



THE INTERNATIONAL WIND BAND CONTEST «CITY OF VALENCIA» AS HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE: ANALYSIS OF THE INNOVATIVE PERFORMED REPERTOIRE FROM THE TUBA CHAIR

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ABSTRACT: The role that composers have granted to the tuba within their works for symphonic wind band has undergone a great evolution since the end of the last century, which is reflected in a greater presence of solos and other outstanding excerpts for this instrument. This article aims to make a first approach to the bulk of symphonic wind band repertoire from the part of the tuba, with the aim of searching, selecting and analysing the most outstanding excerpts, and presenting an innovated proposal compilation. Since this work belongs to a larger research, it establishes a beginning from the study of the composers and their most performed works in a special event which represents a milestone in the Valencian musical culture: the International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia».

KEY WORDS: *Tuba; Symphonic wind band; Symphonic band repertoire; International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia»; Solo excerpt.*

1. INTRODUCTION

From the first pieces written for band at the end of the 19th Century to the great symphonic works of the 21st Century, passing through the entire 20th Century, the symphonic band has undergone a very important evolution and expansion in many ways, above all, in terms of organology and repertoire performed. In this sense, it has also unfolded a new potential as far as concrete writing for the instruments is concerned and the tuba has been no exception. It has now established itself as a solo instrument on a par with any other in the symphonic ensemble, for which composers have dedicated extensive and virtuosic “solo” passages. And what better stage to show it than the International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia» (CIBM).

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During the 19th Century, the most important characteristics that stand out in how composers treated the tuba in their works are aspects such as the register, where the voice of the tuba is basically kept within the staff, which turns out to be like a 4th trombone that doubles other instruments. Do not forget that the most immediate predecessors of the tuba are the serpentone and the ophicleide, which played the lowest voice in the instrumental ensembles (bass) and its tessitura was not as low as it was later achieved with the tuba (Bevan, 1978). A work in which this writing for tuba can be appreciated is *Valencianes* (1909) by Eduardo López-Chavarri (1871-1970), chosen by the organization of the International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia» as a compulsory work for the special section B in 1985. Other examples are: Amilcare Ponchielli's (1834-1886) *Sinfonia per banda* (1872), performed as a free choice work in the 3rd section of the 2000 edition of the CIBM, where below the woodwind instruments only the tuba is heard doubling the voice of the horns; and Salvador Giner's (1832-1911) *El Festín de Baltasar* (1893), with fragments where the tuba doubles the melody of the low woodwind instruments (bassoon and bass clarinet).

The compositions for band of the first half of the 20th Century represent for the tuba an evolution as far as its individuality is concerned, that is to say, the authors not only have the tuba as the main rhythmic-harmonic support, but they also write outstanding passages of certain technical difficulty. As an example, we can mention the Joaquin Rodrigo's (1901-1999) work performed at the CIBM, *Per la Flor del Liri Blau* (1934), and *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937) by Percy A. Grainger (1882-1961), which also introduces interventions marked as "solo" and doubles the tuba line in two octaves, achieving greater sonorous depth.

In the second half of the 20th Century, the tuba continues to acquire greater prominence within the symphonic ensemble and to develop in the aspects mentioned above, while the band's staff continues to expand. From the 60's onwards, the most important increase in original literature for band up to that moment took place, which has not stopped growing exponentially since then. In this period it is very difficult to cite specific works, so any piece by David Maslanka (1943-2017), James Barnes (1949-), Eric Whitacre (1970-), John Mackey (1977-), Bert Appermont (1973-), Philip Sparke (1951-), Mario Bürki (1977-), Franco Cesarini (1961-), José Suñer or Teo Aparicio, just to name a few. All of them played in the International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia».

In this 21st Century, the tuba has joined the writing of emerging musical currents, such as randomness and other new languages, which have expanded its possibilities, not only soloistic, but also in groups. This can be seen represented in the repertoire of the CIBM with works such as *Ghost Train* (1995) by Eric Whitacre (1970-) or *Màscares* (2017) by Voro Garcia (1970-), for example.

At the same time, the tuba has established itself as a soloist instrument at the level of any other in the symphonic band, for which composers have dedicated extensive and virtuosic "solo" passages, extracting from it all its lyrical-expressive potential and an amazing versatility in different planes (register, dynamics, character, etc.). Some

of these composers have even given prominence not only to one tuba, but on several occasions to two or even three of them. Works by Gregory Fritze (1954-), Ferrer Ferran (1966-) or Francisco Tamarit (1941-) clearly show some examples that will be discussed below.

An innovative study: collection of excerpts for tuba

The following study aims to make a first approach to the symphonic repertoire for band from the tuba part, in order to search, select and analyze the most outstanding fragments, and to present a proposal for classification, given the great void that exists in the literature for this instrument in this field. Since the work belongs to a larger research, a beginning is established from the study of the composers and their most performed works within the context of the International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia», which represents a reference in the musical culture, not only in Valencia, but around the world.

For this, some previous studies will be marked, on which this research is supported and promoted, what objectives it pursues and from which hypothesis it starts. Then, the work process carried out will be commented and, finally, what results are extracted from all this, as well as the approach of possible future research.

Related work: The theoretical framework

The studies carried out by the same team of researchers who signed this research (Monteagudo, Carrascosa and Hernández; 2019 and 2020), the rest of the existing works on the repertoire performed in the International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia» are, or very specific in some cases, on the participation of a certain band (Oriola, 2014); not very significant in others, with a merely narrative approach to its general history (Astruells, 2001); and in all, incomplete, collecting research on the repertoire performed in a short period of time, between 1886 and 1897, (Asensi, 2013). Only one previous book has been found, edited in two volumes, which reviews everything that happened in the CIBM until 2011, including the repertoire (Ruiz, 2011), but now in 2021 it is also incomplete.

Regarding the works that study the classification of the repertoire for band, in general, and those that do so from the part of an instrument in particular, we present below those selected in four large groups:

- First, the studies on the repertoire for symphonic band, specifically, those that focus their research on what works to compile and how to classify them. Of particular note is Towner's study presented in 2011 which updates the earlier one by Gilbert in 1993 and the first one by Ostling in 1978.
- Secondly, the studies that collect excerpts of works for band by instruments other than the tuba, such as flute, trumpet, saxophone or bass clarinet, among others.

Averett's work in 2010, which collects 586 trumpet excerpts in works for wind band of the twentieth century, stands out as outstanding.

- Then, the studies on tuba band excerpts. This group is the one that most interests the research and where the great lack of scientific material has been found, since only the study of Harvey in 2007 collects some tuba excerpts, extracted only from works by American composers, and, prior to this, the work of Berman in 1981 selecting thirty-two works that have outstanding excerpts for the tuba.
- And, finally, to point out a study comparing and analyzing the role played by the tuba in large ensembles, i.e.: orchestra, brass band and wind and percussion ensemble (Taylor, 2013).

After the study and analysis of the commented works, it can be deduced that, just as in other instruments more exhaustive and varied research has been carried out in relation to the role they play within the symphonic-band ensemble (not all the works have been exposed, but there are many more), this is not the case of the tuba. And even less if we relate it including the repertoire of Spanish composers.

2. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

At this point, the main objectives to be achieved with this research are presented, which, deductively exposed, would be as follows:

1. To collect the most recent original symphonic repertoire for band, taking as space and time the International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia» and the period from 1979 to the present.
2. To expand other previous studies incorporating more material and, above all, including Spanish composers.
3. To select the works with “solo” excerpts for tuba.

Given the gap in the scientific literature regarding the study of the role of the tuba in symphonic works for band and, given the exponential increase in the repertoire for this group since the late twentieth century, we propose a hypothesis that “tests” the role of the tuba in this repertoire. For example, searching for and selecting the most outstanding passages: in this case, the tuba solo excerpts.

3. METHODOLOGY: SELECTION, ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE MATERIAL

Taking the repertoire listed in a previous research (Monteagudo, Carrascosa and Hernández; 2019) as the main and only source of study, we have extracted only the original works for band from a total that adds up to 1,068 pieces, that is, about 476 works. This document has been decided not to be included here due to its length, but it

can be officially consulted in an article published by Edições Colibri¹. Of this original total, 173 titles were performed as compulsory works in the different sections into which the competition was and is divided² and the rest (303) as works of free choice by the participating bands.

In the following, these works have been analyzed through different ways, in order to identify, select and extract the most outstanding tuba passages:

1. listening to recordings;
2. the study of the score;
3. contact with composers (as far as possible);
4. discussions with band conductors, teachers, tuba soloists and other experts;
5. and taking into account the results of other research on tuba repertoire (e.g., Berman, 1981; and Harvey, 2007).

Next, we have extracted the fragments of the tuba line marked by the composers with terms such as: *solo*, *solí*, *solo divisi* or others of this type, in which there is no doubt that the tuba is important.

For the organization and presentation of the “solo” excerpts, it has been decided to classify them according to an aesthetic and musical texture criterion, resulting in the following groups:

- A) Short “solo” interventions
- B) Solos
- C) Cadential solos and *fermatas*
- D) More than one voice: *Solo Divisi*, *Solí*, 2 Tubas and 3 Tubas.

In the first group, the small “solo” interventions have been classified. They are short soloistic designs (two or three bars, generally), where the tuba intervenes with the theme, and short melodic-rhythmic links, also “a solo”. To illustrate this group, the following examples are presented (Table 1).

¹ Monteagudo Mañas, Javier; Carrascosa López, Conrado E.; and Hernández Farinós, José P. (2020): “The evolution of the wind band repertoire in Valencia: case study of the International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia»”. In VVAA: *Our Music/Our World: Wind Bands and Local Social Life*. Lisboa: Edições Colibri. pp. 443-460.

² The number of sections into which the CIBM is divided has changed considerably throughout its history, especially in the first decades, in relation to aspects such as: the type of band (civil or military), the geography (regional, national and international), the number of seats, the musical-performance requirements, etc. (Galbis, 1999).

Table 1. Short “solo” interventions.

Author	Composition	
	Title	Year
Amando Blanquer	<i>Ritual i Dances d'Algemesi</i>	1982
Andrés Valero	<i>Polifemo</i>	2000
Teo Aparicio	<i>Symphony N°1 “Asgard”</i>	2002
Luis Serrano	<i>Little Suite for Wind Band</i>	2008
Óscar Navarro	<i>Expedition</i>	2011
Óscar Navarro	<i>Hispania</i>	2013

The following group of “solos” (Table 2), gathers the excerpts where the tuba intervenes with a more extensive passage, granting the composer an outstanding momentary protagonism. Some examples are the excerpts from the works by:

Table 2. “Solos”.

Author	Composition	
	Title	Year
Amando Blanquer	<i>Concierto para Banda</i>	1971
Carlos Suriñach	<i>Soleriana</i>	1972
Rafael Talens	<i>Cosmos</i>	1979
Martin Ellerby	<i>Paris Sketches</i>	1994
James Barnes	<i>Symphony N°3 “The Tragic”</i>	1997
Francisco Bort	<i>Llegendes</i>	2000
Andrés Valero	<i>Symphony N°2 “Teogónica”</i>	2003
Luis Serrano Alarcón	<i>Memorias de un hombre de ciudad</i>	2003
Manuel Angulo	<i>Concerto Grosso</i>	2006
Francisco Bort	<i>Variacions Iròniques</i>	2007
Ferrer Ferran	<i>Pinocho</i>	2008
J. Gonzalo Gómez Deval	<i>La Batalla de Rande</i>	2008
J. Gonzalo Gómez Deval	<i>Handàq</i>	2009
J. Gonzalo Gómez Deval	<i>Meigas</i>	2009
Óscar Navarro	<i>Libertadores</i>	2010
Gregory Fritze	<i>A Day in Valencia</i>	2011
Ferrer Ferran	<i>Concert per a Banda</i>	2013
José Suñer	<i>Symphony N°3 “Phobos”</i>	2013
Gregory Fritze	<i>Bocetos de Cullera</i>	2014
J. Gonzalo Gómez Deval	<i>Astrofísica</i>	2014
José Alamá	<i>Fases</i>	2016
Luis Serrano Alarcón	<i>Second Symphony for Wind Orchestra</i>	2017
Fco. Martínez Gallego	<i>La Rosa del Desierto</i>	2018
José Suñer	<i>Soulful Stones</i>	2018

In the third group, we find the cadential solos, in which the tuba is recreated in much more extensive passages performing cadences or fermatas, almost as if they were framed within a concert between tuba soloist and band. It is worth mentioning the indications of the composers in these moments:

Table 3. Cadential “solos” and *fermatas*.

Author	Composition		
	Title	Year	Indication for tuba
Juan Pérez Ribes	<i>La Flor del Taronger</i>	1991	“solo a placer”
Francisco Grau	<i>Capricho Mediterraneo</i>	2002	“sin rigor de compás”
Luis Serrano Alarcón	<i>Marco Polo: La ruta de la seda</i>	2006	“lento ad libitum”
J. Gonzalo Gómez Deval	<i>Dragón Elliot: poema sinfónico a un dibujo</i>	2011	“solo” (several <i>tempo</i> changes until a <i>cediendo</i>)
Fco. Martínez Gallego	<i>Miraculum</i>	2015	“rubato”
Ferrer Ferran	<i>Quartum Milliarium</i>	2016	“Cadenza”

And finally, a group composed by the excerpts where several tubas are soloists, with two or even three of them taking part:

Table 4. More than one tuba: *Solo Divisi, Soli*, 2 or 3 tubas

Author	Title	Composition	
		Year	Characteristics
Rafael Talens	<i>Obertura Rítmica</i>	1990	Basically a “solo” for one tuba, but at the end a 2 nd tuba supports the cadenza
Ferrer Ferran	<i>La sombra del cruzado</i>	1999	The tuba section plays a “soli” excerpt
Francisco Tamarit	<i>Vientos...</i>	2003	A passage for two solistic tubas in the 3rd movement
Gregory Fritze	<i>Flor de Azahar: Concert for Band</i>	2006	A fugue for three solistic tubas in the last movement
Ferrer Ferran	<i>Symphony N°4 “Coloso”</i>	2011	The tuba section plays a “soli” excerpt
José Suñer	<i>El jardín de las Hespérides</i>	2015	Includes an excerpt marked as “only one” for two voices
Gregory Fritze	<i>Vadit Super Pozolum</i>	2016	Passage for two solistic tubas in the 4 th movement

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results drawn from this research show a significant increase in the interest of contemporary composers to include tuba solos in their works for band (in any of the forms previously discussed), which gives the instrument an increasingly greater prominence within the ensemble. Statistically proven, it can be said that 42 of the 476 works analyzed contain at least one tuba solo excerpt and, in a high percentage, performed in the period

2000-2019. In addition, the analysis of the results yields one more and very significant difference, since to a large extent these pieces are the creation of Spanish composers. All these data can be seen in the following graph:

Although this study may seem merely anecdotal, comparing it for example with the soloist role played by other instruments such as the flute, trumpet, saxophone or clarinet, it is believed that it represents a real commitment to the value of an instrument such as the tuba within the symphonic-band repertoire. An innovated and very valuable contribution that increases and enriches the catalog of music for band, not only nationally, but also internationally.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE INVESTIGATIONS

In this study we have only considered the repertoire performed in a specific event, such as the International Wind Band Contest «City of Valencia», and within a specific time frame, 1979 to 2019. Even taking into account that it is an annual event, internationally renowned, very well attended and on whose stage hundreds of fundamental works for the wind band literature have been performed and premiered, it must be recognized that some important titles have been left out, which also include tuba “solos”. Nevertheless, the time frame analyzed does represent the years in which most original compositions for band have been performed and, therefore, the “solos” written for tuba within them.

Possible future research could analyze, perhaps in a similar way, the repertoire for symphonic band played in other international events, such as congresses, festivals or competitions, extracting possible “solos” for tuba and expanding a compendium that collects unpublished material in this regard. It is sure to be of great use for teachers who teach repertoire classes in conservatories, tuba players and musicians in general who want to learn more about this instrument in the symphonic band.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There is not any conflict of interests in these research.

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