

## Twenty-One Years of *The Tuba Family*

By Ronald Davis



This year marks the twenty-first anniversary of one of our most celebrated resources, *The Tuba Family* by Clifford Bevan. I remember my first encounter with this book the summer of 1979 during the Third International Tuba/Euphonium Symposium at the University of Southern California. Many phenomenal things took place that June, including this relatively quiet activity of flipping through a new book. I was in the middle of graduate studies at Bowling Green State University and was preparing to write my masters document. I had chosen my topic, but was having difficulty persuading all of my committee members that there was enough published material specifically on euphonium to justify the project. I was made painfully aware of how few specific sources we had, and I remember my introduction of *The Tuba Family* with great enthusiasm.

When I became Historian I published a call for materials to be donated to the archives, and I developed a routine of taking what came in during the year and sorting through it after my spring semester was over. This gave me most of June and July to write my yearly column. When I was sent word that Clifford Bevan was going to donate materials from *The Tuba Family* to the T. U. B. A. Archives I was moved. His selection of our organization to receive materials of such historic importance was a strong gesture of confidence in us. Cliff sent me a package over a year ago, but by the time I received it I was already composing my column, and I deferred examining his materials until this year. When I finally opened the box it took only a few moments before I was completely absorbed. It contained two complete typed manuscripts, two proofs from the publisher, and a collection of letters that help reconstruct Cliff's creative processes. A brief telephone call to

Winchester, England filled in the missing details.

The letters fall into two main groups. The first was the letters sent to publishers, museum, libraries and manufacturers seeking information or requesting permission to reproduce musical excerpts, quotations and photographs. The second group were exchanges between Cliff and the publisher, Faber and Faber, primarily with



Clifford Bevan

project editor Judith Osborne. I did not see any letters referring to the initiation of the project. Cliff told me that originally he saw a small news item in 1974, stating that a Mr. Gregory, a mathematics teacher and amateur music historian was writing a book about the

trombone but died before he could finish it. Cliff had the opportunity to meet Mrs. Gregory, who told him that her husband had also planned a book about the tuba, and perhaps Cliff would consider taking over the project. Here begins the story.

Cliff did not have a clearly conceived plan of what the book would be, and he thought for awhile before deciding. A look at the letter file shows that Cliff came up with a very clear concept in very short order. In March 1975 he sent out a barrage of letters to publishers for the rights to reproduce musical excerpts, and it is essentially the complete list of examples that appears in the book. Careful records were kept, and when initial inquiries were unanswered Cliff was quick to send follow-up letters. Of the 18 publishers contacted, 17 gave positive responses. Four companies requested copies of the final book for their files and archives. Chappell and Company was the only one asking for fees. Interesting to note that permission to reprint American composers George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein cost £3.24 each, but fees for British composer Arnold Bax cost £5.40. This was not a judgment of quality, simply a matter of territorial jurisdictions. The one negative response from a publisher came from Leeds Music and their refusal to let Cliff reprint the melody from *Tubby the Tuba*. Cliff was severely disappointed. Originally he envisioned quoting Tubby's melody underneath the Gerard Hoffnung tuba drawing on the title page, sort of a musical equivalent of the visual character. How charming! Leeds Music spoiled a wonderful idea!

A rather comical letter exchange took place with Gebruder Alexander. Cliff sent a letter, written in German, requesting the use of a picture of an Alexander oval baritone. Apparently the picture Alexander sent was an original that they needed back. The picture was somehow misplaced

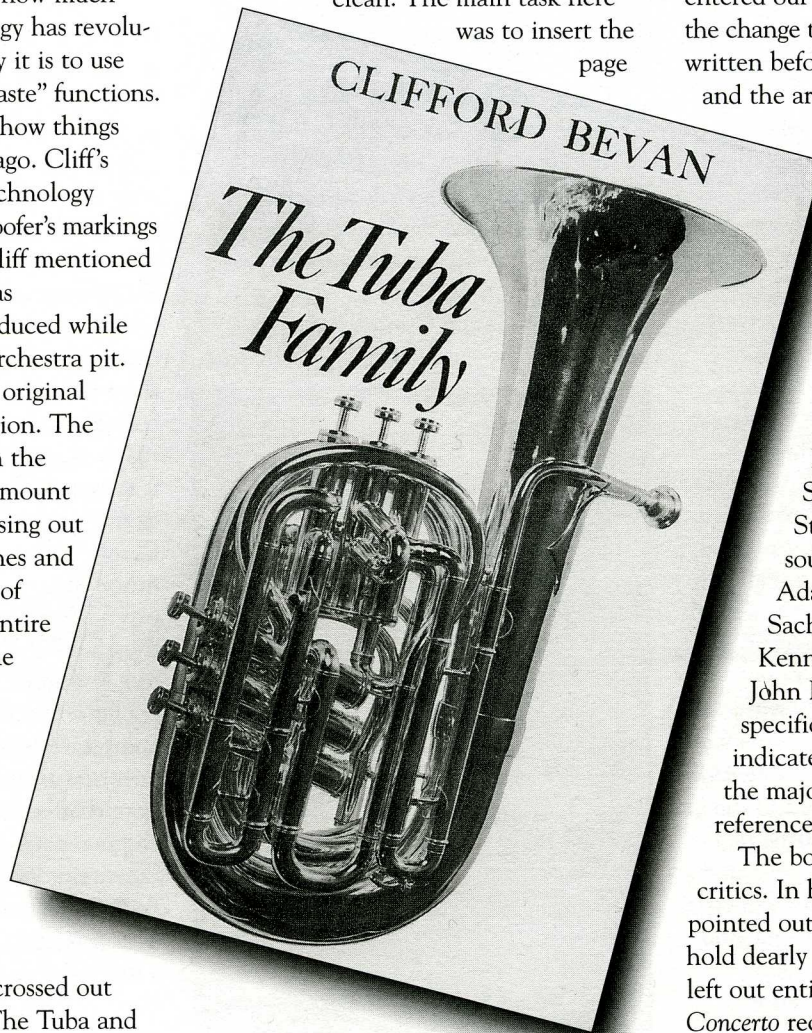
at Faber and Faber. Alexander sent two letters, written in German, respectfully requesting the return of the picture. When these two letters failed to produce the desired results Alexander sent a third, this time written in English. They must have thought that Cliff could write in German but he couldn't read it.

Going through all of these papers was also a startling reminder of how much modern computer technology has revolutionized our lives. How easy it is to use the "delete" and "cut and paste" functions. Here is a stark reminder of how things were just a few short years ago. Cliff's "state of the art" writing technology consisted of a typewriter, proofer's markings and lots of carbon paper. Cliff mentioned that the first rough draft was handwritten, most of it produced while he was sitting tacet in an orchestra pit. Unfortunately none of this original manuscript is in the collection. The first typed draft, which is in the collection, shows a heavy amount of revising, with much crossing out and writing between the lines and in the margins. In the case of more extensive rewriting, entire pages had been retyped. The second typed draft is much cleaner with a makeshift cardboard cover. The title page itself tells an interesting story. The book's original title was to be "The Tuba and Related Instruments". In black pen the words "Related Instruments" are crossed out and the title changed to "The Tuba and Its Relatives". This change is discarded and the title made more succinct, "The Tuba Family". When I mentioned to Cliff how this little detail captured my attention, he related that the episode of title changing took place when the boss of the whole thing at Faber, Donald Mitchell, said that the original title was too long. Cliff, Judith Osborne and Mr. Mitchell went to an office and discussed things until the present title evolved.

The first product from the printer is what I believe is referred to as a "galley proof," the text printed in one uninterrupted flow on 7" x 25" sheets of paper.

After examining the condition of Cliff's second typed draft I can only imagine how excited he must have felt to see how much the galley proof improved the overall the appearance of this work. It appears to have been very carefully scrutinized and slightly edited. The next step is a "page proof," essentially the finished book in loose-leaf binding. This copy is very clean. The main task here was to insert the

page



numbers of all cross-references. One letter from Faber reminds us that not so long ago times were more forgiving. "Clifford, Many thanks for sending me your corrected Index proof. I made all the corrections for which you ask, although I did not make the deletions as these would upset the whole thing. I don't think it matters very much if one or two minor entries creep in." A letter from Cliff to Faber will dispel any notions glamour in publishing. "Incidentally, do please try to persuade your designer not to use the terrible Modern type face used for The

Trombone and The Horn. It makes them look like papers on sewage design. Tell him musicians aren't engineers, however much he might think this is a technical book."

In the Summer 1979 issue of the *Journal* George Jones announced, "The book that all of tubadom has been waiting for has arrived," and *The Tuba Family* entered our consciousness. If you examine the change that took place between articles written before the book's introduction and the articles written after, we could

suggest that the year 1978 be changed to the "Year 1 ATE." To illustrate, an early article published in the *TUBA Newsletter* that included a bibliography was by Stephen Winslow, "A Historical Comparison of the Euphonium and Baritone Horn" (Vol. 5, No. 3 Spring/Summer 1978).

Stephen quotes mostly general sources: Groves Dictionary, Adam Carse, Sibyl Marcuse, Curt Sachs, Richard Franko Goldman, Kenneth Berger's biography of John Philip Sousa. The need for specific source material is clearly indicated. Since 1979 around half of the major *Journal* articles include references from *The Tuba Family*.

The book has not been without its critics. In his review George Jones pointed out that many of the works we hold dearly are mentioned only slightly or left out entirely. The Vaughan Williams *Concerto* receives a courtesy mention, and the Hindemith *Sonata* receives no attention whatsoever. Also there is little mention of all the activity taking place in the United States. Cliff agrees with the comment about the United States. He has traveled to America and has written on the subject since then. As far as leaving works out he told me that the publisher imposed a rigid restriction on the book's length. He had to make some unpleasant decisions about what to include and what to leave out. Cliff was also quick to point out that the second edition, published by Piccolo Press, will have no such restrictions. The music lists will be eliminated, since this

would only duplicate what is already monumentally documented in *The Tuba Source Book*, and this will leave more room for discussion of major works. Cliff was delighted to tell me that the second edition of *The Tuba Family* is being produced on a word processor.

A flurry of activity documented in the *Journal* in 1996 qualifies as our own *Querelle des bouffons*. The Historical Instrument Section has published a number of columns that point out that even with the acoustical and tonal deficiencies of the tuba's predecessors, a fine musician will be able to draw beautiful music from them. In one article Cliff made the satirical suggestion that valves, slides and compensating devices of modern instruments may be a big "con" trick so businesses can drive up instrument prices. Carl Ehrke wrote a vehement letter to the editor that attacked Cliff, *The Tuba Family* and the entire historical

instrument movement. Cliff was rather upset by this and planned a spirited



response. This proved to be unnecessary when a very able defense was published by Stephen Wick in the next issue.

In the original purposes for T. U. B. A. one goal was left out, formal tuba and euphonium scholarship. With low brass players pursuing graduate degrees and writing theses and dissertations, with the growing number of college faculty dealing

with "publish or perish" and establishing documentation for tenure and promotion, academic scholarship has become serious business. For twenty-one years *The Tuba Family* has assisted us greatly. It has informed, and at the same time it has entertained. This versatile little volume has served as an authoritative reference for teaching and pedagogy, literature, instrument design, orchestration and instrumentation. For all serious scholars this book is not simply important, it is essential.

*Note: This will be my last installment as Historian/Archives Liaison. I have immensely enjoyed going through the pictures, papers and ink, then letting my imagination search for our collective personality. Thank you for letting me act as the organizational conscience for four years. My sincere appreciation goes to Craig Kridel, John Taylor and Jerry Young for their guidance and support.*

— Ronald Davis

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