ADVANCED ROUTINE AND TECHNICS FOR TUBA

Paul W. Haugen

A number of my students have asked me to write a book on how to approach playing the tuba. They have regularly stated that no method of instruction exists that is specifically geared to high school and college age students. One either finds standard "Beginning Band" books or methods with, at best, scanty explanatory text. These students are the inspiration for this book. I hope it fulfills their needs and the needs of other students seeking to play the tuba in an artistic manner.

Paul W. Haugen 1977
Forward

It is most important that the tubist views himself first as a musician -- and then as a tubist. There is no reason whatsoever that the tubist should not be regarded on an equal basis with violinists, trumpeters or pianists. Often times the tubist has brought about a distorted concept of the tuba as a musical instrument by his own failure to develop himself as a well rounded musician. There is much more to tuba playing than a "loud-soft-low-high-fast" approach to playing. I have compiled the music in this volume as an example of the different techniques and styles of music that every serious tubist should master. It represents in no way a "complete method" nor does it cover aspects of playing such as multiple tonguing, modern music or orchestral excerpts. It is simply intended to give the tubist an introduction into different methods of practice and how to approach varying musical styles.

Paul W. Hanson
Section I - Foundation to Playing

The Singing Style

I feel that the most important concept of playing any musical instrument is the development of a vocal approach to playing. Music is an extension of vocal communication, and one should keep in mind that our primary purpose in music is to communicate some idea or thought. The key to success on the tuba is the development and application of the singing style. One can vocalize even the most barbaric of musical styles effectively. Considering the full potential of the human voice and its limitless possibilities, this is self explanatory. The tubist should mentally establish how an accomplished operatic basso would sound singing his music with the syllable "TAH". This concept will bring out the vocal element in the tuba tone and project a clear, resonant sound. Vocally approaching music will help the student escape from getting that "muddy" or "fluffy" tone quality so notoriously common among tubists and greatly enhance musical style.
Simplifying Respiration

Breathing and use of air is always of great concern among tubists—and for good reason. Failure to breathe properly and move large quantities of air on the tuba is almost always noticeable. The student constantly hears such advice as, "Breathe from the diaphragm", "Breathe with your chest" or "Expand your stomach and don't raise your shoulders." One could go on for hours examining the do's and don'ts of breathing presented in various wind instrument method books and overlook the simplicity of the whole matter. **The function of proper breathing is Movement of Air.** I suggest that one works with this in mind rather than trying to go through the unlimited gymnastics of breathing a given way. No two teachers seem to agree on what should happen with the body when a wind instrumentalist breathes.

I advocate a **tonal approach to inhalation.** There is no reason that inhalation should be separate from our total view of performance. The tubist's inhalation should sound like a full, beautiful note from his most resonant tuba register and possess all the qualities of the musical tone he wishes to produce with that inhalation. The syllable "haw" or "aw" seems to meet with the greatest success. Care must be taken to breathe through the corners of the mouth and not to open the jaw too wide. At times when the student can not hear his inhalation (such as playing in an ensemble that obscures the sound of his breathing with its volume) he can rely on the feel of a great quantity of air rushing into his mouth. Making the mouth the focal point of inhalation is of great assistance in moving great quantities of air at fast speeds. If air moves into one's
mouth it must go somewhere - and more often than not one will find himself moving greater quantities of air with less effort than previously experienced. It is important to remember that the student can go through all the physical motions of breathing (such as expanding his stomach and chest) and take on very little or no air at all. Make the sound of air do the work when breathing.

Formation and Development of Embouchure

Little needs to be said about embouchure on the tuba. Finding a well-centered place on the mouth is probably the only prerequisite to development of a fine embouchure. It seems that more variation exists among tubists' embouchures than among the embouchures of any other wind instrument. Some players have even had success with puffed cheeks although it is safe to say one usually compromises on tone quality with such a practice. The best way to develop a good looking embouchure is to develop a good sounding embouchure. Embouchure is more an effect of good playing and sound than the cause of it. It is not uncommon to see good looking embouchures that sound terrible and terrible looking embouchures that sound good.

Development of Rudimental Playing Techniques

I believe in establishing a very basic approach to the building up of playing techniques. The tubist should never attempt music so far beyond his ability that it damages the important fundamentals of playing. It is not uncommon to find the tubist who can play proficiently in the high and low extremes of his instrument experiencing great difficulty
executing a simple slurred passage in the middle register. Such a musician has overlooked the most important facet of his performance - that a solid middle register is the fundamental basis for solid playing. Eighty percent of the tubists playing occurs within the two octaves of a Bb scale in the middle register. For this reason (as well as the physical detriment of extended practice of register extremes) I advocate spending the greater part of one's practice perfecting the techniques of playing in the middle range. Perfecting the fundamental techniques of playing is of extreme importance as it is the basis for all playing. Those techniques learned in the middle register can later be transferred to the upper and lower register of the instrument. Brass players should always strive to carry the ease of middle register playing into their upper and lower registers, and to match tone quality throughout all registers. A "TET-AH-TET" approach to the three registers almost invariably leads to a round unprojected low range, acceptable middle range and a thin sounding upper range. Uniform tone quality throughout all registers can't be stressed enough, and the use of diction with the syllable "TET" can be effectively used throughout the entire range of the tuba.
Section II - Warm-Up and Tonal Development

The Warm-Up

A warm-up should prepare one mentally as well as physically for the day's practice and/or performance. I believe that the fundamentals of tone production should be approached every day in a basic mouthpiece exercise that establishes one's mental "set" for the time to be spent on the instrument. Before ever picking up the mouthpiece one's head should be filled with tuba sound and an idea of the tone quality one wishes to produce with his instrument. Once the student has a sufficient mental concept of the tone he wishes to achieve he may take the mouthpiece and do this simple exercise.

Example #1
THROUGHOUT THE TONE BUILDING EXERCISES THE CROSSED NOTE (EXAMPLE #1) REPRESENTS A TONALLY ORIENTED BREATH

WARM-UP EXERCISE #1

"TAH"

mf
Care should be taken that the inhalation sounds relaxed and free, and that the B♭ sounds as close as possible to the singing of the same note with the syllable "TAB". The student should never settle for anything less than what he thinks is his best effort before continuing on to the next exercise.

This exercise expands outward slightly and orients one's ear to pitch. Care should be taken to achieve proper intonation as well as striving to produce the vocal element in the tone.

Example #2
WARM-UP EXERCISE #2

simulate

"TAH"

\( \text{Tempo: 80 (Beamed)} \)
Exercises "1 And "2 cover the most basic of playing techniques - a process of:

1.) Mentalization of Tone
2.) Full Relaxed Breathing
3.) Production of Tone

Once the tubist has these three steps under control, he is ready to proceed to a series of improvisations on the mouthpiece. Ten or fifteen minutes of mid-register playing spent on simple tunes such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" or Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" should be sufficient. The tubist should strive to communicate the musical idea of these simple tunes and stylistically match his own singing of them. It is often a helpful concept to think of the words of these tunes rather than concentrate on precise "TAH" diction at this point in a warm-up. Exercise "2 and some simple mouthpiece "singing" should be a sufficient warm-up for the bulk of one's playing on the tuba. Keep in mind that a warm-up is ninety percent mental and ten percent physical. No one should have to warm up for an hour before playing.
Tonal Development Exercises

The following exercises are helpful for covering some of the more difficult aspects of playing the tuba. They can be done on the mouthpiece as well as the instrument, and should be improvised upon and altered to suit the needs of each individual.
This is an exercise for expanding range and developing tone quality. The student should never attempt going beyond the point of relaxed, comfortable playing when playing this exercise. The student will find that week after week progress will be made until he can comfortably do the whole exercise. Concentrate on a singing and consistent tone quality throughout all the registers of this exercise and play it with a variety of rhythms, articulations and dynamic levels.
This exercise is for developing a smooth legato technic throughout the middle range of the tuba. It is particularly helpful in developing an embouchure devoid of the "break" common among hornists and occasionally found among tubists. Try to make it sound musically as well as technically convincing. This exercise can also be used as part of a warm-up.

Example #4
This exercise develops proper use of the tongue in more accelerated speeds of articulation. It is important to remember when tonguing that the tongue only acts as a valve opened and closed on an over-flowing air stream and does not in itself produce notes. Too often does one hear tubists who blow each note separately, or articulate with their breath combined with a heavy tongue. Try to keep a steady air flow when practicing this exercise. The tongue should strike the roof of the mouth in the same place as if one were to say "TA" while speaking. The tongue should never touch the lips or extend between the lips -- even in the extreme low register. Strive for a steady, metric tempo and consistent articulation in all registers of the exercise.

Exercise 4A
Every day's practice should include some work on the twelve major scales. Although there are theoretically many keys, we can safely say that one rarely finds keys of more than 6 flats or 5 sharps in most music written for the tuba. Play these scales with various articulations and at different tempos. Never practice at so fast a tempo that you can't clearly distinguish pitch. Technic that lacks clarity is worthless.
(Example 4B Scale)

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{D = 80 - } D = 120 \\
(\text{Breath}) 3
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{2 octave scales}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{Fine}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{Chromatic Scale}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{IE. Shape ascending - flat to ascending}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{etc.}
\end{array} \]

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{This scale pattern can be expanded to a four octave Bb scale. When used as such, it is also a valuable range extender.}
\end{array} \]
Section III - Technical and Musical Development

Études

The following studies are selected from the literature of the cornet, horn, trombone and tuba and represent various musical styles that every serious tubist should be familiar with. Some deal with the difficulties of brass instruments and others with varied styles of interpretation.
This is a Kopprasch etude designed to bring about clean slurring and consistent tone quality in the middle range of the tube. It is particularly helpful to those experiencing difficulty in keeping a uniform sound in all registers. Don't settle for anything less than smooth slurs and a clear, consistent tone quality. Play this etude at all dynamic levels - from minimum pianissimo to maximum fortissimo. "Forte" is Italian for big - not loud. Strive to achieve the same quality of tone while playing fortissimo as the tone quality while playing a comfortable Mezzo-forte. Volume is the key word to louder dynamics. Try to think of fortissimo as a greater amount of tone rather than a different sounding tone.

Exercise #5 - Kopprasch #21  \( \text{\textit{d.80}} \)
This is a Kopprasch etude good for the development of consistent tone quality and uniform articulation. Try to carry the resonance of the low G into the upper ranges of the etude. This should be played in a number of different transpositions. Although not often called upon to do transposition, the tubist should nonetheless master it to a certain degree. Play this exercise at all dynamic levels, taking care to maintain the same quality of tone at all times. Also practice with various articulations.

Ex  Kopprasch #20 IN C
This Kopprasch etude is a study in tone and decrescendo. Try to play the gruppetto smoothly and lightly.

Ex #7 Kopprasch #10

with gruppetto diagram
When played at a slow speed, this Kopprasch etude is useful for strengthening tone quality in the upper register of the tuba. Transfer the middle register tone quality of this exercise all the way up to the Eb. Don't settle for a thin sound in the upper range. The tone should always be full and solid. Much of the success in the high range depends upon maturation of facial muscles. Don't let initial failure in getting a solid high range be discouraging. Many times the high register will simply develop with age. It is a good idea not to spend long periods of time on this particular exercise as extended high range practice can be detrimental to the middle register. Always keep middle register tone quality on the top of your priorities as a tubist.

Ex #8 - Kopprasch #9  \( \dot{f}=60 \)
This Kopprasch etude is an excellent study for developing reading ability. Play it at a tempo where it is a challenge, but never past the point where each pitch can be clearly heard. Never settle for muddy technic.

(Example #9)
The dotted eighth - sixteenth is the most commonly misplayed of rhythms among even the finest musicians. When playing dotted eighth-sixteenths the musician must always have sixteenth notes clicking off in his head as if there were a metronome there. With the exception of jazz music, dotted eighth-sixteenth figures should never be played as triplets. It is helpful to give the sixteenth of the dotted eighth-sixteenth figure a bit of a "kick" so they match the strength of the dotted eighths. Strive for rhythmic accuracy in this etude by Kopprasch.
This etude by Vladislav Blazhevich exploits some of the lyrical potential of the tuba. Play it at a slow tempo and settle for nothing but the smoothest legato possible.

Andante cantabile  (EXAMPLE #11)  

BLAZHEVICH

expressivo

poco rall.
This Gallay etude is good for developing a brilliant fanfare style. Play it as flashy as possible with a full tone and light articulation. Don't settle for automatically playing heavier when you increase dynamics.

Ex #12 - Blue Book pp.60 (in D #)
This is a short work by J. S. Bach. Play it as you think a fine cellist would, and try to communicate a musical message.

Ex #13  Blue Book pp. 46  Siciliana  - Eb
EXAMPLE 4.13
Siciliano

J.S. Bach

[Staff notation of a musical piece]
This study by Pauvert is excellent for developing rhythmic and tonal accuracy. Play it in a musical style and tempo similar to a Rondo from a Beethoven symphony. When played to tempo, the use of double tonguing will be necessary. Be sure when double tonguing that the vowel "AAH" remains constant throughout. Conscious effort to play "TAH-KAH" will help you escape from a weaker sound on double-tongued figures.

Ex #14 - Blue Book pp. 108 in/C
This study by H. Cugel is for extending and developing the low register of the tuba. It should be played as vocally as possible with much attention paid to intonation. Definition of pitch in the low register is difficult for those not accustomed to hearing low pitches. It is often helpful to listen for the overtones of lower pitches and use them as a tool for developing intonation. A sound rich in overtones as well as the fundamental helps to make the tuba sound more colorful and is highly desirable.

This exercise is also useful for developing full inhalation. Practice of relaxed, free breathing is all too often neglected by brass players. It is helpful to take as much time as necessary to breath relaxed, full breaths while practicing. Although this may break up the tempo of the music being practiced, it is a good way to develop proper breathing habits that carry over into one's performance. Try to match the sound of inhalation with that of the tuba. Breathe fully - even if it means delaying the first beat of each bar slightly.

Ex #15 - Blue Book p.107 in E's basso
This Blazhevich study is useful in improving low register articulation. Although the tubist may find clean articulation in the low register difficult at first, it is nonetheless a very important element of tuba playing that cannot be overlooked. With practice, it should not really be as difficult to master as one would expect. Be sure to hear it in your head before playing. This is a most important concept of brass playing. Don't settle for anything less than duplicating your most perfect mental concept at all times.

Ex #16 -- Blazhevich Book II #52 p. 17
Section IV -- Practice in the Basics of Playing

I firmly believe that daily practice of the basic elements of playing the tuba is necessary for development as a musician. The following exercises are selected and transposed from Arban's famous "Method for the Cornet" - a book invaluable to any brass player's building of technic. The exercises selected represent elements of the most basic technical and musical nature. Though not particularly difficult, one can literally spend years of practice developing and perfecting them. Care should be taken in regard to articulation, tone quality, intonation, rhythmic accuracy and above all - musicality. Never settle for a musically bland rendering of any music; no matter how simple or poorly composed. Music played without emotional feeling is as interesting as a lecture by a speaker with a monotone voice. It is always important to remember that our goal in music is to convey a message.
Use these exercises to perfect articulation and a rapid entrance of tone. Settle for nothing less than clean, even articulation and a full singing tone.
Keeping the goals of the preceding exercises in mind, proceed on to these exercises and add rhythmic accuracy to your objectives. Particular care should be taken to play the dotted eighth-sixteenth rhythms accurately.

Arban p. 30 #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, p. 31 #9, p. 32 #11, 12
p. 33 #13, 14, 15, p. 34 #16, p. 35 #19, 20
p. 36 #22, p. 37 #24, 25, p. 38 #27
p. 39 #28, p. 40 #30, 31, p. 41 #33, 34
In Closing

Much music for the tuba is being written and compiled each year. The tubist should have music that deals with legato and articulated playing as well as solo literature such as the Hindemith and Alec Wilder sonatas and Vaughn Williams' "Concerto for Basstuba and Orchestra". Due to the efforts of certain individuals and the "Tubists Universal Brotherhood Association" (T.U.B.A.) many fine compositions and study methods have recently been written or are in preparation. Nonetheless, the ability to transpose music down an octave from trombone music and read in the treble clef from trumpet and horn music opens up a whole new world of literature for the serious tubist. Development of technic and style similar to that of the horn and trumpet will not only be of musical satisfaction to the tubist but an incentive for composers to treat our instrument in a more serious manner as well. I feel that those students now studying the tuba will have the opportunity within their careers as musicians and educators to see the tuba treated as a musical instrument for the first time in history. I sincerely feel that when that time comes, those of us playing the tuba will have earned that right many times over.
Paul Haugan began his study of the tuba in Madison in 1967 at Cherokee Junior High School. While in high school, Paul was a member of the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra, and attended the Tanglewood and Aspen music festivals. In 1972 he was a member of Leopold Stokowski's "American Youth Orchestra" and received a "University of Wisconsin Summer Music Clinic" scholarship for study at the U.W. Madison. After a semester at the University, he was offered a full tuition room and board scholarship to the "Institute of Advanced Musical Studies" in Montreux, Switzerland. After two months of study, Paul auditioned for the Nuremberg Philharmonic Orchestra and at age 18 became the youngest American ever to work in the Federal Republic of Germany as an orchestral musician. While in Germany, he substituted in the Bamberg, Coburg, Freiburg, Regensburg, and Wurzburg symphonies as well as the well-known Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra. As a member of the Nuremberg Philharmonic and Nuremberg Philharmonic Brass Ensemble, he has toured extensively and played for audiences throughout Europe. In 1976 Paul became a member of the Chicago Brass Ensemble, an active brass quintet in the Chicago and midwest area. He has been a member of the Chicago Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, has played in Chicago's Lyric Opera and has also substituted for Arnold Jacobs in the world-acclaimed Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Paul is currently a member of the Madison Symphony Orchestra and is active as a substitute and extra player in the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. He is a founding member of the "Madison Brass" quintet and has also been active playing tuba in the Madison jazz and blues scene since 1981. His teachers have included Chester Schmitz of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Abraham Torchinsky of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Robert Tucci of the Bavarian State Opera Orchestra, Klaus-Jochem Sordel of the Bavarian Radio Symphony, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Arnold Jacobs, who is recognized as the world's foremost authority on the subject of respiration in music. Paul performs on the German "Bass tuba in F", an instrument infrequently used in the United States but popular with German Orchestral musicians.