

THE *TUBA SONATA* BY ANTHONY PLOG:
PREPARATION AND PERFORMANCE
THROUGH THE LENS OF HIS REPERTOIRE FOR SOLO TUBA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this document is to provide those teaching and performing Anthony Plog's *Tuba Sonata* with information that will help them better prepare this piece of music through a thorough study of the various stylistic and compositional elements of the piece. In addition, this document will seek to highlight the important connections to Plog's other works for tuba, thereby assisting in the preparation and interpretation of Plog's output for the solo tuba.

This document is in two parts. The first part documents Plog's musical development throughout his career as a performer and composer, highlights his effort to expand the tuba's solo repertoire, and connects the *Tuba Sonata* to his larger body of work. The second part presents a thorough study of the technical and musical demands of the *Tuba Sonata*. Using performance suggestions, including tuba and mute selection, ideas on phrasing, tempo choice, and a discussion of the performer's concept of style, the document provides performers with a better understanding of the challenges encountered in the piece. In addition, practice exercises composed by Plog and the author of this document have been included to assist performers in preparing for the many challenges found throughout the piece.

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INTRODUCTION

In relation to the rest of the standard orchestral instruments, the tuba is still relatively new as a solo instrument. This novelty is due in part to the fact that the tuba is one of the most recent additions to the standard orchestral instrumentation. The direct predecessors of the modern tuba were the ophicleide and the serpent. Both of these instruments, despite their unwieldy shape and numerous intonation problems, found widespread use throughout Europe. The brass family finally gained a true bass voice in 1835 with the patent for the bass tuba by Wilhelm Friedrich Wieprecht and Johann Gottfried Moritz.¹ These new tubas first found use in bands and orchestras as replacements for the problematic serpent and the ophicleide. The works of French composer Hector Berlioz are some of the earliest orchestral works to replace the problematic ophicleide with the bass tuba. Despite its use in the orchestral setting by Berlioz and other significant 19th Century composers, including Tchaikovsky and Wagner, the first major works for solo tuba would not be introduced for nearly 100 years after its invention. The first major works for the solo tuba, which have remained staples of the literature, were Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Concerto for Bass Tuba and Orchestra* (1954) and Paul Hindemith's *Sonata for Bass Tuba and Piano* (1955).

Following these early works by major composers, the next composers to add to the tuba's solo repertoire were American composers Vincent Persichetti, with his *Serenade No. 12* written in 1963, and Walter Hartley, composer of several sonatas and the *Suite for Unaccompanied*

¹ Clifford Bevan, "A Brief History of the Tuba," in *The Tuba Source Book*, ed. R. Winston Morris and Edward R. Goldstein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 3.

Tuba. Both composers followed the example set by Vaughan Williams and Hindemith by using fairly conservative ranges and few significant technical challenges.

It was in American composer Alec Wilder that this “underdog” instrument found a composer who sought to expand both the quantity and difficulty of literature for the solo tuba.² Wilder expanded the repertoire for tuba in a wide variety of directions, often composing his works specifically for former Indiana University professor Harvey Phillips.³ Unlike Vaughan Williams and Hindemith, who each composed a single work for solo tuba, Wilder composed for the tuba in a variety of solo settings. His works include five suites for tuba and piano, two sonatas for tuba and piano, a concerto for tuba and wind ensemble, duets for tuba and horn, a large suite of unaccompanied pieces, and many other works for the tuba in both solo and chamber roles.⁴ Wilder’s embrace of the tuba in such a variety of ways is shared by few; one of these kindred spirits, however, is Anthony Clifton Plog, who continues the effort to expand the tuba’s repertoire.

Since introducing his first work for solo tuba in 1990, Plog has gone on to compose works for tuba that have become widely performed and recorded. Through these works, Plog continues to develop his distinctive compositional voice while crafting a closely connected body of work for the tuba. His most recent composition for solo tuba, the *Tuba Sonata*, will be the focus of this document. The *Sonata*, written in 2006-2007, encapsulates Plog’s style of writing for the tuba, and through it one can gain a comprehensive understanding of Plog’s larger body of work for the tuba.

² Gunther Schuller, “Alec Wilder—A Short Biography,” in *Program Notes for the Solo*, ed. Gary Bird (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 144.

³ Jason Roland Smith, “Stylistic Eclecticism Encountered in the Tuba Music of Alexander Lafayette Chew Wilder with Analysis of His Sonata No. 2 For Tuba and Piano” (D.M.A. thesis, University of Cincinnati, 2003), 24.

⁴ Smith, “Stylistic Eclecticism” 111-117.

This document will provide a thorough study of the various stylistic and compositional elements of the piece to those teaching and performing the *Sonata*. In addition, this paper will highlight important connections to Plog's other works, assisting in the preparation and interpretation of his works for the solo tuba.

CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHY

Anthony Clifton Plog, like many composers, began his musical training as a performer. His formal studies were in trumpet performance, with no serious training in composition. His years spent as a professional brass musician, during which he learned what types of writing make a brass instrument sound the best, have a direct impact on the style of music he writes. An overview of his years as a performer underscores the connection between his years as a performer and the music he composes.

Born in Glendale, California, on November 13, 1947, Plog began his musical studies at the age of 10.⁵ His early studies were with his father, Clifton Plog. Plog's other notable teachers include James Stamp and Thomas Stevens.⁶ It was Plog's experience with the American Youth Symphony, however, that solidified his drive to become a professional performer.⁷

I really didn't have any [musical] influences when I was young because all I really wanted to do was become a professional baseball player. Unfortunately, I had much more enthusiasm than talent. Things started to change, though, around the time I turned seventeen. I began playing in the American Youth Symphony, conducted by Mehli Mehta, Zubin's Father... Now, instead of being something that I just had to do, practicing became a passion.⁸

⁵ Janet Tracy, "An Interview with Anthony Plog: His Career and the Composition of the *Tuba Concerto*" (D.M.A. thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2005), 2.

⁶ Randy Grabowski, "Trumpeter To Composer: An Interview with Anthony Plog," *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 27 (March 2003) 45.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Grabowski, "Trumpeter To Composer," 44.

Plog's first professional performing experience came with the San Antonio Symphony, where he performed from 1970-1973. Following his time in San Antonio, Plog performed from 1974-1976 with the Utah Symphony.⁹ In 1976 Plog returned to Los Angeles to begin his solo career, as well as to increase his focus on composition. While in Los Angeles, he was a frequent free-lance player, performing with various Los Angeles based orchestras, in addition to performing for film scores. Plog can be heard on the soundtracks to a number of films, including *Gremlins*, *Rocky 2*, and *Star Trek 1*.¹⁰

In 1986 Plog became a founding member of the Summit Brass Ensemble. The ensemble was formed with many of the premier brass performers from across the country including David Hickman, Allen Dean, Gail Williams, Joseph Alessi, Daniel Perantoni, and Eugene Pokorny.¹¹ Plog would go on to write works not only for the ensemble itself, but also solo works for many members of the ensemble.

One result of his work with the Summit Brass Ensemble was the invitation to join the Saint Louis Brass Quintet, where he replaced fellow Summit Brass trumpeter Allen Dean.¹² A notable outcome of his years with the Saint Louis Brass and Summit Brass was the release of the first full CD of his compositions for brass quintet and brass ensemble, *Colors for Brass*. The recording featured some of Plog's most often-performed works, including: *Music for Brass Octet*, *Animal Ditties*, *Four Sketches for Brass Quintet*, and the *Concerto for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble*¹³.

⁹ Grabowski, "Trumpeter To Composer," 46.

¹⁰ James Meyer Lind, "The Trumpet Concertos of Anthony Plog: A Performer's Guide" (D.M.A. diss., University of North Texas, 2012), 5.

¹¹ Grabowski, "Trumpeter To Composer," 47.

¹² Grabowski, "Trumpeter To Composer," 48.

¹³ Anthony Plog, *Colors for Brass* (Tempe: Summit Records, 1990).

In addition to his performances and recordings with the Summit Brass and the Saint Louis brass quintet, Plog was also highly active as a solo performer, having toured the U.S., Europe, Australia, and Japan as a soloist.¹⁴

Throughout the 1990s, while living in Europe, Plog continued to perform with the Malmo Symphony, the Basel Symphony, the Stockholm Royal Philharmonic, and the Buenos Aires Symphony.¹⁵ As Plog's interest in composing intensified in the early 1990's, he also began to consider leaving the concert stage. In an interview for the *International Trumpet Guild Journal* he stated that he believes that a person should pick the vocation that he or she loves. For Plog, that vocation was teaching and composing.

I had thought about leaving the trumpet for probably four to five years before I actually did it. In a way, the thought began with the experience I had in Berlin, although at that time I was still committed to being a trumpet player. I've always been very idealistic, and one thing I feel very strongly is that one should pick the vocation that he/she loves. I gradually came to realize after my Berlin experience that composing simply meant more to me than trumpet playing.¹⁶

¹⁴ "Biography," accessed November 10, 2013, <http://www.anthonyplog.com/about-me/biography/>.

¹⁵ "Biography," accessed January 5, 2014, <http://www.anthonyplog.com/about-me/biography/>.

¹⁶ Grabowski, "Trumpeter To Composer," 51.

CHAPTER 2

COMPOSITIONS

While this document will focus on the relationship between Plog's works for tuba, a brief discussion of his music for brass is necessary to introduce the compositions that will lead to the *Tuba Sonata*. Plog is best known for his brass compositions, but his catalog also contains a wide variety of instrumentations and genres. Among his compositions outside of the brass family are works for band, orchestra, woodwind quintet, chorus, guitar, and three children's operas.¹⁷

Plog first experimented with composition during his studies at UCLA, though his first significant compositions would not be composed until his time with the Summit Brass in the late 1980s.

I remember that when I was in college I wrote a short piece called *Mini-Suite for Brass Quintet*, which was published by WIM. That was my first experience as a composer. When I left the Utah Symphony in 1976, my stated aim was to become a soloist and composer, but at the time composing was at the bottom of the list.¹⁸

Plog's compositions for brass instruments find frequent performance in concerts, on recordings, and as required repertoire for numerous international competitions. Competition appearances include the Leonard Falcone International Tuba and Euphonium Competition and the International Tuba and Euphonium Association Competition, among many others.¹⁹

¹⁷“Compositions,” accessed December 18, 2013, <http://anthonyplog.com/work/all-compositions/>.

¹⁸ Grabowski, “Trumpeter To Composer,” 48.

¹⁹ Alexander Robert Cannon, “Defining Characteristics of the Brass Music of Anthony Plog and Their Application in Performance” (D.M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 2012), 2.

While Plog does not have any formal training in composition, he credits his experiences as an orchestral performer with teaching him about composition.

Other influences for me were the great composers that I would play when I was in an orchestra. I wasn't bound by some academic formula. I could just enjoy playing great music. Hearing or playing Mahler, Prokofiev, Bach, Beethoven (you name it) was probably the biggest influence I had, since I am self-taught.²⁰

Part of the reason for Plog's variety of output for brass can be traced back to his project to write a complete set of works for each of the orchestral brass instruments. The set would include an unaccompanied piece which he refers to a "Postcard," a set of piano pieces he calls "Miniatures", a piece with string orchestra he refers to as a "Nocturne", and a concerto with full orchestra.²¹ Aside from this project, Plog's additional works for brass chamber ensembles have become standard pieces in the repertoire, including his *Animal Ditties*, *Trombone Quartet No. 1* "Densities," *Four Sketches for Brass Quintet*, and *Fantasy Movements for tuba quartet*.

While Plog has written numerous compositions for brass that included parts for the tuba, the pieces with the greatest relevance to his *Tuba Sonata* are those that prominently feature the tuba.

An early brass composition whose influence can be seen in all the tuba compositions that follow is Plog's *Four Sketches for Brass Quintet*. Plog composed the *Four Sketches* for the Saint Louis Brass Quintet in 1990.²² Daniel Perantoni, to whom Plog would later dedicate the *Three Miniatures*, was the tuba player for that ensemble. Perantoni, Provost Professor of Tuba at Indiana University, continues to be an advocate and frequent performer of Plog's music. Many of the technical, stylistic, and range demands Plog makes of the tuba in future works can be traced back to the *Four Sketches* and can therefore be seen as a reflection of Mr. Perantoni's

²⁰ Grabowski, "Trumpeter To Composer," 48.

²¹ Tracy, "An Interview," 6.

²² Cannon, "Defining Characteristics," 9.

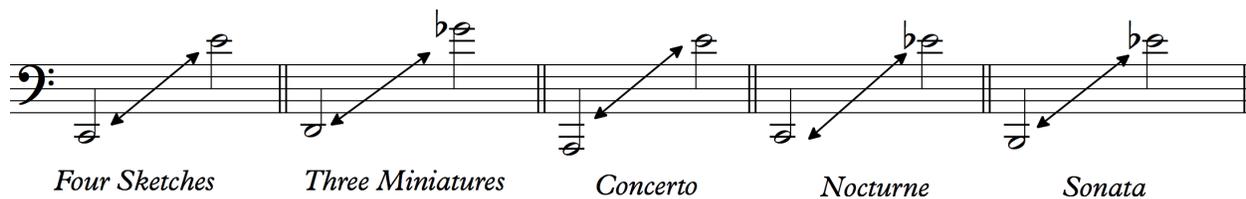
playing abilities. These demands include difficult chromatic lines, rhythmic independence leading to potential ensemble difficulties, use of a mute, and highly exposed lyrical writing. At the time of the *Four Sketches*' composition, these traits were not common for the tuba parts for the standard brass quintet literature. These types of difficulties have now become standard in Plog's writing for the tuba, including the *Tuba Sonata*.

For tuba players, the most notable result of Plog and Perantoni's collaboration was Plog's first piece for solo tuba, *Three Miniatures*, composed in 1990. The piece was commissioned by Custom Music, and was written and revised by Plog with Perantoni's assistance.²³ Since its publication, *Three Miniatures* has become standard solo repertoire for the tuba, appearing in numerous student and professional recitals each year. The piece has also become one of Plog's most recorded works, having been featured on recordings by Daniel Perantoni, Roger Bobo, Craig Knox, and Oystein Baadsvik.

One of the most consistent traits in Plog's pieces for tuba that can be connected to the *Four Sketches* is the range that he uses. This range, from the C below the bass clef staff, to the e above middle c, is used for nearly all of Plog's tuba parts. Example 1.1 illustrates the highest and lowest pitches of the *Four Sketches*, and the four solo works that followed it. While the first solo piece, the *Three Miniatures*, appears to stretch the range higher than the other solo works, it should be noted that the highest pitch appears a single time, with the rest of the piece lying below the e.

²³ Geoffrey Whitehead, *A College Level Tuba Curriculum: Developed Through the Study of the Teaching Techniques of William Bell, Harvey Phillips, and Daniel Perantoni at Indiana University* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2003), 104.

Example 1.1, Ranges of Plog's Solo Works for Tuba



Because of the range Plog writes in, his pieces help fill a much needed niche in the tuba repertoire: pieces which are substantial in length and demand advanced technique, but do not require the intense range demands that are so common in the majority of advanced tuba literature. Pieces of this nature are a welcome addition to the repertoire for a variety of players. For strong undergraduate players, Plog's music provides an opportunity to perform literature with extremely high technical and musical demands without requiring the extreme high range that young players may not have yet developed. For professional musicians, works of this nature provide a similar benefit by providing a substantial recital piece that can balance similarly high-quality pieces on the recital that may have more extreme endurance and range demands. The concept of writing large-scale pieces that are not prohibitively high in range is a notion that stems from Plog's compositions for his own instrument, the trumpet.

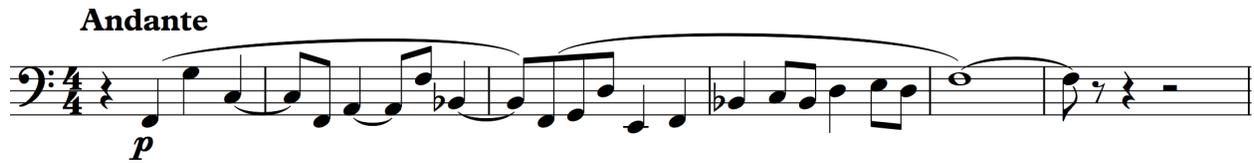
As a trumpet player I have pretty much always rebelled against the normal, prevailing trumpet mentality, which has to do with admiration for physical feats and [sic] the expense of a more philosophical approach to music making. When considering other instruments, such as strings or piano, one aspect of becoming an accomplished player is to have an understanding of the music and its deeper meaning, or at least attempt to understand a deeper meaning. This very rarely happens with trumpet players. So when I write a concerto, I think that this philosophy is in the back of my mind, and in the case of the Trumpet Concerto I didn't want to write just another trumpet jock piece.²⁴

Plog also highlights in his early work the type of lyrical writing for Mr. Perantoni that he continues to use in nearly all of his works for the tuba. Examples 1.2 and 1.3 show excerpts

²⁴ Lind, "A Performer's Guide," 65.

from the third movement of the *Four Sketches*, and the solo part for the *Nocturne* for tuba and strings, written for Kent Eschelmann nearly 20 years later.

Example 1.2, Plog, *Four Sketches, Mvt III*, mm. 13-18



Example 1.4, Plog, *Three Miniatures, Mvt. I*, mm. 79-89

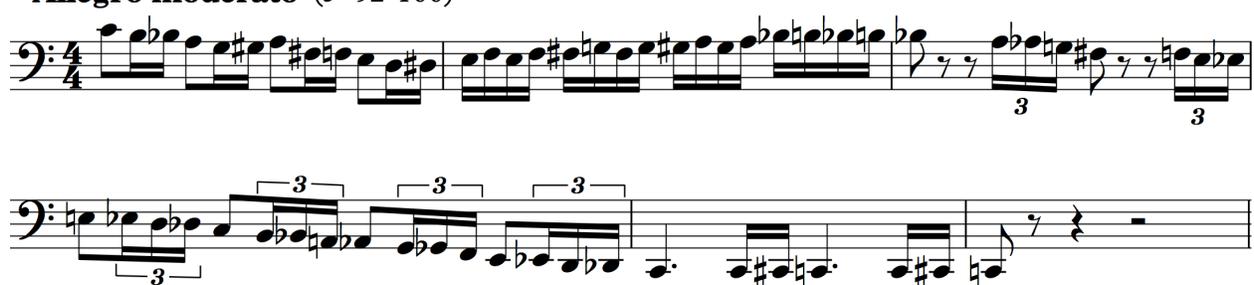
Allegro Vivace



Example 1.4, from the *Three Miniatures*, provides the earliest example of the chromatically influenced lines in solo works that Plog would come to employ in the majority of his works. Plog uses the periodic direction changes and skips to thwart expectations of where the line is leading, which makes his chromatic melodies both exciting to listen to and difficult to learn and execute. In example 1.5, from the first movement of the *Concerto*, one observes both the frequent change of direction in the scale as well as the skips, but the rhythmic content results in a line completely unique from example 1.4.

Example 1.5, Plog, *Concerto, Mvt. I*, mm. 14-19

Allegro moderato ($\text{♩} = 92-100$)



Example 1.6, from the *Sonata*, provides a recent example of these chromatically influenced lines. In this example, Plog has seemingly combined the lines from the previous two pieces. The line from the *Sonata* contains the smooth and long running line similar to the *Three*

Miniatures, while also incorporating the more frequent changes of direction from the *Concerto*.

In all three cases, the extreme tempo, coupled with the 16th-note chromatic lines creates a distinct virtuosity, which is a signature of Plog's writing.

Example 1.6, Plog, *Sonata, Mvt. II*, mm. 45-47

Presto (♩=140-160)



p

CHAPTER 3

THE *TUBA SONATA*

Anthony Plog's *Tuba Sonata* was the result of a collaboration between Mr. Plog and Dr. Janet Tracy. The focus of Dr. Tracy's DMA lecture recital and treatise was Plog's *Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra*. During her research and correspondence with Mr. Plog, Dr. Tracy realized that the logistical issues involved in mounting a full performance of the concerto for tuba and orchestra made the piece difficult to program. As of the writing of this document, 16 years after the publication of the concerto, it has yet to be performed in the full orchestral version. In discussing these issues with Mr. Plog, the idea surfaced that if Plog were to write a large solo piece that was intended for tuba and piano, it would find a stronger and more regular place in the tuba's active repertoire.²⁵ Dr. Tracy subsequently organized a commissioning consortium for the piece. The members of the consortium included: Dr. Janet Tracey, Dr. Dennis Askew, Custom Music Company, Mark Barton, Ronald Bishop, Steven Bryant, Eugene Dowling, Dr. Yutake Kono, Dr. Angelo Manzo, Keith Mund, Daniel Perantoni, Gene Pokorny, and Dr. Kevin Wass.²⁶ In the early discussions of the commission, Dr. Tracy and Plog had very little discussion about which direction the piece would take. Plog only indicated that the piece would be written for the F tuba.²⁷

²⁵ Tracy, email message to author, July 12, 2013.

²⁶ Anthony Plog, *Tuba Sonata: for Tuba and Piano* (Vuarmarens: Editions Bim, 2007), 2.

²⁷ Tracy, email message to author, July 12, 2013.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the use of bass tuba was indicated to Dr. Tracy in the early discussions of the piece with Plog, but it is not indicated as a preference in the published score of the work. While the decision to use the bass tuba for a solo work is often made by performers because of the upper-tessitura demands common in most advanced solo tuba literature, the relatively conservative range of the *Sonata* make this decision less overtly obvious. The range of all of Plog's solo works easily places it in the standard range for both the contrabass and bass tubas. The selection of the appropriate instrument for this piece, therefore, lies more in the considerations of clarity and ease of execution than in range. Because of the piece's many passages in the mid-range of the instrument, tubists will find more success in achieving the required clarity and a better sonic balance by using the smaller bass tuba as opposed to the broad orchestral sound of the contrabass tuba. This sense of balance is of great importance because the piano writing, especially in the slower movements of the piece, is sparse enough that it could be easily overwhelmed by the sonority of the contrabass tuba. The *Tuba Sonata* is most effectively performed on the F, or bass, tuba, which has become standard practice for solo literature. A performer could also elect to perform the work on the Eb bass tuba. However, the ease of the finger patterns, conceived for the F tuba, will be lost.

The *Tuba Sonata* is a four-movement work, lasting approximately 15 minutes in duration. The piece contains many of Plog's popular compositional traits including chromatically influenced melodies, advanced technique requirements, exposed lyrical passages, numerous ensemble challenges, and relatively narrow range demands. To these familiar traits, Plog has added a haunting, flowing simplicity that permeates the entire work. The combination of these well-known compositional mannerisms and a new penchant for simplicity make this piece an important edition to Plog's repertoire.

Some of the most significant challenges tuba players face when preparing a work by Plog are the technical demands the composer places on the performer. These difficulties stem from the often-brisk tempo indications, coupled with difficult and unexpected chromatic figures. To aid in this aspect of preparation, the author of this document proposes various exercises to aid in the preparation and performance of this work. Several of the exercises are drawn from Plog's own "Method for Trumpet" and adapted for tuba by the author of this paper. By using these exercises by Plog to develop the technique necessary to successfully execute the challenges presented in the *Sonata*, it is hoped that performers will be able to easily adapt the techniques and apply them to Plog's other works for tuba.

Plog's "Method for Trumpet" is a series of seven method books composed in 2003, published by Balquhiddy Brass. Each book focuses on a specific technical aspect of playing including the warm-up, fingering exercises, tonguing exercises, flexibility exercises, development of the low and high ranges, development of power and strength, and the execution of chordal and interval passages. These books are useful because each book contains a set of technical exercises followed by etudes that focus on the techniques developed throughout the book. By including etudes to illustrate how these exercises can be used in a musical setting, Plog is able to show that while his pieces are technically difficult, the ultimate goal should be to make music.

All too often one makes technical perfection the ultimate goal. This is viewed by many as the only real concern. But we must realize that we will never really achieve perfection – even the greatest players in the world have their technical limitations. So we must make the *path* to our goal of technical excellence more important than the goal itself. The fact that we will never reach our goal of technical perfection means that we can always learn, we can always be students.

But a second, and equally important concept, is that music is an art form that at its essence is a means of communication, and that ultimately this communication is more important than technical perfection. We should desire to be technically perfect only so

that we have the tools to better express the ideas and intentions of the composer. Thus the striving for technical perfection is the striving towards a means and not an end. Expression, in whatever style or form, is the end. This should always be our ultimate goal.²⁸

In addition to the inclusion exercises written by Plog to develop the technique necessary to execute his music, the author has composed a number of practice examples as well. These examples often are used to highlight and prepare specific measures and corresponding finger patterns. Because of the highly-connected nature of Plog's work, the approach used in this paper to learn the *Sonata* can be easily applied to any of Plog's works for tuba.

²⁸ Anthony Plog, *Method for Trumpet: The Plog Program, Book 1*. (Montrose: Balquhiddy Music, 2003), 4.

Movement I

Plog begins his *Sonata* with an undulating piano line, with the instructions “Calm and Flowing.” The piano’s hushed and rhythmic entrance seems to be reminiscent of a music box. The material presented in both the tuba and the piano at the start of the work is striking in its simplicity. The haunting and flowing nature of the line is an unexpected start to those familiar with Plog’s solo works for tuba. As the tuba joins the piano in measure three, every effort should be made to avoid a harsh articulation. The goal for the performer should be to make it seem as if the tuba’s first long note is organically emerging from the rippling piano line.

Example 2.1, *Sonata, Mvt. 1*, mm. 1-7

Calm and flowing (♩=72-80)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 3, and the second system covers measures 4 through 7. The piano part is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs), and the tuba part is written in a single bass clef staff. The tempo is marked as 'Calm and flowing' with a quarter note equal to 72-80 beats per minute. The piano part features a continuous eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand, with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The tuba part has a long note in measure 3 that is organically emerging from the piano line.

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

The introductory material sets the mood for the entire piece, and Plog brings this opening back in a number of ways throughout the piece. The most obvious use of the opening is the direct return of the material at the conclusion of the first movement, and again in the final 40 measures of the piece. Plog is in essence framing the entire composition with the opening material. In addition to serving as the melodic foundation of the piece, the opening material also serves to introduce the interval of a minor third, which plays a vital role in each of the movements. By using both the exact material, and its intervallic content throughout the work, Plog creates a sense unity of the right from the opening bars.

The use of nearly identical material to tie an entire work together is fairly common in Plog's large-scale works. A prime example of this type of return can be found in his *Tuba Concerto*, the work that helped inspire the creation of the *Sonata*. In the *Concerto*, a three-movement work approximately 18 minutes in duration, Plog returns to the primary theme from the first movement at the conclusion of the third movement. The return of this theme, illustrated in examples 2.2 and 2.3, is instantly recognizable, seamlessly connecting the entire work at its conclusion.

Example 2.2, *Concerto, Mvt. I*, mm. 9-13

Musical score for Example 2.2, *Concerto, Mvt. I*, mm. 9-13. The score is in bass clef and consists of three systems. The first system shows a bass line starting with a fermata and a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a piano line with chords and a *sempre staccato* marking. The second system continues the bass line and piano accompaniment.

Example 2.3, *Concerto, Mvt. III*, mm. 236-239

Musical score for Example 2.3, *Concerto, Mvt. III*, mm. 236-239. The score is in bass clef and consists of three systems. The first system shows a bass line with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic, followed by a piano line with chords and a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic.

At several points in the first movement of the *Sonata*, Plog returns to the opening material, but only for a few measures each time. Each of these partial returns, illustrated in examples 2.4 and 2.5, should be approached by both performers as if they were about to begin a full return of the opening material. With each successive return, Plog weakens the expectations that he will actually return to the material in a significant way. In addition to heightening the musical payoff when a full statement of the opening material finally does return, each appearance increases the listener's awareness of the importance of the material to the piece as a whole.

Example 2.4, *Sonata, Mvt. I*, mm. 51-53

The musical score for Example 2.4 is in 2/2 time and marked *mp*. It consists of three measures. The bass clef part begins with a whole note G2, followed by a whole note G2, and then a quarter rest. The treble clef part begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The piano part consists of chords: a G2-F2 chord, a G2-F2 chord, and a G2-F2 chord.

Example 2.5, *Sonata, Mvt. I*, mm. 61-64

poco rit.

The musical score for Example 2.5 is in 2/2 time and marked *mp*. It consists of four measures. The bass clef part is silent. The treble clef part begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The piano part consists of chords: a G2-F2 chord, a G2-F2 chord, a G2-F2 chord, and a G2-F2 chord.

Measure 35 brings the end of the introduction, and with it, the first technical difficulties of the work. A key consideration as the more technical material begins, and indeed for the entire first movement, should be to fight the temptation to increase the dynamic levels. As Plog stated in an interview regarding his first trumpet concerto, "...as a general idea, I think that most brass players need to be more observant of the softer dynamics."²⁹ In the first movement, the loudest dynamic marking is *mf* at measure 36. Maintaining a soft dynamic for the entire movement keeps the spirit of the movement alternating between the haunting opening, the sprightly staccato material, and the chant-like section that begins at measure 65. This softer movement also presents the opportunity to create a great deal of contrast with the second and fourth movements, which both contain much louder material.

Example 2.6, *Sonata, Mvt. I*, mm 36-44

(♩=72-80)

The image shows a musical score for tuba in 2/2 time, measures 36-44. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 72-80. The score consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mf* and contains a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff continues with several more triplet figures. The music is characterized by rhythmic complexity and specific intervallic content.

The primary challenges presented to the tuba player for these measures will be achieving clarity in the triplet figures, if performing the piece at the marked tempo of half note = 72-80. Clarity on the opening four notes is essential not only because of the melodic importance to the first movement, but because the material will return, transformed, in the final measures of the piece. The return of the material features the same intervallic content, although with different rhythms. Examples 2.7 and 2.8 illustrate the connection between the two movements, with the transformed pitches boxed.

²⁹ Cannon, "Defining Characteristics," 90.

Example 2.10, Measure 36 preparation exercise

(♩=72-80)

Throughout the second section, Plog presents a significant ensemble challenge to both the tuba and piano players. Following the introduction of the staccato scalar material in the tuba line, Plog divides the melodic line between both parts, essentially creating a running line that continues throughout much of this section. Example 2.11 contains the score of these measures, to show the lines in context. Example 2.12 shows a composite of the two parts in a single, continuous line. In the composite example, the notes with the upward stems represent the tuba part, while the notes with the downward stems represent the piano line.

Example 2.11, *Sonata, Mvt. I*, mm. 54-60

Example 2.12, Composite of tuba and piano lines, mm. 54-60

In order for this style of writing to be successful, both performers need to be aware of their roles in the line. Performing example 2.12 in its entirety on either the tuba or the piano will give each performer an awareness of their role in this composite line. This awareness will manifest itself in rhythmic precision, fidelity of tempo, and choice of articulation. The tuba player will need to strive for maximum clarity of articulation to be able to match the sound the piano will be achieving. To aid in developing the light, rapid articulation necessary for these passages, the following exercise from Book 4 of Plog's Method for Trumpet, "Tonguing Exercises and Etudes" can be prepared.

Example 2.13, Tonguing exercise to prepare light triplet articulations, reprinted with permission of Balquhider Music.

(♩=72-80)

As performers prepare this exercise, great care should be taken to imitate the light, staccato, single-tongued style used in the first movement of the *Sonata*. Use of a metronome will be essential to ensure the development of the perfect time necessary for handing the line off to the piano. Performers can then transpose the exercise to various keys to expand their overall clarity in all ranges of the instrument. A further consideration for the tuba player throughout this section should be an attention to number of quarter notes tied to the beginning of a set of triplet eighth notes. The tendency for this type of figure will be to hesitate, or leave the note too late. Even the slightest hesitation will cause a tear in the ensemble. It is recommended that the performer release each of these notes directly on the beat, ensuring that the subsequent eighth notes will be placed correctly in time.

For the third section of the first movement, beginning at measure 64, Plog indicates a slower tempo to present solemn material that seems chant-like in nature. The tuba, though not yet invented when chant was prevalent in the church, has a connection to chant via the prominent solo lines of the “Dies Irae” found in the fifth movement of Hector Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*. The series of perfect fifths present in the left-hand of the piano reinforce the chant connection of this passage. To fully conjure this sound, the tubist should strive for the softest and darkest possible. Not only will this set the right mood for this section of the piece, but it will also add an element of timbral contrast to the preceding staccato.

Despite a significant change in tempo and volume, Plog connects the new material to the previous section via the piano part. Present through almost every bar of measures 35-60 are two notes a major second apart in the right hand of the piano. Plog continues this pattern in the slower section at measure 64, all the way through the section, and continues the pulsing major seconds as the material from the second section returns in measure 89. The presence of this

Example 2.17, *Sonata, Mvt. I*, mm. 94-98

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 94-95) is in bass clef. The bass line contains three triplet markings over eighth notes. The treble line consists of eighth notes with stems pointing up. The second system (mm. 96-98) also features a bass clef. The bass line has a melodic line with a slur and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The treble line consists of eighth notes with stems pointing up. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

Both performers should approach this return in the same calm manner as the beginning, ensuring that the first movement closes with the same simplicity with which it began.

Movement II

The second movement of the *Sonata* is the shortest movement, lasting only a minute and twenty seconds, but it contains some of the most substantial technical and ensemble challenges of the entire piece. The challenging aspects of this movement multiply exponentially when one considers the addition of the indicated mute. The use of mutes in pieces for tuba is far less common in solo tuba works than in solo works for other brass instruments. A primary reason for this may be due in part to the fact that the resultant sound of a muted tuba is much more varied and inconsistent than the muted sounds of other brass instruments, making it difficult for a composer to be specific in eliciting a certain sound. This variety of sounds is due in large part to the numerous shapes and configurations of tubas, the many variations in bell size and taper, in addition to the variety of mute shapes and materials. Whether a tubist selects a mute constructed from wood, metal, or some other material, is a personal decision based on a performer's particular sound preference, coupled with what their instrument can accommodate. When selecting a mute for this piece, a performer should strive to find the mute that retains the maximum clarity of the sound, with the least muffling possible. This will ensure that the tuba is able to convincingly trade lines with the piano without a disparity in articulation and clarity. The author of this paper would recommend the use of a metal mute, which provides several advantages. First, the mute's metallic sound and the overall timbral change will give the movement the most contrast as compared with the rest of the work. Secondly, a metal mute is capable of achieving more "bite" in the sound, which will make the line more audible to the audience and easier to align with the piano. Metal, as opposed to wood, creates a much harsher and clearer sound, which allows the rhythmic underpinnings from the piano to blend well with the muted tuba.

Once the proper mute has been selected, the performer can begin to address the technical challenges of the movement. The most obvious technical hurdle will be in achieving clarity on the 16th notes at such an extreme tempo, which Plog has marked in the range of quarter note equals 140-160. To achieve the desired clarity, especially at the upper end of the indicated tempo range, preparation of this movement should involve a significant amount of practice at half the suggested tempo. By practicing at such a slow tempo the performer can focus on executing the passage with absolute precision, while at the same time establishing muscle memory in the hand. Once the piece has been prepared at the slower tempo, a performer should isolate the lines as shown in example 2.19. This exercise will reinforce the work accomplished during slow practice, while also drawing attention to the comparison between the line at half and full tempo. This example can be adapted by the performer to apply to the melodic material from the rest of the movement.

Example 2.18, *Sonata, Mvt. II*, mm. 1-3



Example 2.19, technique exercise derived from mm 1-3



Once the performer has prepared the movement technically and can perform the movement at the desired tempo, clarity can be increased throughout by adding accents to the start of each set of 16th notes. The added accents mirror what is happening in the accompanying

piano chords, and also help introduce an additional element of rhythmic interest to the line. This application of adding a slight accent to the 16th groupings, as shown in example 2.20, should continue for the entire movement.

Example 2.20, *Sonata, Mvt. II*, mm. 1-6 with added accents for clarity

The image displays a musical score for Example 2.20, consisting of two systems of music. Each system includes a tuba part (bass clef) and a piano part (treble clef). The tuba part features a complex, rhythmic line with many sixteenth notes, marked with a forte (f) dynamic and accents. The piano part consists of chords and rests, also marked with accents. The score is in 4/4 time and includes a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

Like the first movement, the second movement uses a compound line between the tuba and the piano, only in a much more extended fashion. Plog first explored this style of writing for tuba and piano in his *Three Miniatures*. At the conclusion of the *Three Miniatures*, the tuba and piano join together to form a single line. Like the *Sonata*, this closing section is often performed at an extreme tempo, making the alignment of the parts an exciting and virtuosic conclusion, which is very difficult to achieve. Example 2.21 illustrates just four measures of the concluding section of the *Three Miniatures*. The compound line from this piece is quite extensive, lasting for 20 measures.

Example 2.21, *Three Miniatures, Mvt. III*, mm. 51-54

The musical score consists of two systems. Each system has three staves: a tuba staff (bass clef) and two piano staves (treble and bass clef). The time signature is 4/4, with a change to 2/4 in the middle of each system. The tuba part is marked *p* and *cresc.*. The piano part is also marked *p* and *cresc.*. The score shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and a dynamic range from *p* to *cresc.*.

While it still forms a single line, Plog's earlier notion of a composite line creates fewer ensemble difficulties because the piano is playing the full composite, with the tuba only playing interjections. It is still difficult to align and perform, but the lack of trading the full line between the parts prevents any hesitations in the pulse from arising. In contrast, the *Sonata* keeps the two parts separate, overlapping only on single notes that function as a "hand-off" between the parts. As discussed in the first movement, great care must be taken by both performers to maintain tempo and clarity. Any hesitation from either performer as they trade the lines will destroy the effect of the single musical line. The fast pace of this movement makes this seamless clarity difficult to achieve. It is necessary for the performer to understand and be comfortable with the composite line between himself and the pianist. The resulting compound line maintains an

exciting melodic line that lasts for the entire second half of this very short movement. Example 2.22 illustrates a short four-measure section of this compound line, rendered as a single line. Like example 2.12, the upward stems represent the tuba line, while the downward stems represent the piano line. Example 2.22 is a prime example of the unexpected changes in direction of chromatic melodies previously noted as a signature of Plog's compositional style.

Example 2.22, *Sonata, Mvt. II*, mm. 28-31 composite tuba and piano lines



To aid in the clarity of the traded lines, the tuba player should make an even more aggressive use of the accents suggested for earlier in the movement. Not only will this aggression help the tuba player feel a more solid pulse, but will help the initial attack be more audible to the piano player. In addition to the ensemble benefits to the performers, the more aggressive attack and resultant brassy mute sound will lend to the second half of this short movement a unique sound, and help propel the movement toward a virtuosic conclusion.

With the closing three measures Plog brings the second movement to a breathless close and also makes connections to two standards of the solo tuba repertoire: his own *Three Miniatures for Tuba and Piano*, and Paul Hindemith's *Sonata for Bass Tuba and piano*. As stated in the introduction of this paper, Hindemith's *Sonata* was one of the first works for solo tuba, and it remains one of the most important and often performed works in the repertoire.

Though it is much more recent, Plog's own *Three Miniatures* has already found a significant place in the repertoire.

Although both the second movement of the *Sonata* and the conclusion of the first movement of the *Three Miniatures* feature the tuba and piano playing 16th notes in rhythmic unison, as can be seen in Examples 2.23 and 2.24, Plog approaches them in very different manners. In the case of the *Three Miniatures*, performing the piece with one beat to the measure somehow gives the performance of the 16th notes a more relaxed style. The fact that the piano part is not melodically connected to the tuba line also decreases the tension in the line. In contrast, the four very fast beats per measure of the *Sonata*, coupled with a piano line that runs melodically parallel to the tuba, ensure that the work keeps driving until the very final note. While performers have been encouraged to give definition to every beat previously in this movement for the sake of precision, every effort should be taken to perform the final three measures as smoothly as possible, without accenting any of the beats. By eliminating the stress on every single beat, the last eight beats can be heard as a single string of notes. The delicate and precise nature of this type of writing runs counter to the common perception of the tuba's technical capabilities, and is a wonderful way to highlight a performer's skill for clarity and dexterity.

Example 2.23, *Three Miniatures, Mvt. I*, mm. 79-89

Musical score for Example 2.23, *Three Miniatures, Mvt. I*, mm. 79-89. The score is in 3/8 time and consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 79-84, and the second system covers measures 85-89. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system features dynamics of *ff*, *dim.*, *f*, and *mf*. The second system features dynamics of *mp*, *p*, and *pp*. The score includes a bass line and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

Example 2.24, *Sonata, Mvt II*, mm. 45-47

Musical score for Example 2.24, *Sonata, Mvt II*, mm. 45-47. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score includes a bass line and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

While the connection to Plog's own *Three Miniatures* is obvious, Plog also draws another connection to the final measures of the second movement of Hindemith's *Sonata*. Like the excerpts from both Plog's *Three Miniatures* and *Sonata*, the tuba line of Hindemith's *Sonata* rapidly decrescendos to the end of the movement. Both Hindemith's and Plog's lines are also composed in such a way as to illustrate the dexterity of which modern tuba players are capable. A key difference lies in Hindemith's decision not to pair the tuba and piano for the final descent, which may be the result of the vast improvement in the number and quality of tuba soloists now performing, as opposed to the relatively non-existent solo performers in Hindemith's era.

While this connection is not as apparent as Plog's reference to his own music, it is no less important to consider. By connecting these works in this manner, Plog has attempted to tie his new composition to two of the pillars of the solo tuba repertoire.

Example 2.26, *Concerto, Mvt. II*, mm. 1-5

with freedom



mf

With the opening of the *Sonata's* third movement, Plog has chosen to slightly alter this typical start by letting the piano have a solo moment before the tuba enters. By choosing to start with the piano, Plog connects the movement to the haunting opening of the whole piece, while still maintaining the slow setting common to his tuba writing. The top notes of both piano lines feature the minor third that has been highlighted throughout the piece, creating yet another connection to the other movements.

Example 2.27, *Sonata, Mvt. III*, mm. 1-10

Slow and with freedom (♩=66-72)



Slow and with freedom (♩=66-72) *p*

mf

Like Plog’s previous works in this style, an effective performance will require a great deal of patience from the tubist. This patience may be difficult to achieve since the music appears very active, composed of eighth notes and triplet eighth notes. The performer should pay close attention to Plog’s tempo indication of “slow and with freedom,” with special emphasis on the word slow. The natural tendency on a descending line will be to let the time move ahead, but the performer should make every effort refrain from moving forward. To increase the expressive nature of the line, added stress should be placed on each of the notes that precede a change in the direction of the line, in addition to paying special attention to the descending chromatic material in measures eight and nine. The added emphasis to the first note of each of these pairs will increase the lamenting sound of the line. Example 2.28 is a rendering of the first ten measures, with the added stresses. The arrows added by the author indicate that the musical line on the opening half-notes should lead into the Ab. The performer should think of these notes as the leading tone resolving up to the tonic, even though the music is not in the key of Ab. By adding this sense of direction, the performer can create the same natural pull that the half-step leading into tonic would have, even if Plog has not composed the music in the associated key.

Example 2.28, *Sonata, Mvt. III*, mm. 4-10 with added stresses

The musical score consists of two staves of music in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff contains measures 4 through 7. Measure 4 begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features two half notes: G2 and F2. An arrow points from the text above to the G2 note. Measures 5, 6, and 7 contain eighth notes, with measures 5, 6, and 7 each containing a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff contains measures 8 through 10. Measure 8 begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and features a triplet of eighth notes. Measures 9 and 10 continue with eighth notes and triplet eighth notes. The score includes various articulation marks such as accents and slurs.

The primary challenge in performing Plog's slow movements is derived from the intervals, both large and small. Performing these intervals in and of themselves is not the challenge. The difficulty stems from the combination of the soft dynamic, placement of the passage in the middle register of the F tuba, and the slurs placed over the material. Together, these factors can result in a beautifully vocal tone, but can make the execution of precise and smooth slurs challenging. To address this type of melodic playing, I again turn to Plog's own exercises to develop fluidity in this material. Example 2.29 is taken from book 5 of the Plog method, "Flexibility Exercises and Etudes." The preparation of this exercise will be most beneficial if performed at the indicated slow tempo, along with a recording device. As Plog states in the introduction to Book 5: "Often, the slower tempo is the most difficult, as any inconsistency in either rhythm or sound can be heard."³⁰ Using a personal recorder will allow the performer to monitor the level of consistency in the sound, and will ensure that the large intervals are performed cleanly, without picking up notes in the slur. Use of a metronome is also essential to observe that the tempo is not moving ahead and to help the performer develop some level of comfort while performing this slow material. Like the other exercises used in this paper, Example 2.29 can be transposed either up or down in order extend the smooth performance from this material to all ranges of the instrument.

³⁰ Anthony Plog, *Method for Trumpet: The Plog Program, Book 5*. (Montrose: Balquhiddy Music, 2006), 3.

Example 2.29, Plog Flexibility Exercise #3b



The middle section of the third movement, beginning at measure 44, is in stark contrast from the material that bookends it. The ostinato figure featured in the tuba is an oblique reference to the opening piano line from the first movement. By incorporating the undulating minor thirds from the first movement, also referenced in the piano opening to the third movement, Plog is able to continue weaving the opening statement through the piece, but in a less obvious way. The transformation in the third movement presents this once calm material as angular, percussive, and surprising due to the various meter changes.

While the technical components of this brief section are minor compared to what the performer had to execute in the previous movement, the fast tempo and the large, dissonant leaps make clarity difficult to achieve. To aid in the execution of this passage, the performer should seek to outline the compound meter with accents. While these accents are not printed in the score, the note groupings and piano part reinforce their realization.

Example 2.30, *Sonata, Mvt. III*, mm. 44-51 with added accents for rhythmic clarity

Allegro vivace (♩=154-164)

Allegro vivace (♩=154-164)

A further performance consideration for this middle section is the tempo selection. While most tubists will not have difficulty performing the line at the maximum marked tempo, when preparing the piece a performer should keep in mind the difficulty of the piano part. The piano part has several short bursts of 16th notes that will be difficult to clearly articulate. These runs are especially important because they fill the time when the tuba is resting. It may be necessary for the performer to reduce the tempo in an effort to bring clarity to the piano line. Whatever tempo is chosen, both performers should execute their lines as short and dry as possible. The short notes will not only contrast the rest of the movement, but will also give the middle section a nervous, unsettling energy.

Measure 98 brings the return of the quiet opening, and with it, the calm and mournful tuba line. Unlike the opening however, Plog chooses to pair the plaintive tuba line with rhythmic triplets. These triplets help mold the freedom of the opening material into a more regulated melody, and again conjure the idea of the music box. Despite the piano keeping time, the tubist should attempt to maintain a sense of freedom in the line as the movement draws to a close. In addition to the stricter rhythmic feel, the very high piano part produces a brittle sound in contrast with the mournful warmth of the tuba. This quiet and delicate conclusion helps set the stage for the exciting rhythmic material found in the fourth movement. To help further prepare the large, slurred intervals throughout this movement, another exercise from Plog's flexibility etude book will be used. This etude focuses on cleanly slurring the larger intervals, such as those in measures 102 and 103. When preparing this exercise, the performer should strive to make the increasingly large ascending slurs as clean as the very first slur. In doing so, the performer can work to achieve the same level of ease across the range of the instrument.

Example 2.31, *Sonata, Mvt. III*, mm. 98-108

Example 2.32, Plog flexibility exercise #246

♩=66

Movement IV

The fourth movement of the *Sonata*, which is connected to the third movement via an attacca, is the musical culmination of the entire piece. Throughout the movement both the tuba and piano recall material from the previous movements. Many of these recurrences are transformed, providing the listener with new material while still staying connected to the work as a whole.

At first glance, the technical considerations of this movement appear to be less than those of the second movement. The use of eighth notes in cut time, however, masks the true difficulty of these passages when performed at the faster indicated tempo. Achieving clarity on the multiple scalar passages in the movement requires that the performer select a tempo at which it is possible to clearly articulate the longer passages of eighth notes. This may be difficult to achieve, as the range of quarter note of 100-116 is often a tempo range that falls in between a performer's comfortable single-tongue and double-tongue speeds. Whether choosing single- or double-tongue, a performer should select whichever tonguing pattern will grant the most clarity in the more intricate sections of the movement, without letting the tempo drag. The author of this paper recommends selecting the fastest tempo at which performer can cleanly single-tongue. Opting to single-tongue will give a slightly more active start to each grouping of notes. This will also prevent the performer from sounding too relaxed, which may result with the more comfortable double-tongue. In addition to consideration for the majority of the eighth-note material, the performer should also consider the tempo at which it is possible to clearly execute the triplet eighth notes found briefly between measures 44 and 50. Though lasting for a much shorter span than the eighth-note material in the movement, these extremely rapid notes must find equal clarity with the rest of the material in the movement.

As shown in the discussion of the first movement, the initial material for the fourth movement is drawn from the slow, chant-like theme of the first movement. The theme in the fourth movement, however, uses the material in an entirely new fashion, replacing the slow melody with short and tense notes. The tuba melody at the opening of the movement, with its sparse piano accompaniment, seems reminiscent of an electric bass riff. While there is no indication of this style in the score, introducing the idea of the bass riff brings a new style into the work, and will help keep the final movement from acting as a merely aggressive and flashy close to the piece. To fully produce this concept, the performer should accent the first note of each of the large structural beats in each measure, as shown in example 2.33. In addition to the added stresses on the primary beats of the measure, the performer should make every effort to play each note as long as possible. With a fast tempo, there is little need to shorten the notes. A natural tendency with fast music will be to shorten the notes resulting in a pecking, disjointed sound that will make pitch clarity difficult. Playing the notes for their full duration will increase clarity, and lend the line a more relaxed sound. Though the fourth movement begins with the forte dynamic, growing out of a crescendo from the third movement, the tubist must fight the temptation to play too loudly. Accuracy and the style should not be sacrificed in an effort to play loudly. Performers will earn a larger musical payoff when saving the extreme dynamics until measure 65.

Example 2.33, *Sonata, Mvt. IV*, mm. 1-7 with added accents



Measure 17 introduces to the *Sonata* an element from the *Concerto* that inspired the work: scales in thirds. The scale in thirds, a common device in Plog's music, formed the theme

in the final movement of the *Concerto*, a large set of theme and variations. Because Plog has stated that the *Sonata* was an outgrowth from discussions of the difficulty surrounding the feasibility of full-scale performances of the *Concerto*, his inclusion of a similar motivic idea would logically connect the two. The two separate pieces even have a nearly identical tempo range, strengthening the connection.

Example 2.34, *Concerto, Mvt. III*, mm. 1-3 featuring scales in thirds

Allegro - Theme (♩ = 104-112)

Preparing the short exercise in Example 2.36 extremely slowly will create an excellent template for preparing all of the melodic material in the fourth movement. Similar to the slow practice used to prepare the technical challenges in the second movement, slow and methodical practice to prepare these intricate scales in thirds will not only establish clearer articulation, but also develop the muscle memory necessary to execute these passages at full tempo. In addition to the direct benefit this slow practice will have in helping to prepare the *Sonata*, the similarity it shares with the *Concerto* will help performers prepare the *Concerto* more quickly as well.

Measure 65 introduces the first opportunity for the tuba to perform to its full dynamic potential. The fortissimo indication at measure 65 is only one of three appearances of this marking in the piece, all of which occur in the final movement. The fortissimo dynamic provides a welcome contrast within the piece, and is a moment for the tuba player to dramatically introduce an almost ominous sonic intensity in the movement. To fully take advantage of this dynamic, the performer should seek to broaden the notes as fully as possible, especially the quarter notes present from measures 66-68. Not only will this broadening increase the apparent dynamic, but will also contrast the many short notes that surround it. Example 2.37 illustrates the addition of the tenuto quarter notes. Forward arrows have been added to indicate that the performer should sustain the volume and the intensity for the full duration of the long notes.

Example 2.37, *Sonata, Mvt. IV*, mm. 65-77 with added markings

Because of an increase in volume coupled with an increase in note length, the natural tendency will be to slow down through this section. Regardless of this tendency, the tempo of this movement needs to remain constant from measure one, all the way until the first movement material returns in measure 147. The piano provides a clear pulse throughout the movement, helping propel the tuba line forward. The pulsing piano part at measure 65 also provides another connection to Plog's *Concerto*. In both instances, illustrated in examples 2.38 and 2.39, the piano repeatedly articulates polytonal chords, while the tuba performs rapid material around it. This link further connects the pieces within Plog's repertoire, especially to the piece that inspired the *Sonata*.

Example 2.38, *Concerto, Mvt. I*, mm. 9-10

The musical score for Example 2.38 consists of three staves. The top staff is in bass clef and contains a melodic line starting with a rest, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment consisting of chords, marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the instruction *sempre staccato*.

Example 2.39, *Sonata, Mvt. IV*, mm. 65-66

The musical score for Example 2.39 consists of three staves. The top staff is in bass clef and contains a melodic line starting with a whole note, followed by a series of quarter notes, marked with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment consisting of chords, marked with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic.

Following the grand material from measures 65 to measure 77, Plog returns to a theme from the first movement to provide contrast. This material, adapted from the opening melodic material of the piece, allows the tuba player to display a bouncing fluidity in a movement that has thus far been tense and highly articulate. When preparing measures 81-97, the performer should strive for as smooth a sound as possible, without accenting the beat groupings. To aid in the desire for a smooth sound and contrast to the previous section, the performer should consider performing the section well below the marked mezzo piano dynamic. In addition to the sonic contrast a softer dynamic will bring, it will also lead to a softer articulation on each grouping of

two notes. While a clear articulation is paramount to the audible perception of the two-note groupings, a harsh articulation would be highly disruptive to the mood the performer is seeking to create in this section; the performer must carefully balance clarity and excessive articulation. Shortening the second note of each pair will also give the line extra clarity and a sense of lightness. Example 2.40 illustrates this line with an added piano dynamic, and the suggested staccato notes.

Example 2.40, *Sonata, Mvt. IV*, mm. 81-85 with added staccato notes



Measure 97 returns to the opening motive of the movement, this time presented at a piano dynamic. Throughout this section, the tuba player should again seek to evoke the articulate quality of a string bass. This approach is especially effective with the return of this material because the tuba and piano are no longer performing the material at the same time, but are instead trading the melody. Though the nature of the traded lines does not present as significant of challenges as the second movement, extreme care must still be taken in order to maintain fidelity to the pulse during this transitional section. Throughout the section, Plog has placed increasing dynamic markings. What is not printed, however, is a *poco a poco* crescendo marking. Adding this indication will aid the performer in creating smoother dynamic growth to the fortissimo marking at measure 129, as opposed to using terraced dynamics, which will result in less of a connection in the interwoven tuba and piano lines.

The performer should strive to make the arrival of the fortissimo at measure 129 the high point of the movement, and indeed the piece, in terms of volume. By carefully using the 32-measure crescendo that precedes it, the performer can organically reach an extreme dynamic that

does not seem out of place in the movement. This fortissimo should be sustained by both tuba and piano until the downbeat of measure 141. Measure 129 also provides one of the few moments in the *Sonata* where a sense of aggression in terms of dynamic and articulation is appropriate, having finally reached the arrival point after such a gradual build. Because this aggressive style has not yet been explored in the piece, it will not be heard as heavy-handed or over-used, but will instead increase the drama for the climax of the movement. When the performer reaches the quarter note triplets in measure 139, it is effective to increase the intensity even further by adding a crescendo all the way to the downbeat of measure 141. This crescendo, coupled with a broadening of the quarter notes, makes the contrast to the material that follows it even more dramatic. Example 2.41 shows measures 137-141 with the added accents, elongated quarter-note triplets, and accompanying crescendo that builds into the silence that follows the downbeat of measure 141. Because the dynamic has been sustained at such a high level for so many measures, the sudden silence from both performers is jarring.

Example 2.41, *Sonata, Mvt. IV*, mm. 137-141 with added crescendo and accents

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 137-141) features a bass line with eighth notes and a piano accompaniment of chords. The second system (mm. 142-146) shows a transition with triplets in the bass line and piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The brief six-measure transition that follows this point of arrival helps pivot the work back to the opening of the entire piece. Throughout this short transition, there is a great temptation to decrease the tempo along with the decrease in dynamic. The tempo, however, should be maintained across these sparse measures to prevent telegraphing the return to the opening material. The return to the beginning of the piece is a beautiful and surprising moment, and the return is heightened if this appearance is unexpected. The execution of the restatement of the opening should be identical to that of the beginning, especially since much of the material is exactly as it appeared at the beginning of the piece. Changing the character of the movement so completely may be difficult to achieve, coming directly after so much fast and articulate

material, but is of the utmost importance to convincingly return the piece to the atmosphere of the opening.

As both performers reach the end of the material from the first movement, every effort should be made to create the same mood as that of the closing of the first movement; one of quiet closure. By returning to the opening material near the end of the fourth movement, Plog has created a plausible expectation for the piece to have a quiet closing that echoes the ending of the first movement. To heighten this expectation, the pianist should dwell on the final note for as long as the piano will ring before inserting a sizeable pause. If both performers remain motionless in the pause, the appearance of the piano in measure 166 will come as a surprise.

When the piano begins its slow entrance at measure 166, the listener is immediately reminded of the many repeated major second intervals from the first movement. Using this material helps further connect the entire piece, as Plog weaves fragments from the other movements around this simple interval. As previously mentioned, Plog uses the second theme from the first movement as the source for the final theme the tuba and piano will share. In order for the final section of the piece to achieve maximum musical excitement, great care must be given to the poco accelerando that spans the most of this conclusion. To maximize the amount of tempo contrast, the author suggests a starting tempo for the piano below what has been indicated in the score. Starting at a tempo of quarter note equals 80, for example, will not only provide a larger contrast to the final tempo, but will also sound more organic coming out of the slower material that precedes the closing section. Because the tuba and piano are passing the melody between the parts, a smooth and gradual acceleration is difficult to achieve. The responsibility for control of the accelerando should fall to the tuba player. If the tubist aggressively accelerates, while making sure to clearly pulse the music, the pianist will be able to

easily join the forward momentum, which drives music all the way to a dramatic conclusion. The tuba and piano players will find it helpful to have a pre-determined point in the music where the beat will shift from four beats per measure to two. The author recommends that this switch happen in measure 178, which is a logical point for this shift since it lies approximately halfway through the closing section. In addition, the performers will have reached a tempo by measure 178 that is fast enough to comfortably fall in two. Wherever the performers ultimately decide to shift into two beats per measure, the shift needs to have occurred by measure 180 in order to keep the triplet eighth notes from sounding frantic.

In addition to the transformation of the theme from the first movement, Plog uses the concluding section to incorporate moments from each of the movements in an effort to further unify the piece. Example 2.42 shows the first ten measures of the concluding section. Boxes have been added to the score to indicate the elements Plog is borrowing from earlier in the piece. The amount of unity shown in this section ensures that the conclusion is not only virtuosic and exciting but also musically satisfying both to the performers and the audience.

Example 2.42, *Sonata, Mvt. IV*, mm. 166-175

Slower ♩=92-112
(beginning in 4)

poco a poco accel.

Mov. I, mm. 35 (piano)

pp cresc. poco a poco

p

Mov. I, mm. 36 (tuba)

Mov. III, mm. 73 (piano)

Mov. II, mm. 11-12 (piano)

Mov. II, mm. 1 (Tuba)

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Anthony Plog's *Sonata for Tuba* is a challenging, memorable, and significant work that is a valuable addition to the tuba repertoire. It is hoped that through a focused study of this piece performers will not only seek to prepare the sonata but also explore the rest of Plog's repertoire for the tuba. Furthermore, this document can be used as a framework for young performers to approach and study not only Plog's works for tuba but also any other work they may be preparing. Technical exercises composed to master difficult passages, thoughtful score study, and the understanding of a piece's relation to a larger context form a holistic approach to the preparation and performance of a piece of music.

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APPENDIX: PERMISSIONS

From: Rob Roy McGregor rrmcgregor1@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Reprinting Permission
Date: October 7, 2013 at 11:10 AM
To: Crawford, Jeremy jeremy.s.crawford@ua.edu

Super - good luck with our thesis. Thanks for the citation in your work. I copied Tony on this so he will be aware too.

Rob Roy McGregor
rrmcgregor1@gmail.com
Balquhiddier Music
Glen Lyon Books

On Oct 7, 2013, at 8:44 AM, Crawford, Jeremy wrote:

Hello,
Sorry, I should have been more clear! Yes, the passages are from his "Method for Trumpet," published by Balquhiddier. The examples I am using come right from the books, just taken down two octaves to be more easily read by tuba players.

Thank you so much for your response, I really appreciate you taking the time to get back to me.

-Jeremy Crawford

On Oct 7, 2013, at 10:38 AM, Rob Roy McGregor <rrmcgregor1@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Jeremy,

Are these passages from the "Method for Trumpet" (adapted by you) that Balquhiddier Music publishes? If so, I can give you permission for the purposes you state here. Be so kind as to include "reprinted by permission of Balquhiddier Music".

If the licks you're talking about are from some other source of Tony's that I don't publish then you'd have to go to that other publisher.

Rob Roy McGregor
Balquhiddier Music

On Oct 7, 2013, at 8:12 AM, Crawford, Jeremy wrote:

Greetings,

My name is Jeremy Crawford, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Alabama, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. I am in the process of writing my DMA thesis, and am writing on the tuba music of Anthony Plog. I am writing today to enquire about how I go about obtaining permission to reprint excerpts of his music in my document. The excerpts I would be using are several of the exercises from his etude series, adapted to bass clef for use on tuba. The document is for academic purposes only, and will not be published for sale.

Please let me know how I should proceed with this matter.

Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Jeremy Crawford

Dear Jeremy Crawford,

Thanks for your request and interest in our publications.

Please answer this email, confirming that you accept the condition here below. Add the number and approx. length, in bars (average: i.e. between 2 and 5 bars) of the excerpts you intend to use.

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Le 7 oct. 2013 à 17:03, Editions Bim a écrit :

Name: Jeremy Crawford
E-mail: jeremy.s.crawford@ua.edu
Telephone: 563-321-0120

Comment: Greetings,

My name is Jeremy Crawford, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Alabama, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. I am in the process of writing my DMA thesis, and am writing on the tuba music of Anthony Plog. I am writing today to enquire about how I go about obtaining permission to reprint excerpts of his music in my document. The document is for academic purposes only, and will not be published for sale.

Please let me know how I should proceed with this matter. I have a specific list of the pieces I will be using, if required.

Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Jeremy Crawford