tense and increase the ability for fast articulation.

43 Bruce Nelson, 57.
Finger dexterity is another prerequisite to velocity and articulation. Many technical issues stem from a lack of coordination. One solution for difficult finger passages is to search for alternate fingerings. A more operative solution is to develop dexterity in the fingers. When working on this skill, it is important for the tubist to understand the parts of the hand and how to use it more efficiently. The palm of the hand is not one big bone, like the shoulder blade. In actuality, the finger bones go all the way to the wrist. Awkwardness in fingerings can be resolved by striving to reduce tension in the wrist, while focusing on the timing of fingers instead of the pressure.

The following figure is an example from the Cimarosa that develops finger coordination. Seen before for its embouchure flexibility, we look again at this passage in relation to finger dexterity.

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44 Domenico Cimarosa, Concerto for Oboe and Strings, 3.

45 John R. Griffiths, 80.

46 David Vining, What Every Trombonist Needs to Know About the Body (Mountain Peak Music: Flagstaff AZ, 2010), 94-95.
Performing a passage such as the one shown in Figure 10 on the tuba, prepares the tubist for playing an original composition such as the *Capriccio* by Krzysztof Penderecki. Modern literature often allows the performer to “hide” problems with clarity in technique behind dissonant intervals, but the tonality found in Cimarosa requires development of precise fingerings for exact technique; a trait that improves clarity in all repertoire.

The previous examples in this chapter provide the tubist examples of how to use transcriptions to further develop technical abilities in preparation for performance of tuba repertoire. Tone consistency within registers and dynamic extremes are supplemented

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47 Domenico Cimarosa, *Concerto for Oboe and Strings*, 3.

48 Krzysztof Penderecki, 6.
with the vocal-like melodies of Concone and Bordogni etudes, as well as the Chopin
Nocturne in E flat. Articulation is developed with the use of Koprasch and Arban etudes,
and the light tonguing found in the Cimarosa Oboe Concerto facilitates ease of
articulation in modern solo tuba literature such as the Plog Three Miniatures. Lastly, the
rigorous demands of string music holds no regard for the difficulty it places on a brass
embouchure, developing flexibility that exceeds the challenges found in most tuba
repertoire.
CHAPTER 3

PHRASING

As the largest instrument in the brass family, the tuba requires a substantial amount of air in order to produce a good sound. Large quantities of air are required in all registers and all dynamic levels, which can be problematic for performers with smaller lung capacities. Many times in modern solo literature, the composer will utilize the large range of the tuba by incorporating frequent use of wide intervals, further challenging the tubist’s breath support and ability to perform a longer musical phrase. Perhaps the greatest breathing challenge is when a composer focuses on the tuba’s low register, requiring the performer to sustain loud volumes in the register that requires the largest volume of air. 49

There are many resources devoted to developing breath support and phrasing. Once such resource, with a thorough focus on breathing, is available in The Breathing Gym, 50 by Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan. The book and companion DVD offer breathing exercises in order to help wind players develop efficient use of their lung capacity by developing breath control, and prioritizing air flow instead of air pressure.

Along with the importance of developing air control, the tubist must develop the ability to use breathing techniques to create musical phrases. The most important part of phrasing is developing an understandable, cohesive musical statement. Phrasing involves determining where a musical line is headed. It requires a performer to lead a listener

49 Kent J. Mason, 27.

50 Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan, The Breathing Gym (Focus on Music: Chandler, Arizona, 2002).
from one note to the next and one phrase to the next, so that a piece of music is engaging.\textsuperscript{51}

All wind instrument players must learn how to make the breath a part of the music, instead of a disruption necessary for air support. In his book \textit{The Musician’s Breath}, James Jordan insists that the greatest misunderstanding about breathing is that it is only a device for sound production and has little to do with musical ideas. Jordan argues that the breath is the primary vehicle of communicating.\textsuperscript{52} The tubist must embrace breathing as a vital tool for musical phrases, instead of treating it as an obstacle.

Developing a musical interpretation requires the performer to find meaning in the notes and to use breaths to create phrases that convey that meaning to the listener. The performer must understand that where they breathe affects how the audience understands their interpretation.\textsuperscript{53} Philip Farkas uses the example of language to relate this concept. Someone who speaks a language fluently has variation in their voice and breaks up their speech in appropriate places with breathing. In a similar manner, the musician must give direction to the notes of the melody and breathe in a manner that accentuates the meaning of the phrase.\textsuperscript{54}

Incorporating transcriptions into a tubist’s practice provides alternative opportunities to develop the art of phrasing. Compositions for other instruments do not take into consideration the difficulties a tubist has in breathing. String repertoire, in

\textsuperscript{51}Luis E. Loubriel, 95-96.


\textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 21-22.

particular, holds little regard for the lengths of phrases because string instruments do not require breathing to produce sound. When a tubist studies a string transcription, they must learn how to propel a phrase despite needing to breathe in the middle. This challenge encourages the tubist to determine the shape and direction of the musical line, to identify cadence points, and to define musical points of interest. The tubist must keep momentum going through a breath, and know when to let the music breathe.

The Bach *Cello Suite No. 4 in E flat* is one example that helps a tubist develop phrasing. Referring to the original *Cello Suite* manuscripts, which contain no phrase markings, the tubist must determine where to take a breath that is appropriate within the context of the music, without disrupting the shape of the music.

Beginning with the Prelude from *Cello Suite No. 4*, the tubist will notice the constant stream of eighth notes throughout the piece. There are no marked places to breathe, and only a couple of rests throughout the entire movement. Accepting that the tubist will have to breathe often, there are seemingly endless possibilities for placing breaths. It is for this reason that the piece is beneficial for a tubist to learn. Douglas Yeo states that: “…deciding what to do with the double stops and broken chords, how to phrase when you need to breathe and the line doesn’t give you the chance, and surmounting the immense technical challenges is the stuff of what makes a player a better player.”

A tubist must study the work in depth in order to choose places to breathe that enhance the musical line. Such a test to the tubist’s phrasing abilities develops proficiency in a skill that will enhance the player’s performance of tuba literature.

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Phrasing Breaths

Before examining the Prelude of Bach’s *Cello Suite No. 4*, some key terminology needs to be established. Throughout the phrasing examples, the author will refer to two different types of inhalation, the phrasing breath and the fueling breath. The first type of breath that the author will discuss is a phrasing breath. A phrasing breath will occur in the context of the musical line, where the performer deems that the music itself may breathe. The phrasing breath not only allows the audience to digest the preceding phrase, but it allows for an adequate breath that completely fills the tubist’s air supply. The tubist must analyze the progression of the musical line in order to properly determine a phrasing breath. Not every moment in a piece of music is as important as the next. The performer must analyze how the notes move in order to create gestures, and how gestures move to create phrases, and how phrases complement the framework of the piece. The *Cello Suite No. 4* exercises this skill and the performer’s ability to connect with their audience.

Fueling Breaths

The other type of inhalation to be discussed is a fueling breath, which is taken to keep a player from playing phrases that are too large. The instability of the breath support at the end of a tubist’s air supply is neither dependable nor conducive to tone production or musicality. Fueling breaths address this issue by keeping the air supply from depleting too low. Though the main purpose of these quick breaths is for breath support, they must be conceived musically. A fueling breath needs to fall at an appropriate time that does not disrupt the flow of the melody, but is instead hidden within

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56 John R. Griffiths, 14.
the musical line so that it does not interrupt the momentum of the phrase. The performer usually needs to take a fueling breath well before they feel it necessary to breathe in order to prevent an inhalation that is disruptive.

Regarding the use of the fueling breath, the performer must consider the potential of decreased phrasing ability during performance. In this state, it is natural to take more shallow inhalations more frequently as adrenaline rushes to the lungs to help maximize the body’s use of oxygen.\(^57\) In performance, this means that the likelihood of running out of breath rises with the increased predilection for shallow breathing. Adequate fueling breaths allow the tubist to perform without worry of being unable to make it to the end of a phrase.

A musical line must flow through a fueling breath. Fueling breaths correlate directly to the quick breathing exercise in the *Breathing Gym*. This exercise includes a four beat exhalation, where inhalations occur first on the span of a quarter note, then an eighth note, then a sixteenth note in order to develop getting a large amount of air in a short amount of time.\(^58\) The fueling breath incorporates this technique into a musical setting. It requires a careful attention to detail in order to facilitate, given that the musical line must be consistent through the breath. It is important that the note before the inhalation does not taper as though at a cadence point. It also means that the notes following must match the notes preceding the breath; entering at a different volume ruins the continuity of the line.


\(^{58}\) Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan, *The Breathing Gym*, 34.
Phrasing Suggestions for Bach *Cello Suite No. 4*

The following examples are the author’s interpretation of phrases within the context of Bach *Cello Suite No. 4* and are not the “correct” way of phrasing in these pieces. These examples provide one interpretation for performance on tuba; however the description of their formation is the key point. The deliberate manner of placing a breath with attention to the flow of the musical line is the skill this chapter is discussing. The tubist must learn to develop thorough reasoning behind choices for each breath that is implemented. These examples, therefore, serve as a starting point to developing an approach to phrasing that is based equally on attention to the direction of the melody and the need for breath support. They are not, however, an endpoint of how the phrasing needs to be performed for each example.

Seen in Figure 12, are the first fifteen measures of the Prelude from *Bach Cello Suite No. 4*. When deciphering the flow of the musical line, the tubist must take into consideration J.S. Bach’s skill as a composer. Bach was a master at counterpoint, weaving different lines together, yet a Cello Suite is for one solo instrument with one musical line. What the tubist must search for is a type of implied harmony.\(^{59}\) In the opening of the Prelude, there is a reoccurring start of each measure with a low E flat, followed by notes soaring downward as they arpeggiate different chords. The low E flat serves as a bass line in the harmony. A cellist brings this bass line out by emphasizing the low E flat and letting the string ring, so that what follows is heard in the context of the harmony provided by the low E flat. The tubist can emulate this quality by giving more weight to the low E flat as well.

In order to keep fluidity in the moving notes as they arpeggiate different chords, the tubist needs to choose the least distracting moment to place fueling breaths. Since there is emphasis being placed on the low E flat in each measure, breathing after it would separate the E flat entirely from the flow of the melody. Breathing in the middle of the descent from the peak notes in each measure sacrifices continuity in the falling line. However, by quickly breathing before the last eighth note in a measure, the descending line is kept as in tact as possible, while creating a slight rubato for the emphasis desired on the low E flat. The performer could choose to insert a fueling breath into measure two, between the penultimate G and the B flat. This idea will assist the tubist in maintaining a full lung capacity to play the entire phrase with ease. The flexibility required in these eleven measures requires quality air supply, and without the fueling breaths a tubist may struggle to execute the technique without adequate breath support. The next fueling breaths can be taken similarly, perhaps in bars four and six.

With fueling breaths in place, the tubist must find where the first phrasing breath can be taken. There is a descending pattern of the highest notes in each measure that are

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60 Breitkopf und Hartel, 1879.
following a path down from the high E flat in the opening measure. In measures one and two the peak note is E flat, but the peak occurs a whole step down on D flat in measures three and four, and then C in measures five and six. Measure eight builds tension with the A flat that functions as a seventh needing resolution. Measure nine allows for this resolution and also begins the first time that the bass notes change. The low E flat gives way to the low D in measure ten and then arrives at a low C in measure eleven, at which point the peak note ascends back up to a high E flat. In this interpretation of the musical line, the first musical phrase is over after measure eight, and measure nine begins a new motion. The performer can give a slight rubato to let the first phrase sink into the listeners’ ears; however there is a choice of where to place the phrasing breath. It could go before or after the last A flat in measure eight. The important thing for a tubist to realize is the implication of breathing in either place. Breathing before the A flat means the tubist wants the phrasing breath to seem more like a comma in a sentence, before continuing into the next phrase. Breathing after the A flat means the tubist would prefer the phrase to seem more like a semi colon, ending an idea but continuing on with related material.

Again, it is important to emphasize that the above interpretation is the present author’s interpretation of the musical line. This interpretation provides a tool for developing strict intention behind choosing where to breathe in order to develop coherent and meaningful musical phrases for the audience. The methodology of developing phrases is what’s important; more so than the end result. The Cello Suites demand the described attention to detail for an effective performance.
Phrasing Techniques from Bach to Penderecki

A tubist can develop their ability to phrase modern tuba repertoire by applying the skills learned in studying the *Cello Suites*. Figure 13 is a selection of the first three lines of Krzysztof Penderecki’s *Capriccio for Solo Tuba*. The piece shares the element of bareness found in *Cello Suite No. 4*. *Capriccio* is unmetered, although there is a hint of a triple feel by the indication of Scherzo alla Polacca at the opening of the piece.

Figure 13: Krzysztof Penderecki, *Capriccio*, pg. 4.\(^{61}\)

In the same way that the constant flow of eighth notes is daunting in *Cello Suite No. 4*, the lack of bar lines challenges the tubist to focus on the musical line and decide musical direction. There are breath marks indicated in the score, which help decipher possible phrases. Applying the idea of fueling breaths, learned in the *Cello Suite No. 4*, the tubist should search for moments that do not disrupt the musical line in the *Capriccio*. The opening three quarter notes give way to an ascending motive of F, G, and A flat that

\(^{61}\) Krzysztof Penderecki, 4.
is repeated with elaboration. Here would be a good place for a fueling breath. Playing 
the same motive twice in a row can sound repetitive, but giving the slightest pause before 
the second iteration helps to exaggerate the repeated motion. It is in that slight pause that 
a fueling breath can be taken. The same motion occurs after the large descent into the 
pedal E flat that ascends back up into a reiteration of the opening motive. After this 
point, the breath marks that Penderecki has placed in the score are sufficient to carry 
through to the end of the first phrase.

With fueling breaths in place, the tubist must decide where the first phrase ends in 
order to place a phrasing breath. The opening motive is repeated on the first line, but the 
second time it leads to a B natural at the top of the bass clef staff. The musical line 
continues to dwell on this B natural, creating tension. There is a neighbor note motion to 
B flat that returns back to B natural. Next the line descends to G sharp before ascending 
back to B natural. The B natural continues to build suspense, developing a strong desire 
for the listener to hear it resolve in some way. The answer is revealed on the third line, as 
the melody arrives on the original F, the pitch the piece began on displaced by an octave. 
There are three half notes of F separated by a neighbor note motion and a double 
neighbor note motion that goes above and below before returning to F. The last thing 
before Penderecki’s noted breath mark is a register shift back to the original F. 
Following the line in this way supports Penderecki’s notated breath mark following the 
return to F can be treated as a phrasing breath, allowing a breath for the tubist, and 
allowing the musical line to set in before carrying on to the next phrase.
Phrase Mapping from Bach to Plog

Closely related to the previous focus on phrasing in terms of breathing, The *Bach Cello Suite No. 4* can be used to develop the skill of phrase mapping. Every performer must be aware of how each note relates to the formation of a phrase, and how each phrase relates in an overall piece. Mapping how all the pieces of the puzzle fit together is a skill all teachers try to impart upon their students, and cross training with transcriptions provides a valuable supplement to this skill. This ability can be developed with the Sarabande from the *Cello Suite No. 4*.

The Sarabande appears midway through the Suite. This slow, contemplative movement could disengage the audience if the tubist does not devote time to mapping the musical ideas. The consistent, high tessitura of the movement and the frequent use of double stops add to the difficulties performing the Sarabande. The technique of trying to arpeggiate all of the double stops can have a negative effect on the melodic line, and the endurance required to play the movement in the notated octave is exceedingly demanding on the performer. For these reasons, it is best to eliminate the double stops to preserve the melody, and play this movement down an octave to assist endurance in the context of performing the entire suite. These simplifications allow the tubist to focus on the beauty of the musical line, but also increase the risk of disengaging the audience because the tuba is playing slowly in the low register. It is imperative to develop a musical “map” that takes into consideration the movement as a whole in order to engage the audience.

The Sarabande at this point in music history had a very serious nature, and was in
a very slow triple meter with a typical AABB form.\textsuperscript{62} The Sarabande in \textit{Cello Suite No. 4} is the shortest movement in the suite. When phrase mapping the movement, the tubist must take into account how the repetition of each line can sound monotonous without variation. One possible solution for mapping the Sarabande is to take a palindromic approach. The first time through the A section the tubist can play louder, in a mezzo forte dynamic. As the performer reaches the end of the A section, they can decrescendo to the trill on B flat and pause slightly before repeating the section, this time pianissimo. This nuance allows the second time through to sound different, like an echo of what was just heard, creating a deeper intimacy with the listener. To avoid the predictability of each section being loud the first time and soft the second, the performer can continue to play pianissimo at the beginning of the B section. The first time through the B section would then incorporate subdued versions of the tubist’s musical inflections. As the end of the B section approaches, the performer can crescendo and intensify into the repeat. The second time through can now embrace and deliver fully all of the musical ideas hinted at the first iteration. The palindrome created is forte and piano for the A section and then piano and forte for the B Section – forte, piano, piano, forte for the overall movement. To add further variation, the performer can also make the B section a palindrome in itself. The full volume of the second iteration prepares the listener to expect a large climax at the final note. To play with expectations, the performer may decrescendo to an anticlimax on the final ascent to the high E flat.

This skill can be applied to the opening phrase in the second movement of Plog’s \textit{Three Miniatures}, seen below. Similar to the Sarabande, it is important to hold the

attention of the audience during this slow movement. The first seven bars use two gestures very similar in melodic shape.

Figure 14: Anthony Plog, *Three Miniatures*, II, mm. 1-7.63

There is also help from the piano, which enters in measure two, carrying through to measure four. At that point, the piano plays block chords until measure seven. It is vital to engage the audience in these opening gestures in order to keep them captivated for the entire movement. Here, the skills of phrase mapping developed in the Cello Suite assist in creating an engaging opening gesture. Plog has the tuba decrescendo into the B natural in measure two. Viewing this point as an anticlimax, it is important for the tubist to create one continuous motion from the opening note all the way to the B. The indicated breath mark in measure one can then be viewed as a fueling breath instead of a phrasing breath to create continuity of the musical line. A similar gesture begins in measure four, but this time when it arrives the piano enters, changing the direction of the musical line. The performer should then build and crescendo into the high C in measure seven to create more of a musical climax. Similar to the Sarabande, this interpretation creates another palindrome. The music begins mezzo piano and decrescendos to piano. The next phrase goes from piano to mezzo piano, resulting in mezzo piano, then piano followed by piano, then mezzo piano.

63 Anthony Plog. 2.
Each of these examples demonstrates how transcriptions supplement the development of phrasing. Bach’s *Cello Suite No. 4* offers challenges that exceed the problems that are found in the phrasing of modern tuba literature. By studying the *Suite*, the tubist develops an ability to follow a musical line and make appropriate breath marks, conforming to the musical intent of the composer and the interpretation of the performer. A tubist also learns the importance of mapping phrases to create a fully engaging performance. As a result, the phrasing and mapping challenges of tuba literature become much less intimidating.
CHAPTER 4
STYLISTIC INTERPRETATION

The last chapter of discussion will focus on the benefits of using transcriptions to develop stylistic interpretation of modern day tuba repertoire. As music evolves, composers learn and expand on preexisting forms and styles. This attribute is often exemplified in contemporary music. Tuba literature of today shares many qualities with past eras of music, making the use of transcriptions vital, since no solo tuba literature exists in these eras. The developing tubist of today should be acquainted with past eras through their music history and theory studies; however, deeper understanding requires studying and performing repertoire from earlier eras. Using the three pieces of tuba repertoire in discussion, this chapter will explore how the stylistic traits of transcriptions enable nuance in the interpretation of today’s tuba literature.

Penderecki’s “Capriccio” and Chopin’s “Nocturne in E flat”

The first case study will begin with Penderecki’s Capriccio for Solo Tuba. Composed in 1980 and premiered by Cdzislaw Piernik, the piece has become a mainstay in the tuba repertoire. It is often used in competitions because of the extreme challenges found in the work. The first challenge is the unmeasured nature of the solo. There is one bar line, which occurs before the coda section at the end of the piece. The work is extremely demanding on range, covering over four octaves from D1 to G4. This excludes the range that can be incorporated in Figure 15, where Penderecki uses arrows to indicate that the performer should play the highest and lowest notes possible.
Furthermore, the technical challenges push the performer to the peak of their abilities, with fast sixteenth passages, glissandi, and rapid alternation of large intervals, as exemplified in the following selection.

Figure 16: Krzysztof Penderecki, Capriccio for Solo Tuba, 7.\textsuperscript{65}
The dissonant nature of this work and all of the technical challenges that it brings for the tubist are often influenced by a detailed study of Penderecki’s life and work. His childhood took place during WWII, with battle lines not very far from his home town of Debicia, Poland. The traumatic experiences that occurred as Penderecki was growing up, such as the bombing of Hiroshima and many others influenced him greatly and inspired many of the emotions he tries to convey throughout his music. His *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* was influenced by the dropping of the nuclear bombs on Japan, the events at Auschwitz influenced his *Dies Irae*, and his *Lacrimosa* was influenced by the workers killed in the Gdansk uprising in 1970.

Taking all of this into consideration, it is common for the tubist to incorporate an aggressive performance of this piece. It can be quite surprising to realize that this solo is supposed to be a comical dance. Penderecki gives the tubist a couple of easily overlooked clues that are vital to the performance of the work. The beginning of the piece is marked *Scherzo alla Polacca*. Roughly half way through the piece, the mood changes in a *Tempo di Valse* section. These are more than just tempo indicators, and instead are the guidelines for the mood of the entire piece. A scherzo is a lighthearted musical joke. A Polacca is equal to a Polonaise, which is a Polish dance in \( \frac{3}{4} \) time. The polonaise was a stately, processional dance commonly played at weddings and

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festivals. With this information, we know that it is Penderecki’s intent that the piece should be interpreted as a light-hearted and flowing dance, rather than a serious, dramatic solo.

Understanding the style of Penderecki’s writing when he composed the *Capriccio* solidifies his intent of the work. Penderecki has utilized many different compositional styles in his career. During the time *Capriccio* was written, he began his period of synthesis between Avante Garde and Neo-Romanticism, in which he uses his same focus to strange sounds alongside increased attention to form and melodic progression.70

Since Penderecki was focused on Neo-Romanticism, and his guidelines in the piece are centered on Polish dances, learning a Chopin Nocturne becomes an effective cross training experience. Chopin’s *Nocturne in E flat* may not seem a likely candidate for a stylistic model at first, but there are very many qualities that can be gleaned from it that bring nuance to interpretation of the *Capriccio*. More specifically, the *Nocturne* has stylistic qualities that help the tubist formulate more contrast with the Tempo di Valse section of *Capriccio*.

As a leading icon of Romantic music history, Chopin serves as one of the most prolific composers of dance music from the era. Argued by the research of Eric McKee, Chopin’s affinity for writing dance music stems from his experience with ballroom dance during his youth. Chopin grew up regularly attending aristocratic tea parties and balls and was a skilled dancer by his teenage years. McKee notes that in Chopin’s letters he

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frequently mentions attending balls, but would only mention dance if something odd occurred. McKee uses this information to support that dance was so common to Chopin that it was not worth discussing unless it was unusual. As he became an accomplished musician, his love of dance permeated throughout his compositions.71

Almost half of Chopin’s output is comprised of dance music, and dance elements are found in many of his remaining works, including his Nocturnes.72 Chopin’s Nocturnes have always been difficult to describe because they are an amalgamation of so many of his stylistic traits. While listening to the Nocturnes, it is easy to perceive rhythmic and melodic elements from other genres.73 The Nocturnes also consist of sweeping lyrical qualities that make them sound more like vocal writing than piano, which is conducive to developing lyrical brass playing. Recent research by James Parakilas provides compelling evidence of a relationship between Chopin’s piano nocturnes and Parisian vocal nocturnes. Composers including Auguste Panseron and Antoine Romangnesi were seen as symbols of the Paris salon, creating vocal nocturnes that were extremely lyrical and would be seen published in collections with romances and chansonnettes. The fact that Chopin, and his predecessor John Field, would have been exposed to these works is a wonderful explanation for the lyrical vocal-like melodies found in the piano nocturnes.74


72 Eric McKee, 106.


74 Ibid, 205-206.
As a tubist learns the *Nocturne in E flat*, they become acquainted with the dance-like motion and the vocal qualities in the work. In Figure 17, the opening melody for the *Nocturne* goes through its third transformation of embellishments. The section has many wide interval leaps that are a challenge to perform smoothly. Even more difficult, is that a tubist must be able to perform this in a manner that does not disrupt the flow of the melody. Chopin was adamant about performing with simplicity and grace.\(^{75}\)

Figure 17: Frederick Chopin, *Nocturne in E Flat Major*, mm. 21-22.\(^{76}\)

All of the aspects learned from Chopin help to form a unique approach to the Tempo di Valse section of the *Capriccio*. In Figure 18, one can see how Penderecki incorporates brief lyricism with wide intervallic leaps. A tubist learning the piece can begin to focus on the slur as a hurdle to overcome amidst staccato articulations. In doing so, the articulated sections become the focus, and the heavier articulation used throughout the outside sections of the piece is applied in the Tempo di Valse section. More contrast is achieved, however, if the tubist makes the slurred portions the focus. Many of the staccato articulations can be seen in the same light as the embellishments Chopin uses in the *Nocturne*. The approach to this section then becomes tender, emitting a vocal-like dance melody, led delicately by light articulations. By bringing in the experience gained

\(^{75}\) G. Schirmer, 1894.

\(^{76}\) Ibid, 14.
by the *Nocturne*, this section can be romanticized as a huge contrast to the surrounding sections. The result not only adds life, but complements the Neo-Romantic style in which it was composed.

Figure 18: Krzysztof Penderecki, *Capriccio for Solo Tuba*, 8.77

Learning Chopin also acquaints the tubist with performing in a *stile brillante* manner, a tradition of style that Chopin incorporated into his earlier Nocturnes. This style of performing was based on creating dazzling musical effects. In this style, it is important to stay as far away from stagnation as possible. Every musical decision is executed as an effortless virtuoso effect.78 This idea of performance brings the entire *Capriccio* to life, as the tubist prepares all of the technical challenges to the point where the performer can make a brilliant spectacle of all the difficulties.

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77 Krzysztof Penderecki, 8.

*The John Williams Tuba Concerto and Debussy’s Syrinx*

One of the major challenges of the John Williams *Tuba Concerto*, composed in 1985 for Chester Schmitz, is performing a musically engaging version of the second movement. The other two movements are high energy, with exciting melodies. On the contrary, creating the same energy and momentum in the second movement is difficult. A successful performance takes the fragmented ideas and creates unity, but achieving a successful performance is challenging. The style of Debussy, exemplified in *Syrinx*, offers tools to solving this problem.

Debussy has a unique style of music that is easily recognizable. He relies heavily on sonority and the use of interesting harmonies rather than excitement and climax through tonal function. His works use standard key signatures, but freely incorporate dissonance to the point where the key is indistinguishable.79

Debussy’s writing was also greatly influenced by different cultural styles. He was captivated by medieval music, and looked to Francois Couperin and Jean-Phillipe Rameau as national influences. He loved foreign ethnic styles such as Spanish and especially Javanese music. The beauty and exoticism of these styles were an influence that found their way into many of his works, providing unique harmonies to his compositions.80

Debussy used unique sounds and forms in his music in order to create an elusive quality that formed the basis of his impressionist and symbolist style of writing. Debussy found artistic inspiration outside of music. He was enraptured by impressionist paintings and by symbolist writings. Many of his major successes, such as *Prelude to the*

80 Ibid, 4-5.
Afternoon of a Faun, are settings of symbolist poetry. Due to the fact that Debussy absorbed qualities from both impressionism and symbolism, it is difficult to ascribe Debussy to just one style of thinking. He was transfixed by the common goal of each movement, which was to go behind the surface meaning of things. 81 Debussy’s music creates a strong and clear emotion in the listener, focusing on depicting the feeling more so than the stimuli. Instead of creating music that sounds like a storm, Debussy would rather create music that evoked the same type of fear and awe that one would feel trapped in a storm. 82

One of Debussy’s greatest abilities in his music was his technique of capturing the inability of the mind to focus. A prime example is found in his Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun. In this work, the faun is focused on erotic ideas, exemplified with sensuous flute music. The music tries to relate how the faun’s mind is constantly diverted away and then drawn back again to eroticism. 83

Debussy’s Syrinx exemplifies the aforementioned qualities of style. The work was originally conceived in 1913 as music for the play Psyche by Gabriel Mourey. The story involves Pan and his pursuit of the nymph Syrinx. He is extremely captivated by her and chases her fervently. In an effort to escape to freedom, Syrinx transforms into reeds by the water’s edge. In deep pain from losing her, Pan fashions the reeds into pipes to play the song of his lament. Syrinx is thought of typically as Pan’s death song. 84

82 Victor Lederer, 11.
83 Ibid, 30.
84 Ibid, 131.
The tubist is able to embody all of the characteristics that Debussy utilizes when playing *Syrinx*. The opening melody, seen below, is the main melodic motive that returns throughout the piece. It is somber, and captures the spirit of longing the piece is trying to evoke.

Figure 19: Claude Debussy, *Syrinx*, mm. 1-2.85

![Figure 19](image)

Syrinx for Solo Flute by Claude Debussy
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The melodic theme comes to a dramatic pause before its reiteration starting in measure 3. This time, the theme is diverted away from its original ending, into sixteenth note triplet figures before working its way up to a soft E flat above the staff. This motion depicts Debussy’s style of portraying the unfocused mind, as the melodic line shifts away from the original melody and returns. This section also shows Debussy’s reluctance to form a climax. The high E flat in measure 8 is the highest note in the piece, aside from the F flat grace note in measure 27. Instead of this peak serving as a climax, the melodic line shies away from it. Debussy is not trying to depict a perfect step by step story with a definite high point and resolution, but rather purely depict the emotion of longing, which varies in intensity throughout the piece. The main melody comes back an octave lower in measure 9 before entering a languishing triplet section at measure 14, seen in Figure 20.

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At measure 26 the music ascends to a restatement of the original melodic motive, before slowly subsiding downwards to a low D flat in the last measure. The work ends on a D flat, but the piece is far from sounding like D flat major the key signature would indicate. Still, the work effectively embodies longing with the use of the entrancing harmonies, and somehow sounds like it resolves to a tonic at the end.

Developing an appropriate style and approach to *Syrinx* can have significant impact on interpretation of the second movement of the John Williams *Tuba Concerto*. It has a very similar sound in harmonic texture to *Syrinx*, with interesting harmonies, but not necessarily traditional harmonic function. The entrance of the tuba in this movement, seen in Figure 21, opens up with slow quarter notes that lead into dectuplets.

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86 Claude Debussy, 3.

87 John Williams, 6.
The frenzied dectuplets combine with tranquil motives until the heavily syncopated section at measure 209, seen in the following example.

Figure 22: John Williams, *Tuba Concerto*, mm. 210-212.\(^{88}\)

![Concerto for Tuba by John Williams](image)

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The section that follows consists of different elements interacting with each other. Segments from the first and second section combine until measure 241, seen in Figure 23, upon which the first instance of a fully stated melody appears.

Figure 23: John Williams, *Tuba Concerto*, mm. 241-245.\(^{89}\)

![Concerto for Tuba by John Williams](image)

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A tubist can form a unique approach to the John Williams second movement by incorporating the idea of wandering focus that Debussy uses in *Syrinx*. Instead of treating the movement as one idea progressing and transforming, the tubist can treat the

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\(^{88}\) Ibid.

\(^{89}\) John Williams, 7.
different melodies as interjections that distract from the peaceful nature of the opening line. Also similar to *Syrinx*, one can try to capture an emotion in the John Williams rather than depict a specific scene. This helps to give the music purpose without moving to a climactic point. In this style, the main arrival point of the movement may be seen as measure 241, where a distinguishable and cohesive melody is finally presented. Instead of an arrival in terms of climax and resolution, this arrival is a moment of clarity and focus. It may be treated as the point in the movement where the melody line finally ebbs and flows instead of being interrupted. This interpretation could then make the cadenza at measure 260, seen in Figure 24, serve more of a transitory purpose towards the final movement instead of a climactic purpose. The aforementioned approaches create a variety of tools the tubist may use in their own personal interpretation of the movement.

Figure 24: John Williams, *Tuba Concerto*, mm. 260-262.\(^9^0\)

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\(^9^0\) John Williams, 7.
be successful. They are a decadent embellishment, but since they are so uncommon to see in a tuba part they become the main focus of a performer, as they work to get through them accurately.

The opening lines of the second movement are much more idiomatic of flute writing. In fact, when listening to the *Concerto* with orchestra, there is a flute cadenza just before the tuba’s entrance at measure 194. Once the tubist enters, a duet between the tuba and flute occurs. The tuba plays three notes and is answered by the flute playing a combination of a quintuplet and a septuplet. After the first dextuplet in the tuba, the flute answers with a duodectuplet. It is important in the opening of the second movement that the tubist plays “flute like.” The delicate writing found in Debussy’s *Syrinx* not only provides experience with flute writing, but with music that has similar movement and harmony to those in the John Williams. Figure 25 is an excerpt that shows very similar writing to the second movement of the John Williams.

Figure 25: Claude Debussy, *Syrinx*, mm. 18-22.\(^\text{91}\)

![Syrinx for Solo Flute by Claude Debussy](image)

\(^{91}\) Claude Debussy, 3.
the lightness and smoothness of the runs. By perfecting the cleanliness and grace required in *Syrinx*, the dextuplets that fly by in one beat in the John Williams become much less daunting, and more easily learned as an embellishment.

**Plog Three Miniatures and the Cimarosa Oboe Concerto**

Lastly, Anthony Plog’s *Three Miniatures*, composed in 1990 for Daniel Perantoni, can gain new perspective with the incorporation of stylistic traits gained from cross training with the Cimarosa *Oboe Concerto*. Plog’s music is very popular amongst new brass literature. His solo and chamber compositions for brass instruments are highly sought after as standard pieces of repertoire. His works incorporate flashy technique alongside harsh sounding harmonies, challenging metrical structures and heavy syncopation. Because of the contemporary nature of *Three Miniatures*, it may seem unsuitable to seek stylistic influence from the Cimarosa *Oboe Concerto*. However, combining past styles into such a modern work seems more appropriate when incorporating Neo-Classicism, where modern tonal and rhythmic language are used in the context of past form and style.

The opening line of the first movement of *Three Miniatures* is a repetitive cell in shifting meters that keeps coming back to provide structure throughout the piece. It is interesting to note that, though it appears very modern, using a repetitive pattern of motives is a common practice found in works of the Baroque era. Once again examining the opening of the Prelude in Bach *Cello Suite No. 4*, the opening four eight notes can be seen as a repetitive motive that occurs in each succeeding measure. This gesture, seen in Figure 26, also returns at the end of the piece, signifying the approaching end of the Prelude. This technique is very similar to measure sixty four of *Three Miniatures*, where
the opening motive returns one last time before the final chromatic run that ends the movement.

Figure 26: J.S Bach, Cello Suite No. 4, Prelude, measures 1-15.92

Taking all of this into consideration, a tubist can develop a unique interpretation of Three Miniatures by incorporating stylistic traits from the Cimarosa Concerto for Oboe and Strings into the modern tonal and rhythmic language of Plog. Figure 27 from the fourth movement of the Oboe Concerto requires single tonguing and challenging flexibility that is as equally demanding to the tubist as the Three Miniatures.

Figure 27: Domenico Cimarosa, Concerto for Oboe and Strings, IV, mm. 1-11.93

Concerto for Oboe and Strings by Domenico Cimarosa arr. Arthur Benjamin © Copyright 1942 by Hawkes & Son (London) LTD. Reprinted by permission.

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92 Breitkopf und Hartel, 1879.

93 Domenico Cimarosa, 3.
The tubist must work diligently to perform this movement with agility, as well as grace that would be expected in Cimarosa’s style of writing. The lively interpretation of the Cimarosa can be applied to the first movement of the *Three Miniatures*. The frequent repetition of the flexible motive can be played with finesse instead of force, as a player tries to incorporate the idea of an early classical idiom to the music. Instead of treating the *Allegro Vivace* in the Plog as frantic and frenzied, the tubist can incorporate the high spirited speed and style of the Cimarosa. This nuance provides a more refined interpretation of *Three Miniatures*, allowing the tubist to perform gracefully, even though the tonal and metric language is not typical of early classical writing.

Instead of thinking of the first movement as a mosaic of motives, the tubist could conceive of the first movement as being based on Sonata form. Measures 1 through 20 would be considered as the first theme, followed by a second theme leading into 21. Measures 39 through 63 would be a development section, followed by a recapitulation in measure 64. By studying the style of the early classical style of Cimarosa, the tubist gains a wide variety of tools to use in the interpretation of the first movement of *Three Miniatures*. 
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

In these three brief case studies, there is substantial evidence of the pedagogical benefit to incorporating transcriptions as cross training for solo tuba literature. Transcriptions allow tubists to make connections, and build upon older material in order to create the most technically sound and musical interpretation of modern literature. By focusing on how to use transcriptions in this way, tubists expand their value far past the role of supplemental materials to eras void of solo tuba literature.

The use of transcriptions provides a variety of styles and interpretations which might not otherwise be considered. At the same time, there’s no limit to the choice of transcriptions to be used. A performer may choose to utilize a Schumann transcription to develop the Penderecki. It is also possible that a Bach flute partita can help a tubist identify with the John Williams. The articulation required for the Three Miniatures could be developed in an Albinoni oboe concerto, or possibly a Mozart transcription. The case studies presented are by no means the ultimate solution, and there are endless possibilities to using transcriptions in order to develop style, technique and phrasing within the context of tuba literature. The fact that many combinations of transcribed material can be used with tuba literature is noted in a concise list in Appendix F.

Over the past half century, tuba literature has developed in quantity and difficulty. More literature is presented that is pushing the boundaries of performers’ abilities. By embracing transcriptions, the tubist will continue to push the boundaries and rise to the technical and musical challenges presented. Cross training with transcriptions assists the tubist in developing consummate musicianship.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX F

SUGGESTED CROSS TRAINING MATERIALS FOR SOLO PREPARATION
Krzysztof Penderecki *Capriccio*

- Daily Bordogni and Concone etudes: developing tone consistency throughout all registers and dynamics
- Daily Kopprasch and Vizzutti etudes: developing consistent articulations throughout all registers and dynamics
- Daily Lip Slurs from Deanna Swoboda and Bai Lin: developing flexibility and tone consistency throughout all registers
- Bach *Cello Suite in E flat* Prelude only: developing flexibility and phrasing
- Chopin *Nocturne in E flat*: developing lyricism and *stile brilliante*

**Anthony Plog’s Three Miniatures**

- Daily Bordogni and Concone etudes: developing tone consistency throughout all registers and dynamics
- Daily Kopprasch and Vizzutti etudes: developing consistent articulations throughout all registers and dynamics
- Daily Lip Slurs from Deanna Swoboda and Bai Lin: developing flexibility and tone consistency throughout all registers
- Bach *Cello Suite in E flat* Sarabande only: developing phrase mapping
- Chopin *Nocturne in E flat*: developing dynamic control
- Cimarosa *Concerto for Oboe and Strings*: developing quick and light articulation as well as developing an early classical style that can be incorporated

**John Williams Tuba Concerto**

- Daily Bordogni and Concone etudes: developing tone consistency throughout all registers and dynamics
- Daily Kopprasch and Vizzutti etudes: developing consistent articulations throughout all registers and dynamics
- Daily Lip Slurs from Deanna Swoboda and Bai Lin: developing flexibility and tone consistency throughout all registers
- Bach *Cello Suite No. 4*, Entire Suite: developing flexibility and endurance
- Debussy *Syrinx*: developing “flute-like” style, as well as impressionist approach to the second movement