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O Tubas!

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for
Craig Fuller

O Tubas!

Randall Snyder
2004

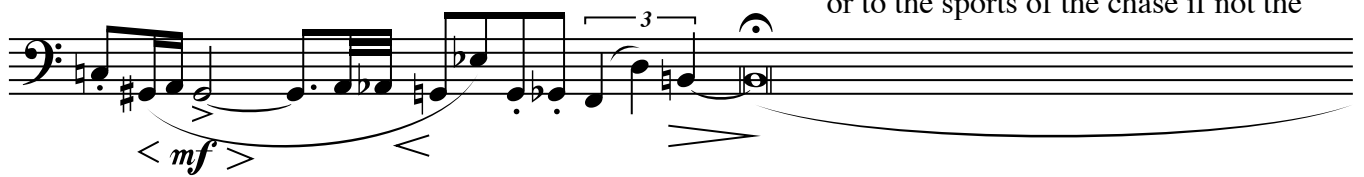
Narrator When I was asked to write the history of the Tuba in a short and compendious form, I was appaled at the audacity of the suggestion! My task appeared like an attempt at the impossible. The Tuba belongs to the There was, however, one redeeming feature in the request: I was to be amply paid for my efforts!

Tuba



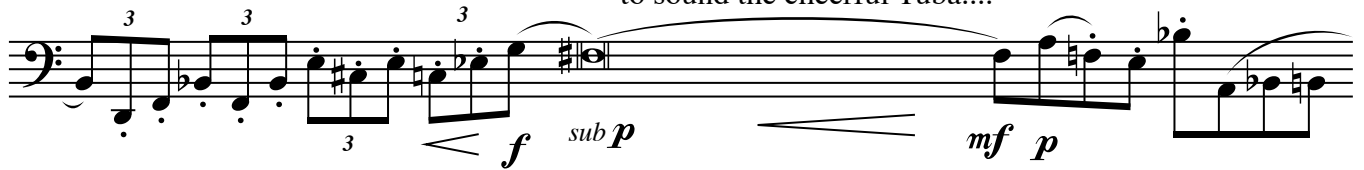
class of aerophones..or wind instruments

perhaps owing their inception to the riverside and the grain-sown fields... or to the sports of the chase if not the




battlefield

But just when man actually first learned to sound the cheerful Tuba...



is shrouded in the mists of antiquity

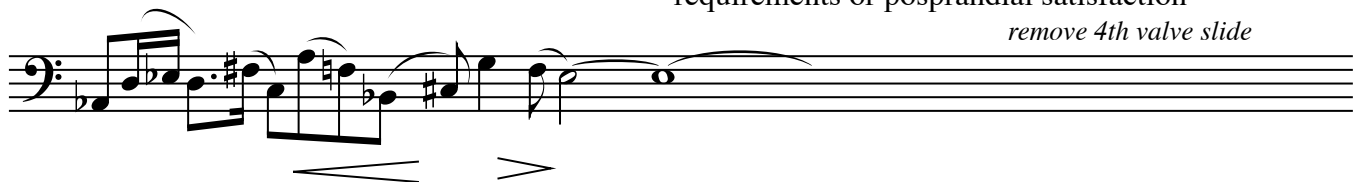
Yet we may infer, from



the manner of its sound-production

that is was discovered by our forefathers'preprandial requirements or posprandial satisfaction

remove 4th valve slide



(in other words... they got hungry)

One of the earliest forms of the Tuba...is the spiral shell

found as the *Cank* or conch shell in Asia and as the *Biou* in Europe

replace 4th valve slide



Now in order to get at the fish concealed within it was necessary to break off the tip of the shell to push it or blow it out....

slowaccel.....

with the final blast that heralded the meal, the Tuba was discovered!



The earliest record however, of the making of a Tuba which we've been

long a tempo

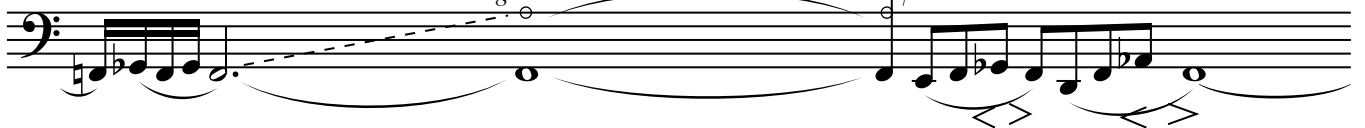


able to discover....

is contained in an ancient description of the labors...

of the Sumerian hero, Gilgamesh

sing



dated from the Fourth or Third Millenium B.C.E.

Slower

A Tempo 1

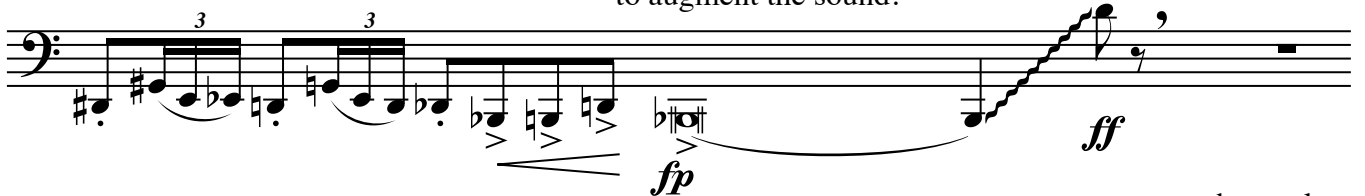
In this instance the instrument ...



was constructed of wood...

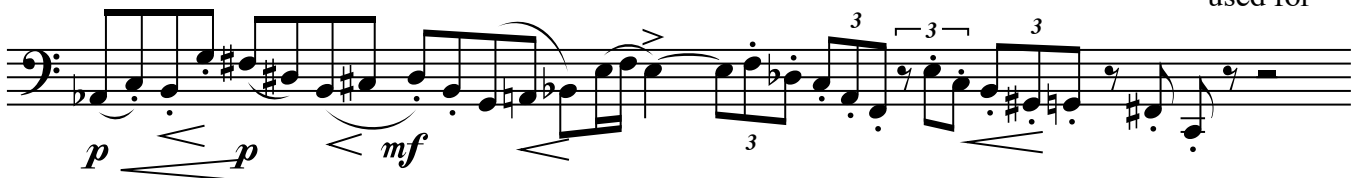
with the added refinement of an attachment at the end to augment the sound!

Other inland peoples also crafted the Tuba on large, hollow



river-reeds...thus, in the Gilgamesh story on the cuneiform tablet...

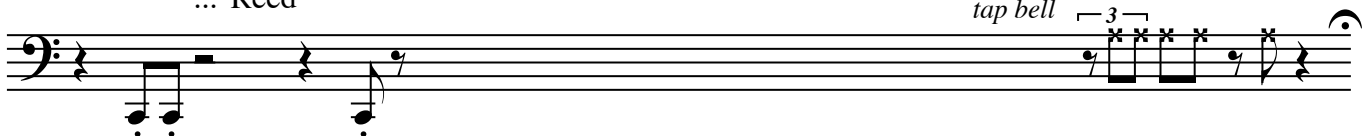
the mark used for



..."Tu-ba"

also means
..."Reed"

To this elementary instrument would soon be added a resonator of gourd, wood, or horn, serving as... a bell tap bell



In Egypt... weird ensembles of Tubas used for state and military purposes appear in hieroglyphs about 1500 B.C.E. then passed

Musical notation in bass clef with dynamics *mf* and *p*, and triplet markings.

to the traders of the Eastern Mediterranean and it is in this connection, that the side-blown metal war tubas found in Ireland, can best be explained

Musical notation in bass clef with a large slur and dynamic markings.

March ♩ = 88 Pesante These fierce Tubas, know as *Karnyx*, frightened the most redoubtable warriors

Musical notation in bass clef with dynamics *f* and *fp*, and triplet markings.

even the sturdy Roman Legions quailed before the din of the Celtic War Tubas

Musical notation in bass clef with dynamics *f* and *p*.

eventually being forced to retaliate by creating three different forms of the Tuba: the large, circular *Bucina*, used for signaling... the crescent-shaped *Cornu*,

Musical notation in bass clef with dynamics *p* and *mf*.

and the huge *Contrabadass*.....the direct progenitor of today's powerful Double Bb giants! These Roman tubas were extremely unwieldy, with the production of overtones, or upper notes, doubtful at best

Musical notation in bass clef with dynamics *f* and *fp*, and the label *mouthpiece buzz*.

Musical notation in bass clef with dynamics *mp* and *ppp*, and the label *heavy breathing*.

For several centuries therefore, Herculean efforts were directed towards the construction of a Tuba capable of playing...the "perfect scale":

No! Try it again! *rit.*

p *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

By the Middel Ages, the most important bass instruments were referred to by the ominous title:

Serpents!

a reference to their circular shape

pp *mp* *p* *mf* *p* *f*

Serpents ranged widely in size....

from the petite *Ophimonocleide* which could only play one note...

to a truly leviathon Double Contra Serpent....

p *f*

the last known specimen now taking up an entire wing of the Municipal Museum at Grand Island

One of the most unpleasant offsprings of the Serpent... was the..... *Ophicleide*

mf

Berlioz informs us, that the monster..." required an amount of breath which would exhaust the lungs...

cresc. e accel.

...of the most robust man!"

In the 19th Century a delightful variety of Tubas were developed:

f *p* *ff*

panting sounds

a baritone *Bugle a piston*....the spacious *Sonorophone*....the elliptical *Helicon*, the impressive, deep-throated

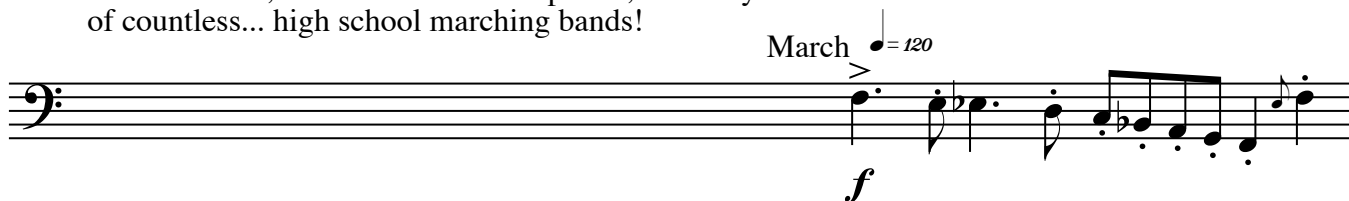
Jaunty

mp *mf* *fp*

Bambardon, and how can one forget...the Wagnerian Tuba!



The most familiar descendant of these marvelous instruments is, of course...the Sousaphone, mainstay of countless... high school marching bands!



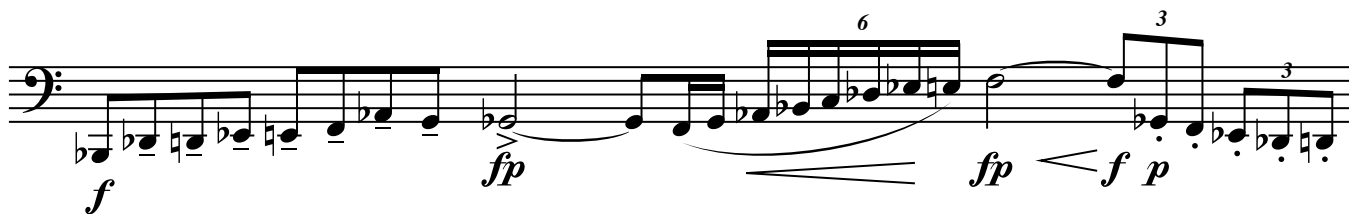
So dawns a new century and already many composers, such as Honneger, Ibert, Milhaud, and



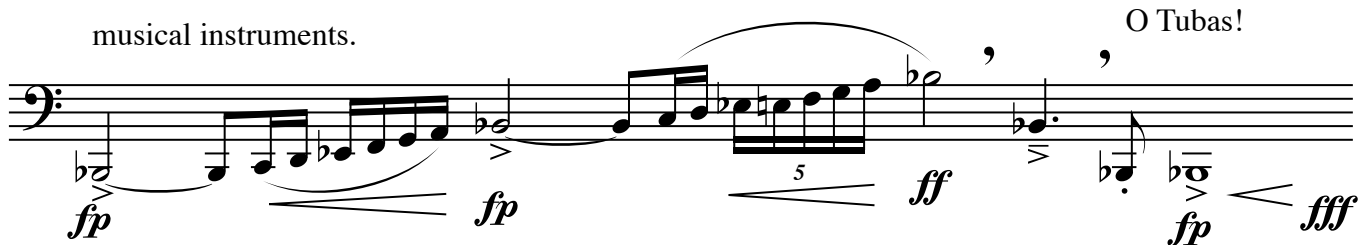
Spike Jones...have recognized the Tubas possibilities The unknown tonal effects and mysterious charms



which lie hidden within its cavernous depths may in the years to come place it as the foremost ...of our



musical instruments.



O Tubas!