

A PERFORMANCE GUIDE FOR THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES IN CONCERTO FOR
TUBA AND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA BY JAN BACH

Ryan J. Robinson, B.M., M.M.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2014

APPROVED:

Donald Little, Major Professor
Eugene Corporon, Committee Member
Brian Bowman, Committee Member
John Holt, Chair of the Division of Instrumental
Studies
Benjamin Brand, Director of Graduate Studies
in the College of Music
James Scott, Dean of the College of Music
Mark Wardell, Dean of the Toulouse Graduate
School

Robinson, Ryan J. A Performance Guide for the Unique Challenges in Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra by Jan Bach. Doctor of Musical Arts (Performance), August 2014, 36 pp., bibliography, 29 titles.

In 2003, Jan Bach completed his monumental Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra. This concerto requires unique performance techniques and technical skills unlike the majority of available tuba repertoire. In addition to these techniques, the guide explores the influence of popular songs, jazz/rock/funk styles, implied humor, and personal experience through an interview with the composer.

Copyright 2014

By

Ryan J. Robinson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2 NECESSITY FOR A SPECIALIZED PERFORMANCE GUIDE	3
CHAPTER 3 TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS	6
CHAPTER 4 GLISSANDI	8
CHAPTER 5 TRILLS	12
CHAPTER 6 OPTIONAL ENDINGS.....	16
CHAPTER 7 USE OF POPULAR TUNES AND NON-WESTERN-CLASSICAL STYLES	19
CHAPTER 8 INSTANCES OF HUMOR.....	27
CHAPTER 9 AIR TUBA	30
CHAPTER 10 SOLUTIONS FOR PERFORMING WITH THE PIANO REDUCTION.....	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY	35

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Jan Bach is a prolific composer of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. His long and distinguished career as a performer, educator, and composer has spanned more than fifty years and has included numerous awards and distinctions. He has written music for many different instruments and ensembles including flute, horn, harp, brass quintet, trombone, euphonium, double reeds, chamber orchestra, and tuba. In recent years, his music has been used in many instrumental international competitions.

As a hornist, Bach was a member of the United States Army Band in Fort Myer, Virginia from 1962-1965. He accepted a teaching position at the University of Tampa in Tampa, Florida for one year before taking a similar position at the University of Northern Illinois where he taught from 1966-2004.

In 1956, Bach won the BMI Student Composers Competition and started an impressive list of awards that he continues to add to each year. These awards include the Koussevitsky Competition Award at Tanglewood, the Harvey Gaul Award, Mannes College Opera Competition Award, Sigma Alpha Iota Choral Competition Award, first prize at the inaugural International Brass Congress, Brown University Choral Competition, Nebraska Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra Competition, and the New York City Opera Competition. He has also received grants from the Illinois Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. He has twenty-nine compositions published with five different publishers and has had eight of his pieces recorded professionally. The Stockholm Chamber Brass, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and Chicago Symphony Orchestra have performed major world premieres of his works. His most recent

large work is his Tuba Concerto, commissioned by and dedicated to Jay Hunsberger, principal tubist of the Sarasota Orchestra and Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida.¹

In 2003, Jan Bach completed his monumental Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra. This concerto requires unusual performance techniques and technical skills unlike the majority of available tuba repertoire. In addition to these techniques, the guide explores the influence of popular songs, jazz/rock/funk styles, implied humor, and personal experience through an interview with the composer.

Tubists often rely on landmark recordings, scholarly articles, and live performances to inform them of common performance practices and solutions for traditionally problematic material found in the standard literature such as trills, glissandi, range, and tonguing. Jan Bach's departure from traditional western classical styles, recent completion date, and the extended duration of the piece has resulted in a limited number of performances and recordings available. The goal of this paper is to introduce a specialized performance guide, centered on an interview with Jan Bach, which will greatly improve future tubists' ability to interpret the piece and achieve a successful performance.

1. Jan Bach, "Long Bio," 10 March 2014 < <http://www.janbach.com/page54.html>>.

CHAPTER 2

NECESSITY FOR A SPECIALIZED PERFORMANCE GUIDE

The tuba was invented by Wilhelm Friedrich Wieprecht and Johann Gottfried Moritz in 1835 and is the youngest member of the orchestral brass section. The tuba did not receive a true concerto with orchestral accompaniment until the premiere of the Vaughan Williams Tuba Concerto on June 4, 1954 by Philip Catelinet and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.²

Before the arrival of this important composition, the repertoire for solo tuba was lacking any significant works. Although Philip Catelinet himself was somewhat disappointed with Vaughan Williams' Tuba Concerto, it has since been widely accepted and most certainly led to other respected composers writing serious solo works for the tuba. Harvey Phillips spoke about this issue in *Mr. Tuba*. "It is regrettable that 119 years had to pass after the tuba was patented before the first serious concerto for tuba with orchestra was written. All tuba players will forever be indebted to Ralph Vaughan Williams and Paul Hindemith for their respectful tips of the hat to our instrument. These two pieces helped to open the floodgates for the commissions of new solo literature."³

Since the premiere of that concerto the literature for solo tuba with orchestra accompaniment has grown significantly. The standard repertoire for today's tubists includes works from many significant composers including Alexander Arutiunian, Eugene Bozza, Bruce Broughton, Eric Ewazen, Edward Gregson, Anthony Plog, William Schmidt, John Stevens, Henri Tomasi, Alec Wilder, and John Williams. The vast majority of these works utilize traditional

2. Harvey Phillips, *Mr. Tuba* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 398.

3. *Ibid.*

European orchestral techniques such as tonguing, slurring, and range extension. These techniques have been explored in depth by several method books and treatises including Jean Baptiste Arban's *Complete Method for Tuba*, Max Schlossberg's *Daily Drills and Technical Studies*, and *20 Minute Warm-Up Routine* by Michael Davis. Treatises including *The Art of Tuba and Euphonium* by Harvey Philips and William Winkle have added well-organized explanations of traditional pedagogy.

Further explanation of traditional techniques has been accomplished through dissertations such as Michael Fisher's *Ralph Vaughan Williams: An Interpretive Analysis of Concerto for Bass Tuba*. Fisher's dissertation compares different methods of breathing in the Vaughan Williams.⁴ David Daussat's dissertation *Birth of a Modern Concerto: An Explication of Musical Design and Intention in Journey: Concerto for Contrabass Tuba and Orchestra*, examines challenges and solutions of extended range.⁵

The significance of Bach's Concerto is that it represents the next step in solo tuba literature. Today's modern tuba literature includes serious pieces like John Stevens' Concerto, Anthony Plog's Concerto, and John Williams' Concerto. These concerti are important pieces but require traditional techniques that have been discussed in other guides. However, Bach's Concerto uses popular tunes, jazz/rock/funk styles, acting (air tuba), and humor. These elements need more explanation than is currently available through standard texts. For some of these instances, multiple techniques are discussed and compared; the most appropriate option are explored. While these techniques are an important part of any performance of this

4. Michael Fisher, "An Interpretive Analysis of Concerto for Bass Tuba." (PhD dissertation, University of North Texas, 1999), 11.

5. David Daussat, "Birth of a Modern Concerto: An Explication of Musical Design and Intention in Journey: Concerto for Contrabass Tuba and Orchestra." (DMA dissertation, University of North Texas, 2008), 14.

piece, this guide focuses heavily on the interview with Jan Bach as a means to explain these challenges. Using the interview with Jan Bach, a more informed performance is possible.

In my interview with Jan Bach, he wrote openly about his inspiration for writing such a piece. He also adds valuable insight regarding how he feels that his Concerto is different from another modern tuba concerto by John Stevens.

John's concerto was a serious one despite its reliance on train terms, and I was so influenced by it that I realized if I were to fill the commission from Jay (Hunsberger) I would have to go the opposite direction, and "lighten up," using a style which I thought would suit Jay because he was still young and a cool guy (he still is) when I wrote it, and would accept whatever I wrote for him.⁶

Fortunately, the composer is still alive and excited to inform tubists about his music.

The interview with the composer is the perfect opportunity for future performances to be intimately informed by the composer's thoughts and feelings. This dissertation is the only source in existence for solutions to the challenges featured in Jan Bach's Concerto.

6. Jan Bach. "Interview with Jan Bach." E-mail interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

CHAPTER 3

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to note that the techniques in this performance guide are described with the understanding that the performer is using a bass tuba pitched in F. While tubas pitched in other keys may be viable options, the preferred solo instrument in the United States is the bass tuba in F.

According to William Mitchell's survey, seventy-eight percent of the polled university teachers use the F tuba while performing solo literature.⁷ This percentage grew significantly in the last half of the twentieth century. As the next generation of tuba players emerges, all signs point to this trend continuing to grow. It is not uncommon for first-year university students to already own and perform with both the bass and contra bass tuba, with the bass tuba being preferred for the majority of solo performances. Furthermore, a small but growing number of advanced high school tubists have started using both the bass and contrabass tubas. While the available range of the instrument does not change drastically between bass and contra bass tuba, the slightly smaller size and higher starting fundamental of the F tuba allows for a more appropriate sound quality and greater pitch security for the majority of the available solo literature.

The techniques utilized in Bach's Concerto are described with regards to a five-valved version of the bass F tuba. These five-valved options are also possible on all six-valved versions and additional options may be available if the sixth valve is utilized. Conversely, some techniques described may not be applicable for those tubists using a four or three-valved tubas.

7. William K. Mitchell, "Teaching the Bass Tuba: A Survey of Current Trends in College and University Applied Studio in the United States" (DMA dissertation, University of North Texas, 2006), 10.

Solutions for three or four-valved compensating F tubas will not be explored in this guide due to the limited usage in the United States. The use of a five-valved bass tuba in F is not only my personal choice; it also represents the majority of F tubas used by performers today.

It is worth specifying the length of the fifth valve used for these solutions. Several options are available for the fifth valve length; the most common length discussed in this performance guide is the flat whole-step configuration that has become the standard among all major manufacturers. Jay Hunsberger, dedicatee of Concerto, performs on a five-valved F tuba with a flat whole-step fifth valve. It is also worth noting that in my initial conversations with Jan Bach about producing this performance guide he was very curious to know what key tuba I used and the number of valves on my particular instrument. This clearly demonstrates that Bach had knowledge of the instrument used by Jay Hunsberger during the premiere performance, and tailored the piece around the capabilities of the instrument.

CHAPTER 4

GLISSANDI

The first distinctive technique is found in measure 40 of the first movement. A glissando is written between C# and c#. ⁸ Written instructions are found throughout the entirety of the first movement and include the written text in parenthesis, "(flutter valves)."

Ex. 1, Measure 36 - 40, Movement 1:



Ex. 2, Measure 115 - 127, Movement 1:



Ex. 3, Measure 178 - 185, Movement 1:

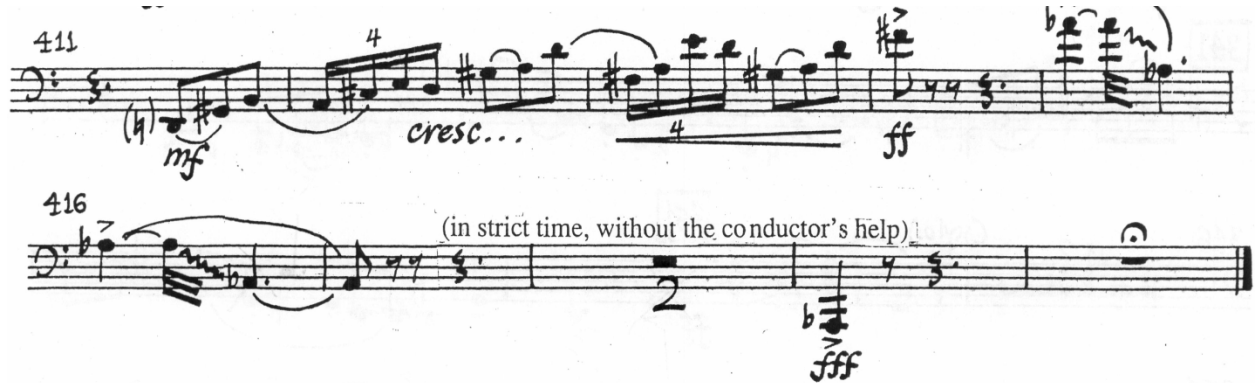


8. R. Winston Morris and Daniel Perantoni. *Guide to the Tuba Repertoire: The New Tuba Source Book* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), xv.

Ex. 4, Measure 285 – 289, Movement 1:



Ex. 5, Measure 411 - 421, Movement 1:



While the written description (flutter) by the composer hints at the desired effect, it is not a complete guide. The performer must always consider the desired effect of the glissando notation. Some glissandi are written to sound as a smooth bridge between two notes, much like a trombone is able to accomplish with the slide. The tuba is limited in this ability; half-valve technique is the closest fabrication.

Utilizing the half-valve technique allows the performer to escape the clarity of the notes that sound when a valve is depressed and additional tubing is opened. With the valve depressed half way, the additional tubing is only partially opened and some air is allowed to pass into the open bugle. Simultaneously, the remainder of the air passes through the added tubing, thus creating an unfocused sound that lacks a definite partial or overtone series. The lack of a secure partial permits the performer to “bend” pitches freely. This technique creates the smooth transition between notes required a smooth sounding glissando.

Half-valve technique can be successfully performed in several ways. It is possible to achieve the desired result by half way depressing any valve or any combination of valves. Each tuba responds differently but the most consistent method is using the fifth valve depressed half way. This method tends to produce a full sound compared to the diffuse quality that can occur from using any other half-valve combination. If a trombone glissando is the desired effect, a fuller sound is absolutely necessary.

The half-valve method described above works well and is used frequently in most standard literature but does not necessarily reflect the “flutter valves” text that is written in Jan Bach's Concerto. To effectively produce the flutter required the performer must use multiple valves in rapid succession in between the two written notes. In slow motion, multiple valves are quickly opened and closed. This allows access to the overtone series associated with each length of valve tubing that is added when the valve is depressed. The order of valve combinations during the flutter technique does not need to be specific or planned. Instead, the most important goal is to move quickly and randomly while attempting to glissando between notes in the same manner as if you were using the half valve technique. The tuba does not use a trombone slide and therefore cannot produce a true glissando with this method or the half valve method.

The performer should continue practicing the half-valve technique described in the standard literature because the freedom to move smoothly between partials is also required with the “flutter technique.” By practicing the traditional half-valve technique, it is possible to learn the skill of smoothly transitioning between notes without the limitations of partials found

in the overtone series of a fixed length tube.⁹ In the case of the glissandi found in this piece, a combination of the two described techniques should be utilized. Using this half-valve technique with the fifth-valve only, while simultaneously and rapidly depressing, or “fluttering”, the other four remaining valves fulfill two necessary objectives. First, smooth transitions between notes are feasible. Second, dynamic retention is achieved which allows the performer to project over the ensemble.

9. Oldham, Guy. “Harmonics,” *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. (<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50023>).

CHAPTER 5

TRILLS

The first movement of Concerto presents several trills that require special consideration. The trills located in measures 140, 185, 202, 206, 275, 279, and 288 are all effectively performed using traditional techniques found in the *Complete Method for the Tuba* by Jean Baptiste Arban.¹⁰ However, the trills in measures 191, 284, and 286 necessitate the use of non-traditional methods in order to achieve the desired effect. The difficulty is due to the fingering combinations that are required of the performer in order to play the two notes of the trill. In each of these examples, the trill is impossible to accomplish with appropriate style using traditional techniques.

The previous description of the specific type of tuba discussed in this guide becomes important during this section. The fifth-valve, operated either by the right thumb or left index finger, lowers the pitch by slightly more than a whole-step. By depressing this valve the performer gains access to an additional harmonic series. Since this performance guide refers to bass tuba in F, the additional harmonic series available is in the key of E-flat, and allows the tubist to use the instrument as if it were a double tuba in F and E-flat. Unlike the double horn, traditional pedagogy does not describe the tuba as a double instrument. The fifth-valve is traditionally utilized as a method to compensate for the inherent pitch issues between the fundamental and second partial. However, this non-traditional pedagogy is necessary and often overlooked as a solution to the trills in Concerto. No other literature is available to performers to satisfy this difficulty.

10. Jean Baptiste Arban. *Arban Complete Method* (Troy, MI: Encore Music Publishers, 2000), 92-125.

Examination of a fingering chart for each the F and E-flat tubas will more clearly show the relationship and new fingering possibilities of this technique.

Ex. 6, F tuba fingering chart¹¹:

21 G# Ab A A# Bb B Cb C C# Db D
 2-3 1-2 or 3 1 2 0 2-3 1-2 or 3

28 D# Eb E E# F F# Gb G G# Ab A
 1 2 0 1-2 1 or 1-3 2 or 2-3 0 or 1-2

Ex. 7, Eb tuba fingering chart:

22 G G# Ab A A# Bb B Cb C C# Db D
 1-2 or 3 1 2 0 2-3 1-2 or 3 1 2

30 D# Eb E Fb F F# Gb G G# Ab A
 0 1-2 1 or 1-3 2 or 2-3 0 or 1-2 1 2

12

By depressing the fifth valve, the performer using a 5-valved F-tuba gains access to the fingerings shown on the E-flat-tuba fingering chart.

In measure 191, the trill is written between D-flat and C. On the F-tuba, D-flat is played with a 2+3 valve combination and C is played with no valves depressed.

11. Norlan Bewley, "F Tuba Fingering Chart," 2008 <<http://www.norlanbewley.com/tuba/fingering-tuba-5.htm>>

12. Norlan Bewley, "Eb Tuba Fingering Chart," 2008 <<http://www.norlanbewley.com/tuba/fingering-tuba-3.htm>>

Ex. 8, Measure 186 – 193, Movement 1:



Traditional Fingerings: 2-3 + 0

New Fingerings: 5-1 + 5-1-2

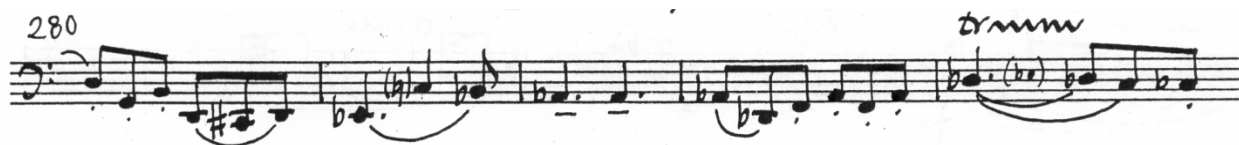
Rapid and smooth movement between these two notes is problematic if not impossible.

By imagining the tuba as a double tuba in F and E-flat, the performer can depress the fifth valve and open up a new set of possible fingerings. In this case, the D-flat becomes 5-1 and the C becomes 5-1-2. During the trill the fifth valve is kept engaged for both notes. The new fingering combination is 5-1 to 5-1-2. This fingering combination is much more manageable for the performer.

Depending on the instrument, the use of the fifth valve in this manner may require the performer to push the fifth valve slide all the way in to the shortest length. This maneuver will minimize the inherent flatness associated with the flat whole-step fifth valve set-up described previously.

The trill in measure 284 is modified using the same technique. This trill is between D-flat and E-flat. The new fifth valve trill fingerings become 5-1 and 5. By keeping the fifth valve depressed a 1-0 trill is accessible.

Ex. 9, Measure 280 – 284, Movement 1:



Traditional Fingerings: 2-3 + 1

New Fingerings: 5-1 + 5-0

The new fingering technique can also be applied to the trill in measure 286.

Ex. 10, Measure 285 – 289, Movement 1:



Traditional Fingerings: 2-3 + 1

New Fingerings: 5-1 + 5

CHAPTER 6

OPTIONAL ENDINGS

The final movement of Jan Bach's Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra, entitled *Variations*, requires virtuosic technique. Several excerpts include extended range, extremely rapid note changes, and large interval leaps. While challenging, the majority of the movement is written in a traditional style. The final eleven measures of the piece require the performer to choose between three possible endings.

In the original ending, Bach writes “*Avanti!*” at measure 175 and includes a metronome marking of dotted quarter at 168 beats per minute. The performer is required to play interval leaps of fourths and fifths in eighth notes. Over the next seven measures the solo line moves higher until reaching G-flat, first space above the treble clef staff. This required range is a full octave higher than the highest note in the Vaughan Williams Tuba Concerto. In measure 180, the traditional eighth note heads are replaced with “x.” Bach adds this explanation: “begin faking it-going through the motions of playing, even when the notes get too high to play [air tuba?].”¹³ Air tuba is discussed in greater detail in chapter 9.

13. Jan Bach, Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra, (Annandale, VA: Tuba Euphonium Press, 2004), 13.

Ex. 11, Measure 175 – 185, Movement 3

ff *Avanti!* (*♩* = c. 168)

175

mf

179

(⊕) *see alternate endings below*

(begin faking it — going through the motions of playing, even when the notes get too high to play [air tuba?]).

Bach includes two alternate endings that may be inserted as a replacement for these “air tuba” measures. The first alternate ending starts in measure 179 and effectively eliminates the last six measures of the movement. Rests replace the last two measures and Jan Bach gives us a new written explanation: “pretend to play, but tpt. II takes over.”¹⁴ Due to the use of trumpet, this alternative is not the best option if performed with piano reduction in place of chamber orchestra.

Ex. 12, Measure 179 – 185, Movement 3

ALTERNATE ENDING 1

179

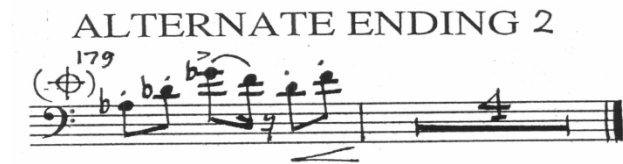
(⊕)

(pretend to play, but tpt. II takes over)

Alternate ending two starts in measure 79 and only includes five full measures. This ending shortens the movement by two full measures and does not require any “air tuba” or other instruments.

14. Jan Bach, Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra, (Annandale, VA: Tuba Euphonium Press, 2004), 13.

Ex. 13, Measure 179 – 183, Movement 3



This second alternate ending and the original ending are the only two viable options for the performer when the concerto is performed with piano reduction in place of chamber orchestra. The reliance of trumpet II in the first ending cannot be achieved by the reduction.

My personal preference is to perform the original ending. I prefer this ending because it more accurately reflects the distinctive compositional techniques found in this concerto. The original ending allows the player to decide when their range is exhausted and “air tuba” is necessary. It is important to convincingly pretend that the tubist is still playing the imaginary notes. The audience should not be able to decipher when the performer actually stops playing and begins acting. A seamless hand-off between playing and acting will make the ending of the piece disappear into the extreme high register of the instrument and beyond. This technique is revolutionary and is a truly unique aspect that separates Jan Bach’s Concerto from other modern tuba concertos. I was unable to find any other piece in the tuba repertoire that specifies “air tuba.” The eighth note heads written as “x” have been used in 20th and 21st century writing but are associated with various other techniques and not “air tuba.”

CHAPTER 7

USE OF POPULAR TUNES AND NON-WESTERN-CLASSICAL STYLES

Composers throughout music history have borrowed music to use as thematic material for their compositions. Jan Bach's Concerto makes use of two tunes: "Sweet and Low" and "Do Your Ears Hang Low." At times, this usage is quite obvious while in other instances some deciphering is required.

"Sweet and Low" is a SATB vocal quartet hymn written by Sir Joseph Barnby in 1865. Barnby enjoyed a long career as an organist, church music director, and professor. During his tenure at St. Andrews, Wells Street, and through his appointment at Eton College, he is remembered for greatly increasing the scope of choral music. Previous regimes had been under pressure to simplify church music to better fit the standards of the Victorian society, which they served. Barnby's services included much more elaborate programs including Gounod's *Messe solennelle* and Bach's *St John Passion*. In fact, his programs were so large that parishioners began referring to church services as "the Sunday Opera."¹⁵

Barnby was a prolific contributor to vocal repertoire. His contributions include hymns such as "Cloisters" and "For all the Saints." He was also responsible for editing several hymnbooks, including *The Hymnary*. Perhaps the most well-known of all of his music is the song "Sweet and Low." This piece is still a standard of many choirs almost one hundred fifty years after it was written. Barnby used this text written by Lord Alfred Tennyson:

15. Nicholas Temperley. "Barnby, Sir Joseph." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. Web. 11 Apr. 2014. <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/02085>>.

1) Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea.
Over the rolling waters go;
Come from the dying moon, and blow;
Blow him again to me,
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

2) Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon.
Father will come to his babe in the nest;
Silver sails all out of the west;
Under the silver moon,
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.¹⁶

The most obvious borrowing from "Sweet and Low" comes in the third movement of Jan Bach's Concerto. In this instance, the tune is borrowed very accurately with little variation from the original score. It is clearly recognizable and easily heard. The accompaniment becomes much more harmonically supportive than in most of the rest of the piece. This serves as a nice break before the much more complicated variations that follow.

Ex. 14, Measure 1 – 42, Movement 3

16. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Sweet and Low, Sweet and Low, Wind of the Western Sea." *Hymnary.org*. Web. 12 March 2014. <http://www.hymnary.org/text/sweet_and_low_sweet_and_low_wind_of_the_>.

Theme. Moderato (♩ = c. 72)

(1) $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$ vlns. 8[↑] *cantabile* *mf*

22

27 *f*

32 *f* *mf* *mp*

Variation I. (♩ = c. 52)

Variation II. (♩ = c. 52)

Jan Bach explained the usage of *Sweet and Low* in the third movement:

Most of the melodic materials in the first and third movements are derived from the old tune “Sweet and Low,” an obvious reference to the tuba’s tone. The tune was written in the mid-nineteenth century by Joseph Barnby to accompany a poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, a song that I learned in my grade school’s “happy singing” class. The third movement of course has the most overt use of the “Sweet and Low” theme, as a more expanded series of variations on the tune in its original form.¹⁷

The composer’s personal connection with the song is an important aspect that should influence the approach to performing this part of the concerto. The simplicity of the melodic and harmonic compositional style of this variation is a musical anecdote representing Bach’s grade school happy singing class. This rare and beautiful memory is an important moment in Bach’s Concerto and brings the composer’s personal experience into the music.

While this hymn style is not typical of the tuba repertoire, the availability of recordings makes it easy to hear several quality examples. The Robert Shaw Chorale featured the hymn on

17. Jan Bach. "Interview with Jan Bach." E-mail interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

their 1954 album titled *Sweet and Low*. The album is only available on vinyl and can be found in the University of North Texas Music Library as well as various online retailers like EBay and Amazon.com.¹⁸ Modern renditions include a recording by the Grammy Award nominated group New York Polyphony. By listening to recordings like these the performer will gain new and valuable knowledge of the style that is appropriate for this section of Bach's Concerto.

The first movement culminates with another well-known tune. *The Tuba Source Book* incorrectly states that this tune is "Turkey in the Straw."¹⁹ Actually, according to Jan Bach, the tune is "Do Your Ears Hang Low." Both of these tunes have similar melodies but once again, Bach's personal connection is specific and important. Bach has this explanation regarding his use of the tune, "The first movement ends with a concert treatment of a camp song I learned in Boy Scout camp, 'Do Your Ears Hang Low,' another reference to the tuba (and some of its players?)."²⁰

The end of the first movement is another example of the composer deliberately trying not to mimic the more serious compositions of the modern tuba repertoire. The lyrics for "Do Your Ears Hang Low" further explain the light-hearted nature of the musical quote.

Do your ears hang low?
Do they wobble to and fro?
Can you tie them in a knot?
Can you tie them in a bow?
Can you throw them over your shoulder like a continental soldier?

Do your ears hang low?
Do your ears hang high?
Do they reach up to the sky?

18. Robert Shaw Chorale. *Sweet and Low*. RCA Victor, 195-. LP.

19. Jan Bach, *Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra*, (Annandale, VA: Tuba Euphonium Press, 2004), 8.

20. Jan Bach. "Interview with Jan Bach." E-mail interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

Do they droop when they're wet?
Do they stiffen when they're dry?
Can you semaphore your neighbor with a minimum of labor?

Do your ears hang high?
Do your ears hang wide?
Do they flap from side to side?
Do they wave in the breeze?
From the slightest little sneeze?
Can you soar above the nation with a feeling of elation?

Do your ears hang wide?
Do your ears fall off?
When you give a great big cough?
Do they lie there on the ground?
Or bounce up at every sound?
Can you stick them in your pocket just like little Davy Crockett?

Do your ears fall off?²¹

Interestingly, the section of the first movement in which this musical quote happens does not feature the tuba playing the melody. Instead, the tuba plays a counter melody, or descant line, while the accompaniment plays the actual tune. Here is what the tuba plays:

Ex. 15, Measure 356 – 377, Movement 1

The image shows a musical score for a tuba part and its accompaniment. The tuba part is written in bass clef and 4/4 time. It starts at measure 356 and ends at measure 361. The accompaniment part is written in treble and bass clefs and 4/4 time. It starts at measure 356 and ends at measure 361. The tuba part is marked with 'ff (loco)' and 'ff (+ picc. obbligato)'. The accompaniment part is marked with '(EF)' and '(2)'. The tuba part has a 'B↑' marking above it. The score is numbered 356 and 361.

21. "Do Your Ears Hang Low." *ScoutSongs.com*. Chakra Sites, Inc., n.d. Web. 15 March 2014.
<<http://www.scoutsongs.com/lyrics/earshanglow.html>>.

When the piece is performed with orchestral accompaniment the tubist must play loudly in order to be heard. However, the tubist should examine the necessity for the fortissimo marking when playing with the piano reduction. The melody is in the accompaniment with the tuba playing a secondary role. This hierarchy must remain intact.

If the performer is unfamiliar with “Do Your Ears Hang Low” there are options available. The song was recorded by Sharon, Lois & Bam on their album entitled *Stay Tuned*. It was also featured on several recordings from the children’s television show *Barney* on two separate albums, *Barney’s Favorites* and *Barney’s Greatest Hits*. Kinky Friedman recorded a comical version on his album *Live From Uranus*.

Jan Bach’s usage of such a common, and sometimes crude, tune gives the performer the freedom to play raucously. This is a significant departure from the standard repertoire and

should be performed in a carefree manner as if sitting around a campfire. This is no easy task given the technical demands of tempo, range, and flexibility that are found in this section. In order to achieve the correct style, the tubist must be able to move past these obstacles.

Popular tunes play a large role in the melodic material found in Bach's Concerto. The performer must be familiar with these tunes as well as the light-hearted mood required for each of these sections. Even in sections where Bach uses an original tune, he continued with his theme of non-western classical styles. Bach explained the influence of non-western classical music in his Concerto: "The only other music from the first movement march that may seem derived was the "trio" tune of the march, written intentionally to evoke the happy little tunes of 1970s television sitcoms like *The Andy Griffith Show* and *Leave It To Beaver*.

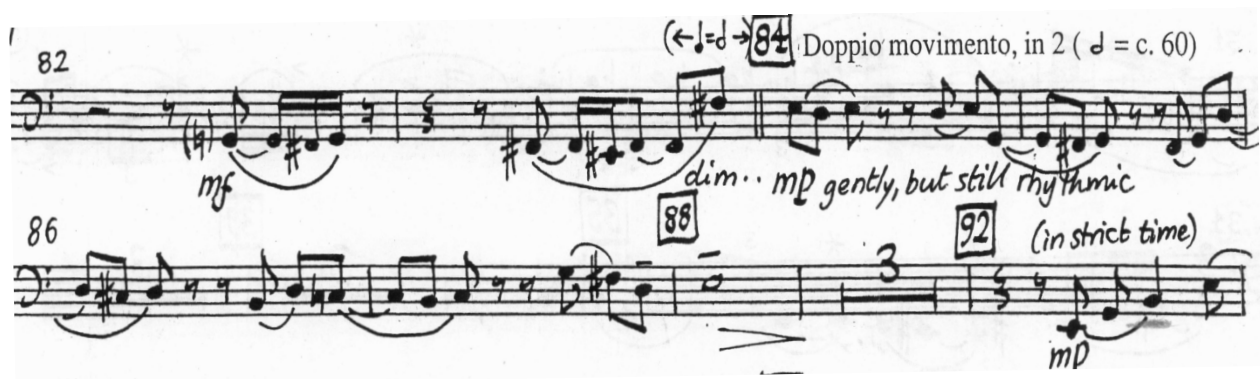
Ex. 16, Measure 268 – 289, Movement 1

The image shows a handwritten musical score for tuba, spanning measures 268 to 289. The score is written on four staves. Measure 268 is the first staff, starting with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. Measure 273 is marked with a box and a handwritten note: "(support the entire weight of the orchestra on your 'virtual' shoulders)". Measure 275 is marked with a box and the word "trmn" above it. Measure 280 is marked with a box and the word "trmn" above it. Measure 285 is marked with a box and the word "trmn" above it. Measure 289 is marked with a box and the word "trmn" above it. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "ff".

The second movement also includes examples of non-western styles. This time the tune is not directly borrowed but, rather, is derived from a memory of a song played by a defunct rock band. "The only derived material from the second movement is the ground bass in the

second half, based on a tune played by a rock band that one of my older music education candidates played for me from a videotape of her band; it was a hard tune to get out of my mind. That bass line, too, furnishes the basis for a short set of variations in the tuba and orchestra.”²² The tune starts in measure 84 and continues for the next several minutes in variations.

Ex. 17, Measure 82 – 92, Movement 2



The orchestral accompaniment is more obviously based on a rock tune because of the use of drum set. When performing with the piano reduction, the tubist must do more to exaggerate the style in order for it to be obvious. By emphasizing the syncopated rhythms it is possible to direct the listeners ear to the new rock feel that is now prominent. It would also be useful for the performer to be aware of styles used in modern rock bands, specifically by the bassists. This section must not sound labored and must maintain a solid groove throughout. Bach gives several clues about the importance of this concept by writing “gently, but still rhythmic” and “(in strict time).”²³

22. Jan Bach. "Interview with Jan Bach." E-mail interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

23. Jan Bach, Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra, (Annandale, VA: Tuba Euphonium Press, 2004), 8.

CHAPTER 8

INSTANCES OF HUMOR

Jan Bach includes many instances of popular tunes in order to “lighten up” his Concerto. Another element that further supports this idea is his use of humor. Through phone conversations and emails it is obvious that he has a great sense of humor. The dedication on the first page of the piece foreshadows the humorous examples sprinkled throughout all three movements. The commission reads, “Commissioned by and respectfully dedicated to His Lowness Jay Hunsberger.”²⁴

The end of the first movement is yet another example of a personal experience from Jan Bach. Here are Bach’s comments on humor in his Concerto, specifically with regards to the last note of the first movement.

The most obvious one is the tuba’s isolated stinger at the end of the first movement; this, oddly enough, is most effective when the orchestra, soloist and conductor all “freeze” at what the audience should assume is the end of the movement until the “splat” of the final note is heard. If the conductor’s cut-off of the orchestra right before that note is too violently terminal, the effect is lost. I’m reminded of my summer at Tanglewood in 1961 and Bernstein’s cut-off of the BSO in Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony right before the Grand March that ends the last movement, prompting the huge audience in the Great Shed to burst into applause, and me jumping up to shout “It’s not over yet!”²⁵

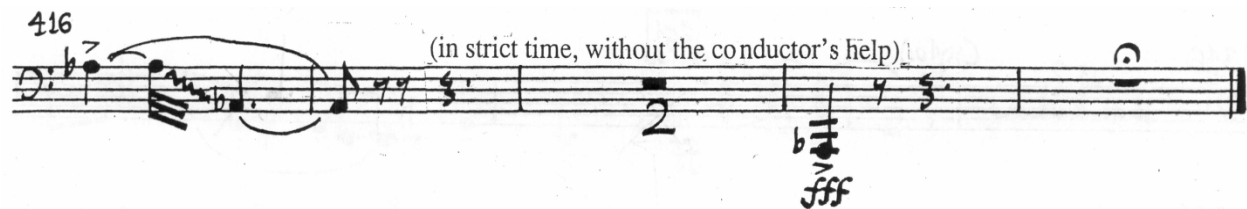
This funny story does a great deal to explain not only the intention of the last note, but also how it may be performed. The rests before the last note feel like an eternity during a performance. The only way to successfully perform this part without confusing the audience is to be an actor. The tubist and pianist must absolutely freeze and hold all of the tension in the

24. Jan Bach, *Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra*, (Annandale, VA: Tuba Euphonium Press, 2004), 1.

25. Jan Bach. "Interview with Jan Bach." E-mail interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

room. The proof of the effectiveness of this moment was Jay Hunsberger’s world premiere performance of the piece with the Sarasota Orchestra. There was audible laughter in the audience after Hunsberger plays the final “splat.”

Ex. 18, Measure 416 – 421, Movement 1:



There are other obvious instances of humor written in the directions to the performer. For example, in measure 253 of the first movement Bach writes, “Trio?”²⁶ In measure 273 of the first movement he writes, “Support the entire weight of the orchestra on your ‘virtual’ shoulders.”²⁷ In the third movement, in a very technical passage, he writes, “as legato as possible under the circumstances.”²⁸ These comedic moments are interesting because they are not necessarily obvious, or even intended to be noticed, by the audience. The performer should use these as reminders of the nature of this piece. These hints from Bach are certainly different from those found in the other serious pieces written for tuba.

In the interview, Bach continues to explain even more instances of humor.

The other jokes are closer to those of Joseph Haydn rather than P.D.Q. Bach: such things as opening riff in the timpani and its later *fff* repetition of the tuba’s opening notes; the introduction of the “Marching Machine” during the first movement, an instrument originally used for sound effects in old time radio programs; the incongruity of introducing the Moody Blues – type rock theme into the more serious idiom of the

26. *Ibid.*, 4.

27. *Ibid.*, 4.

28. *Ibid.*, 10.

second movement (and alternating with it in brief episodes at the conclusion of the movement); the more playful variations of the third movement.²⁹

From this quote we learn a great deal about the influence of humor found throughout Bach's Concerto. From the obvious late stinger note at the end of the first movement to the juxtaposition of the two styles in the second movement, Bach uses humor very regularly throughout the piece. Again, the orchestral accompaniment is much more effective in most of these examples. The piano reduction cannot accurately duplicate the sound of the marching machine or the effect of dozens of performers freezing on stage. In order to achieve these goals, the tubist and pianist must exaggerate the acting.

29. Jan Bach. "Interview with Jan Bach." E-mail interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

CHAPTER 9

AIR TUBA

Another example of the acting that is required to accomplish the comedic effect is the use of air tuba at the end of the final movement.

Ex. 19, Measure 175 – end, Movement 3

ff *Avanti!* (♩. = c. 168)

175

mf

179

(⊕) *see alternate endings below*

(begin faking it — going through the motions of playing, even when the notes get too high to play [air tuba?]).

Air guitar is a term that has been used in popular culture but air tuba is a new concept. For air tuba, the performer is required to physically act out the motions of playing the tuba. The best way to accomplish this is to act as though it is very difficult to play the air notes. Ideally, the piano plays loudly enough to make the tuba sound disappear into the extreme upper range of the instrument. As I mentioned earlier in this guide, I prefer this ending because of the additional usage of the distinctive writing found throughout the piece. However, the composer feels differently. When asked about the ending he answered:

As I believe I mentioned on the phone to you, I have gotten rid of this “air tuba” effect; it wasn’t particularly funny or memorable. I do hope that you have been working from an earlier edition of the score when the ITEA Press published it, because now the only “true” version has the tuba stopping on the downbeat of m. 180 as the upper brass take over for two measures, the piece ending on measure 185. I’m attaching the last page of the piano score to the e-mail, which also contains this letter, which I made for the Phoenix ITEA Convention around 2008, when the concerto was the final hurdle for the professional tuba soloist contest (as I remember). This measure count was also the same

on both the orchestra and band scores (yes, there is a band version!) of the concerto.³⁰

Here is the new ending included in his response:

Ex. 20, Measure 172 - 192, Movement 3:

172

175 *Avanti!* (♩. = c. 168)
mf

175 *f* *p*

179

179 *ff*

182

182 *mf* *cresc. ...* *ff*

30 Jan. Bach. "Interview with Jan Bach." E-mail interview, 10 Mar. 2014.

Interestingly, Bach also informed me of a misinformed description of the “air tuba” section found in the *Guide to the Tuba Repertoire*. The book claims, “The piece ends with a musical “tribute” to a performance by Louis Armstrong that Bach witnessed as a young man.”³¹ In my interview with Bach he claimed to have absolutely no idea where this story came from. Jan Bach never witnessed a Louis Armstrong performance and he never told anyone that the “air tuba” section had any outside influence.

This new ending, preferred by the composer, is not included in the published edition. The finalists of the 2008 International Tuba Euphonium Conference Tuba Artist Competition are the only tubists that have performed the end in this way. Jan Bach is willing to share this new ending with interested performers, but it is not included in the published parts available through Tuba-Euphonium Press. The published parts that are available continue to include the handwritten parts that are used as score examples in this guide. In fact, on the Tuba-Euphonium Press website, there is a disclaimer about the handwritten parts.

31. R. Winston Morris, and Daniel Perantoni. *Guide to the Tuba Repertoire: The New Tuba Source Book*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006) 175.

CHAPTER 10

SOLUTIONS FOR PERFORMING WITH THE PIANO REDUCTION

In my interview with the composer I mentioned that I had performed the piece in its entirety at the Great Plains Regional Tuba Euphonium Conference in May of 2013. He was intrigued by this and admitted that he has never had the opportunity to hear the piece performed with the reduction, only with orchestra accompaniment. I sent him a copy of the recording that was made from my performance and received these comments:

It was very interesting to hear it in its piano version for the first time and I thought you and the accompanist did a great job. I did think the pianist could have been a little quieter and more legato in the second movement, but hey! The condensation has a lot of notes to play, and without the colors of the orchestral instruments the inside voices sound a lot more complicated than they are. I guess the hardest thing to accomplish with the piano version is the light touch that the orchestrated version conveys. One more thing -- unless you let a lot of time elapse before the ending stinger of the first movement, it loses its humorous effect; I think I mentioned this recently, but of course too late to affect your performance.³²

The main issues in the reduction, or “condensation” as he said, are the lack of available sounds. In the orchestra version there are many instruments used from the woodwind, brass, string, and percussion sections. With the reduction, it is simply not possible to duplicate this. These issues are common with reductions and are not dissimilar to the issues in the Vaughan Williams Tuba Concerto, Edward Gregson Tuba Concerto, and most other landmark works originally written for tuba with ensemble accompaniment.

The best way to avoid losing the character of Jan Bach’s unusual Concerto is to identify the important popular tunes, exaggerate the elements of physical acting, and always keep the light-hearted nature of the piece intact regardless of the extreme technical demands. Careful

32. Jan Bach. "Interview with Jan Bach." E-mail interview. 10 Mar. 2014.

consideration of dynamics, such as the fortissimo marking during the descant line during *Do Your Ears Hang Low*, will help to priorities the complicated relationship between the tuba solo and condensed accompaniment.

The challenges in Jan Bach's Concerto should not be a deterrent to performers. By finding solutions to technical problems and gaining valuable insight from the composer directly, this guide facilitates an informed performance of this new landmark composition in the tuba repertoire.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arban, Jean Baptiste. *Arban Complete Method*. Troy, MI: Encore Music Publishers, 2000.
- Bach, Jan. "Interview with Jan Bach." E-mail interview. 10 Mar. 2014.
- Bach, Jan. *The Official Website (in fact, the only website) of Composer Jan Bach*. N.p.. Web. 10 March 2014.
- Bach, Jan. *Concerto for Tuba and Chamber Orchestra*. Annandale, VA: Tuba-Euphonium Press, 2004.
- Baines, Anthony. *Brass Instruments: Their History and Development*. New York: Dover, 1993.
- Berlioz, Hector and Richard Strauss. *Treatise on Instrumentation*. Translated by Theodore Front. New York: Dover, 1991
- Bevan, Clifford. *The Tuba Family*. England: Piccolo Press, 2000.
- Bewley, Norlan. *E♭ Tuba Fingering Chart*. 2008. Chart. www.norlanbewley.com. Web. 16 March 2014. <<http://www.norlanbewley.com/tuba/fingering-tuba-3.htm>>.
- Bewley, Norlan. *F Tuba Fingering Chart*. 2008. Chart. www.norlanbewley.com. Web. 15 March 2014. <<http://www.norlanbewley.com/tuba/fingering-tuba-5.htm>>.
- Davis, Michael. *20 Minute Warm-Up Routine*. New York: Hip-Bone Music, 2009.
- Daussat, David M. "Birth of a Modern Concerto: An Explication of Musical Design and Intention in Journey: Concerto for Contrabass Tuba and Orchestra." DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2008.
- "Do Your Ears Hang Low." *ScoutSongs.com*. Chakra Sites, Inc., n.d. Web. 15 March 2014. <<http://www.scoutsongs.com/lyrics/earshanglow.html>>.
- Fischer, Michael A. "Ralph Vaughan Williams, an Interpretive Analysis of Concerto for Bass Tuba." PhD diss., University of North Texas, 1999.
- Fredericksen, Brian. *Arnold Jacobs: Song and Wind*. Gurnee, IL: Wind Song Press, 1997.
- Morris, R. Winston and Edward R. Goldstein. *The Tuba Source Book*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Morris, R. Winston and Daniel Perantoni. *Guide to the Tuba Repertoire: The New Tuba Source Book*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006.

- Mitchell, William K. "Teaching the Bass Tuba: A Survey of Current Trends in College and University Applied Studio in the United States." DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2006.
- Nelson, Bruce. *Also Sprach Arnold Jacobs: a developmental guide for brass wind musicians*. Germany: Polymnia Press, 2006.
- Oldham, Guy, et al. "Harmonics." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50023> (accessed February 18, 2013).
- Phillips, Harvey. *Mr. Tuba*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012.
- Phillips, Harvey and William Winkle. *The Art of Tuba and Euphonium*. Los Angeles, CA: Alfred Music Publishing, 1992.
- Randolph, David. "The use of the F-tuba in the College Teaching Studio". *The TUBA Journal*. Vol. 16, No. 3, (Spring 1989): 36-39.
- Randolph, David. "The use of the F-tuba in the College Teaching Studio". *The TUBA Journal*. Vol. 16, No. 4, (Summer 1989): 25-27, 35.
- Randolph, David. "The use of the F-tuba in the College Teaching Studio". *The TUBA Journal*. Vol. 17, No. 1, (Fall 1989): 18-20, 33.
- Robert Shaw Chorale. *Sweet and Low*. RCA Victor, 195-. LP.
- Schlossberg, Max. *Daily Drills and Technical Studies for Trumpet*. New York: M. Baron Company, 1965.
- Schultz, Charles. "Two European Traditions of Tuba Playing as Evidenced in the Solo Tuba Compositions of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Paul Hindemith, a Lecture Recital with Three Recitals of Selected Works of Walter Ross, R. Beasley, A. Russell, V. Persichetti, W.S. Hartley, N.K. Brown, J.S. Bach, and others." DMA diss., University of North Texas, 1980.
- Temperley, Nicholas. "Barnby, Sir Joseph." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press. Web. 11 Apr. 2014.
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/02085>>.
- Tennyson, Alfred. "Sweet and Low, Sweet and Low, Wind of the Western Sea." *Hymnary.org*. National Endowment for the Humanities. Web. 12 March 2014.
<http://www.hymnary.org/text/sweet_and_low_sweet_and_low_wind_of_the_