# FORTY YEARS ON

*Forty years on, growing older and older,*
*Shorter in wind, as in memory long.*
*Feeble of foot, and rheumatic of shoulder,*
*What will it help you that once you were strong?*

— From "Forty Years On", the school anthem of Harrow School, U.K. (founded 1572).

We usually first meet Pythagoras when learning about the square on the hypotenuse in math class, but his biographer Iamblichus's statement that before 520 B.C. Pythagoras had "reached the acme of perfection in arithmetic and music and other mathematical sciences" is probably of more interest. No doubt through his practical experience in playing the lyre, Pythagoras noticed that when the ratios of the lengths of vibrating strings were represented by whole numbers, the tones were more harmonious. If you turn to Wieprecht's patent for the Baß-Tuba you will find the same territory being explored, with the tuba as the end product... over 2,000 years later.

The Greek Aristides Quintilianus is thought to have been the first to demonstrate that the science of music includes both theory and practice, in around the third to fourth century A.D. "Practice" implies the presence of instruments, common to the work of both Pythagoras and Wieprecht, but "theory" demands conclusions based on research. However, apart from some Arab authors about 500 years later, who continued the work of the Greek theorists, there seem to have been no subsequent publications dealing with musical instruments until the mid-seventeenth century, when German composer Michael Praetorious published Syntagma Musicum in 1619 and French theorist Marin Mersenne published Harmonie Universelle in 1636. The volume of Praetorious's work entitled "Organographia" includes full descriptions of contemporary instruments, while "Theatrum Instrumentorum" has woodcuts illustrating forty-two of them. In 1776, Dr. Charles Burney's renowned General History of Music appeared, in the same year as the less highly-regarded General History of the Science and Practice of Music by Sir John Hawkins. The latter, however, includes a detailed description of the serpent along with astonishingly thorough fingering-charts.

Fast-forward again to 1881, when Eichborn's Die Trompete was published in Leipzig. This seems to have been the first publication devoted to a specific brass instrument. In 1934, Menke's *History of the Trumpet of Bach and Handel* was published in London, but there was a marked lack of other publications about specific brass instruments until 1961, when public [i.e., private] schoolmaster and amateur french horn player Robin Gregory published The Horn. Some ten years later, his obituary mentioned that he had recently completed a book about the trombone and was planning another on the tuba. As a tubist, I had tried in vain to discover information about the instrument's history and wider family so, without much hope, I volunteered my services to the publisher, Faber, on the grounds that (a) I had already compiled some information which had often been difficult to find, and (b) I had published a number of articles on other musical matters.

*The London Serpent Trio. Christopher Monk, Andrew van der Beek, Clifford Bevan*

I was in effect auditioned by being commissioned to proof-read The Trombone and compile its index. This book appeared in 1973, receiving some adverse criticism in the brass world as showing too much emphasis on the math (in the form of acoustics) and too little in some practical areas seen as important by trombonists themselves. (*The Trumpet and Trombone*, written by radio producer Philip Bate and published in 1966, was actually more comprehensive and ran into three editions.) In 1976, Faber published *Brass Instruments: Their History and Development* by Anthony Baines, sometime bassoonist who had already published a similar book on woodwind instruments and six years earlier had been appointed the first full-time curator of the Bate Collection of Musical Instruments in the University of Oxford.

The significance of this book is that its author was a professional musician who had held a post in a prominent London orchestra and worked as a teacher and conductor. Previous English-language books on instruments had been the work of writers not professionally involved in music, following a tradition of research and publication established by such Anglican clergymen as the eighteenth-century

Gilbert White, whose N*atural History & Antiquities of Selborne* established him as England's first ecologist. At a time when only a tiny minority of people benefited from a university education, the intellectual curiosity typical of a graduate and comfortable wealth typical of those who entered the Established Church gave men of that calling the stimulus and opportunities for investigating the world around them.

Another such was Canon Francis Galpin, for whom the Galpin Society for the Study of Musical Instruments is named. He collected and studied a range of instruments, publishing *Old English Instruments of Music* in 1932 and A Textbook of Modern European Instruments in 1937. In the latter he presents a useful "Bibliographic Summary" of existing works on instruments, many in European languages, but a number in English. The earliest of these is dated 1890, when both Kappey's Military Music and Rockstro's *The Flute* appeared.

In 1941, Russian-born American Nicholas Bessaraboff's *European Musical Instruments* introduced an important new word to the language. He wrote, "The creative, artistic, and scientific aspect of music might be entitled musicology. The scientific and engineering aspect of musical instruments might be entitled organology." Finally the serious study of instruments had a name, and it could stand alongside other established fields of research. The combination of prestige, and the participation of those professionally involved, at a leap conferred a new status on the study of musical instruments.

Having passed my "audition," I could now begin work on the tuba book. *The Horn* and *The Trombone* had been structured in chapters dealing with each variety of instrument, for example, "Tenor Trombone" and "Bass and Tenor-Bass Trombones." A preceding chapter covered "Baroque Trombone and Modern Copies," and a subsequent chapter dealt with "Trombone in the Orchestra." A second section (of equal length) covered "The Music."

I was fortunate at the time to be working in theatres in the West End of London, so I would spend the day at the British Library (then British Museum) and earn my living in the pit at night. For *The Tuba Family*, it soon became apparent that the historic differences between instruments were not so much based on pitch or form but geographical regions, and after dealing with "Acoustics," "Serpents, Keyed Bugles and Ophicleides," and "Valves," the preferred type of instrument and its effect on national composers (or vice-versa) were the determinants. A lengthy investigation into the nature of the cimbasso (an instrument that did not exist according to all the Italian musicologists I consulted) followed. Fortuitously, I went with the BBC Concert Orchestra to Berlin for several days and saw my first actual Wieprecht and Moritz Baß-Tuba. Later I obtained microfilm of the Baß-Tuba Patent, secured with the help of a museum curator in West Berlin and the Patents Office in East Berlin, which at the time could communicate with each other only by a complex series of phone calls circumnavigating both countries.

Faber, and its American partner, Scribner, produced a very striking book, I suppose one of the last to be printed letterpress, with a half-tone section on art

## A Short Autobiography from Clifford Bevan

Clifford James Bevan. BMus (London), PhD (London, Music History), FLCM (Composition), LRAM (Trombone, Performers), ARCM (Theoretical Music). Born Manchester, England 1934. Played Eb horn in brass band conducted by father, then trombone; later also in amateur orchestras and jazz bands while apprentice compositor and then printers' reader. 1956-60 Royal Academy of Music, London: Trombone (Sidney Langston) and Composition (Howard Ferguson). 1960 first published article. 1960-61 freelance; 1st Trombone Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet; 1961-64 pianist and chief arranger, The Temperance Seven. (Several UK Charts entries, including Number 1). 1964-72 Tuba, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; 1967-70 also Orchestra Manager; 1970-72 also General Manager, Manchester Mozart Orchestra. 1970 first published composition. From 1971 music publishing as MGP, later Piccolo Press, including music books. 1972-75 freelance London (tuba and euphonium), symphony, opera and theatre orchestras, big bands, sessions. Decided that playing with the Mike Gibbs Band (jazz-rock) was the ultimate for a tuba-player. 1975-78 Music & Dance Officer, Southern Arts Association; member ACGB Music Panel Jazz Sub-Committee; music columnist Entertainment & Arts Management. 1978 first edition of The Tuba Family. Freelance (low brass, including cimbasso), teaching, examining, research, writing, lecture-recitals, master-classes; member London Serpent Trio and gave first-known full-length ophicleide recital. From 1993 Joint Historical Instruments Editor, ITEA Journal. Ten published books, plus compositions and arrangements. Compositions include music for TV, stage and film. Contributor to New Grove Dictionaries of Music, Musical Instruments and Jazz, along with Tuba Source Book amongst others. Recipient Manchester Typographical Society Award 1955; Edward Hecht and Oliviera Prescott Prizes (Composition) 1956-60; HBS Christopher Monk Award 2008; ITEA Lifetime Achievement Award 2010. Personal highspots: 2008 Clifford Bevan Award for Excellence in Research established by ITEA; Carnegie Hall concert with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; filming in Cinecittà Studios, Rome with Temperance Seven; ophicleide with Grimethorpe Brass Band and Orquesta do Porto; euphonium at Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and in Royal Artillery Band recordings; conducting band of 59 serpent-players at St John's, Smith Square, London. Most pleasing? When he was told that an extract from his article "Brass Band Contests: art or sport?" had appeared as the comprehension test in a national examination board's English Language Advanced Level Paper. Stopped playing and teaching brass aged 80 owing to a trapped nerve in the back, but piano-playing is improving and ambition achieved: now volunteer with Watercress Line, heritage steam railway. Still researches and writes (watch this space) with three more books in preparation.

paper. And the publicity department did an amazing job. Serious interest in low brass was also emerging elsewhere, with the formation in 1973 of TUBA (was there ever a smarter acronym?) and the featuring of articles on the tuba in The Instrumentalist in February that year.

With an increasing amount of research into low brass, much more was also being discovered about the historical precedents of modern brass winds. Twenty years later the amount of new information available demanded a revision of *The Tuba Family*. The explosion of organological publishing by mainstream publishers in the 1970s had obviously been no more than that, and they had moved on to lucrative pastures new. I had set up a modest venture to publish music for brass many years earlier and it became clear that any new edition of The Tuba Family would have to appear from Piccolo Press. (Incidentally, an explanation of the name is due: Piccolo Press obviously because it published music for low brass. The logo was pp (pianissimo) compared to Faber & Faber's ff (fortissimo): all a matter of scale.)

The book's role in encouraging low brass scholarship has probably been of greater importance than the publication itself. In one respect, the second edition was less comprehensive than the first in not containing a repertoire list. But this omission had been dealt with in a truly comprehensive way when Morris and Goldstein's *The Tuba Source Book* appeared in 1996. This also included a directory, as did Bone and Paull's *Guide to the Euphonium Repertoire*, published nine years later. (Both books have since been updated.)

The founding of the Historic Brass Society in 1988 and the establishment by Craig Kridel and ITEA of The Clifford Bevan Award for Excellence in Research twenty years later provided stimuli for further investigations into low brass. Winners of the Award have come from many countries and covered many aspects of our instruments, including the micro-tonal tuba (revolutionary yet closely based on the theories of Wieprecht and Pythagoras), the work of Adolphe Sax (conceiver of the idea of a complete matching brass family, and a craftsman sufficiently skilled to prove his theories through practice), an assessment of the euphonium as cello of the wind band (accepted as its original function, but equally valid in the very different music played 160 years after its invention), an investigation into the French serpent, prototype for all the variants that were to follow, and an immensely detailed comparisons of tubas manufactured by a prominent maker over a period of some sixty years. But there are many other researchers and students whose work has enriched our knowledge of low brass. Often their contributions have appeared in the *ITEA Journal*, the perfect medium for dissemination of these new ideas and for the encouragement of others to follow in their footsteps.

Occasionally I think that there is no more to discover. Although our family of valved bugle-horns may be one of the largest groups of musical instruments ever known, their study is restricted to a very small percentage of the world's population. *ITEA Journal* is not only ideal for spreading the word, it is also the ideal platform for someone to ask those in the tuba/euphonium community to carry on thinking, to engage in exploring, and to be generous in communicating their discoveries to a low brass world eager to learn more.

***Forty years on, growing wiser and wiser,***
***Probing the secrets of things that we blow,***
***We're learning more. So now, aiming high, sir,***
***It's up to us: there is still more to know.***

— "Anthem of Low Brass Researchers" (2018).