

**“Playing Heavy Metal”: A Comparative Study of
the Role of the Tuba in the Orchestra, Brass Band
and Wind Ensemble**

Submitted by

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Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968

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Abstract

As an Australian tuba player, I draw on my experiences as a member of orchestra, brass band and wind ensemble in my country. Through my experiences in filling the required roles expected of the tuba player in each ensemble type, I noticed how the roles differed from each other, and that they impacted on my own approach to performing in ensembles. To that end, I detailed the differences between the roles and compared them to each other

This thesis comprises an exploration of this subject, based on study of tuba scoring and instrumentation through methods of orchestration as well as scores for each type of ensemble. From my reading of texts, theses and journal articles that covered tuba/brass playing within these ensemble types as well as performance in general, I noticed that there was not a great deal of literature highlighting the differences of the tuba's role comparing one ensemble type to another. My research found that due to the tuba's role in each ensemble type, it gives the tuba player a set of individual skills and abilities that can positively affect their performance in the other ensemble types, and these different skills can complement each other. As a result, the tuba player who performs in each ensemble type gleans skills that can be beneficial in other ensemble types. This is particularly useful for the aspiring professional tuba player, as they can use the skills they have learned to perform as a more flexible and sound musician.

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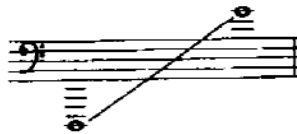
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Glossary

There are a number of terms used within this thesis that will require definition due to the confusing synonymous nature of words, titles and phrases used in music and these ensembles.

Tuba:

- The tuba can be referred to in a number of ways in ensembles. It is not uncommon to see parts written for '*Bass-tuba*', '*Contrabass-tuba*', '*tuba*', '*bombardon*'. These terms refer to what is essentially the same instrument).
- A typical example of the range of the tuba is the following:

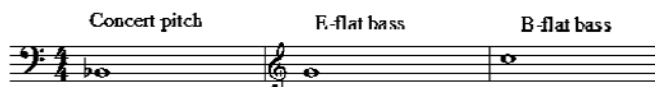


Orchestra:

- *Orchestra*, *Symphony orchestra*, *philharmonic orchestra* are, unless specified, synonymous with a musical ensemble comprising strings, woodwind, brass and percussion sections.

Brass Band:

- *Brass band* is a musical ensemble consisting principally of brass instruments – cornets (one soprano in E-flat, the rest in B-flat), flugelhorn, tenor horns, baritones, euphoniums, trombones, basses (see below) and percussion.
- By tradition, brass bands refer to the tuba as '*bass*' (eg. 'E-flat bass' instead of 'E-flat tuba'). In brass bands the word '*bass*' is synonymous with '*tuba*' and there are some performers/conductors who will refer to the instrument as '*tuba*', however in scores and instrumentation it is called '*bass*.' Brass band tuba parts are written in transposed treble clef based on the pitch of the instrument (i.e. E-flat bass parts are in E-flat transposed treble clef):



Wind Ensemble:

- *Wind ensemble, wind band, concert band, military band, [symphonic] wind orchestra* are in this thesis synonymous for an ensemble consisting of woodwind, brass and percussion sections (with a double bass and occasionally cello section also scored). These terms have slightly different meanings ensemble-wise (in general more to do with the number of players than the instrumentation) but are essentially the same ensemble:
- *Wind ensemble* - 1 player per part (with the exception of clarinet sections where the numbering is usually 2-3 per part. Example: Eastman Wind Ensemble)
- *Military band* – usually a professional ensemble of the armed forces. Similar in number of members as a wind ensemble
- *Concert band/wind band* – Generic term for the ensemble type
- *[Symphonic] wind orchestra* - Usually 80+ or 120+ players total in the ensemble. Commonly found in Europe e.g. in Spain.
- In some cases, wind ensemble repertoire will refer to the tuba as ‘bass’ rather than ‘tuba’ in the score and on the parts, though this is practice is not very common, especially when there is a double bass scored which can also be referred to simply as ‘bass’ and cause confusion. This occurs more so in older works for the ensemble, and is rare to observe in works post 1945.

General:

- Single/double/triple tonguing: Articulation techniques. Single tonguing is when the player uses a constant “T” syllable to start the note, using the front part of the tongue; double tonguing is an alternation of “T” and “K” syllables to start the note, using the front and the back of the tongue to articulate the beginnings of notes and allowing the player to play notes at a faster rate; triple tonguing uses an alternation of “T-K-T” syllables. Double and triple tonguing are used when the performer has to play faster than mere single tonguing articulation will allow.

Definition of terms used in this thesis:

- “m” or “mm”: Measure reference in musical works. E.g. “Mozart, Symphony No 40, mm. 1-12”
- The following system of pitch notation is used in this thesis:

