



The Stearns Newsletter

The Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments at the University of Michigan

SPRING 2002

SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

VOLUME 15, No. 1

Greetings from the Director

Taking advantage of the mild winter of 2002, the Stearns Collection was busy mounting new displays, presenting lectures and tours, and planning for the future. Among these activities, three should be highlighted here. First, the Collection has now produced its own full color postcards and T-shirts; see pictures and purchase information on page 3. Second, the Collection has now secured a display area in the renovated Hill Auditorium which is scheduled to reopen in late 2004. This marks the Collection's return to its old home; until 1975, it was housed in the auditorium. To support this development, a fundraising drive will be launched in the coming fall. Please stay tuned! Third, the Collection has now a website featuring information about membership, tours, and other things of interest about the collection and its activities. Please visit it and send us your comments at:

<http://www.music.umich.edu/resources/stearns/>

Docents Needed

As the Stearns Tour program expands, more voluntary docents are needed. If you are interested to participate in this wonderful opportunity to learn about the instruments, and to show them to various visitors, children and adults, please contact Ms. Carol Brodbeck: Brodbeck@aol.com. Training workshops will be given by Professor William Malm and Ms. Brodbeck.

Virginia Martin Howard Lectures, Spring 2002

In the Winter of 2002, the Stearns Collection presented two Virginia Martin Howard lectures. On January 27, Professor Stefano Mengozzi of the University of Michigan presented a lecture on the lute and its music. Entitled "Pleasurable Melancholy: the Lute's Place in European Music Consciousness," the lecture provided historical, aesthetic, and analytical insights to the instrument and its music.



Professor Stefano Mengozzi

On April 14, Professor Nancy Guy of the University of California, San Diego presented a lecture on use of *huqin* (fiddle) in Peking opera. Entitled "The *Huqin* in Peking Opera: The 20th Century's Long March," the lecture introduced various types of fiddles used in the Chinese theater, and traced organological and musical changes since the 1920s. Professor Guy's lecture ended with a lively question and answer session.



Professor Nancy Guy

The Euphonium

The Stearns Collection houses many brass instruments, many of which were produced in Michigan in the early 20th century decades. To highlight this heritage, this issue features Mr. Colin Roust's essay on the euphonium and its music.

The euphonium is a "valved brass instrument of widely conical profile, essentially a tenor tuba in 9' B^b. Since the mid 19th century, it was a regular member of brass bands, providing deep and sweet sounds. The name euphonium is derived from the Greek *euphōnos*, which means "sweet voiced." Since the late 19th century, the instrument began to appear as an orchestral instrument. See article on euphonium and its music.

Source of data: *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*

The Orchestral Euphonium and its Repertoire: A Fashionably Late Arrival

By Colin Roust

When people talk about orchestral instruments, few think of the euphonium. After all, the instrument was not introduced to the orchestral stage until 1899, and its symphonic repertoire is quite limited. One should not assume, however, that the instrument has no presence. It has appeared in at least 70 symphonic works, including some pieces of the standard repertoire.

The history of the euphonium began in the early years of the nineteenth century, a time of tremendous experimentation and innovation in the construction of wind instruments, especially the tenor and bass ranges of the brass family. The invention of valves for brass instruments provided an alternative to the ophicleide, which by the 1820s was the accepted bass brasswind instrument in most European orchestras. In his *Treatise on Instrumentation*, Hector Berlioz emphasized that the earlier instrument had a rough sound and was clumsy on fast passages, "rather like a bull escaped from its stable and frolicking in a salon." But with Heinrich Stölzel's invention of the "chromatisches

Basshorn" in 1828, a more agile replacement was found that could play the full chromatic scale quickly and cleanly. Between the 1820s and the 1870s, at least 50 other low brass instruments were developed in Europe and the United States, including various forms of the contrabass and bass tubas and the euphonium (or tenor tuba).

Three instruments were particularly important to the early development of the modern euphonium. In 1835, Milanese maker Giuseppe Pelitti invented the bombardino, a smaller version of the bombardon (also his



Euphonium from the Stearns.

invention). Especially favored by Italian military bands, the bombardino had a narrower bore and brighter tone than the modern euphonium. In Berlin in 1838, the prominent manufacturer Wilhelm Wieprecht developed a tenor tuba for use in Prussian military bands. In 1843, another Prussian maker named Sommer invented the euphonion, a wide-bored valved bugle.

The most important inventor of tenor-bass brasswind instruments, however, was the Belgian Adolph Sax, who spent much of his life in Paris. From 1842 to 1845, he developed the saxhorn family, a complete set of seven brasswind instruments ranging from sopranino to contrabass. Though most of these instruments are museum pieces today, the lower pitched saxhorns have evolved into the modern tuba family. The two saxhorns pitched in B-flat (tenor and bass) can be considered the predecessors of the modern baritone and euphonium. Though these instruments are quite similar, differences in bore size and conicity (the rate at which the diameter increases throughout the tubing) create significant differences in tone. The baritone has a smaller bore and lower conicity, giving

... see *Euphonium, p. 4*



Top Row, from left to right: Dragon Postcard, Dombak Postcard, Chitarra Postcard.
Bottom Row: Rebak Postcard, Stearns T-shirt modelled by William Malm with Mrs. Virginia Moss and Mr. Mike Montgomery in the background.

Purchase Information

T-Shirts are available in sizes small, medium, and large for \$15.00 each plus \$3.00 shipping and handling. Postcards are available in four different styles for \$0.75 each plus \$0.50 shipping and handling. Full color pictures are viewable at the Stearns website <http://www.music.umich.edu/resources/stearns/>. Please send orders with a check made payable to the Stearns Collection to the following address:

**Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments
School of Music
University of Michigan
1100 Baits Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2085**

Euphonium, continued from p. 2

it a brighter timbre than the euphonium. Although these instruments were developed primarily for use in wind bands, they nevertheless have made several appearances in the modern orchestra.

Richard Strauss was the first composer to have included the euphonium in the orchestra in his tone poem *Ein Heldenleben*. Strauss's instrumentation originally indicated a tenor Wagner tuba, but the part was so difficult on that instrument that the musician could not play it adequately. So Ernst von Schuch, who conducted the rehearsals of *Ein Heldenleben*, recommended that a euphonium be used in place of the Wagner tuba. When Strauss arrived to conduct the performance, he approved of the change. In fact, he liked it so much that he rescored not only this work, but also made the same revision to one of his earlier tone poems, *Don Quixote*. Strauss's treatment of the euphonium is one of the most significant orchestral uses of the instrument. He viewed it as a replacement for the tenor Wagner tuba, just as the F tuba had replaced the bass Wagner tuba. Thus, with the addition of the euphonium, the tuba section was now complete with contrabass, bass, and tenor tubas. Strauss's Austrian contemporary, Gustav Mahler, also experimented with an orchestral tenor tuba. However, Mahler did not actually use a euphonium, rather a German *tenorhorn*, which is quite similar to the baritone. The first movement of his *Symphony No. 7* prominently features the tenorhorn as a soloist. Together, Strauss and Mahler represent the first period in the orchestral repertoire of the euphonium. They used the instrument in two capacities: as a soloist and as a member of the tuba section.

In England, the euphonium was given similar orchestral treatment, as a member of the tuba section. Between the 1880s and the 1920s, British light orchestral music emerged, with a texture and style that contrasted sharply with its counterpart in the Austro-Germanic tradition. These English works also often had programmatic associations, as many were written as orchestral character pieces, concert overtures or incidental music for plays. The scores often call for two tubas, with the euphonium playing the first tuba

part, for example in Edward Elgar's *Cockaigne Overture*. The euphonium and smaller-bored tubas were originally used in these works to achieve a lighter sound than the larger-bored instruments, which were used primarily in bands. When orchestral composers desired the larger sound, they could indicate this by scoring the work for "military bass" or "bombardon" rather than a "tuba." Following World War I, British orchestral composers began writing separate parts for bass and tenor tubas. The tenor tuba or euphonium in these works still spends much time playing the bass line. However, it also is given considerably more melodic and countermelodic opportunities, probably under the influence of the British brass band tradition. This trend is exemplified in several of Havergal Brian's early symphonies and in Gustav Holst's *The Planets*.

The lighter sound that the English composers valued came in part from the influence of the French C tuba, a six-valved, small-bore tuba that was pitched one step higher than the euphonium. With its brighter sound, this instrument was well suited to be a solo instrument. For example, Maurice Ravel's orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* features a famous solo in the fourth movement, "Bydlo," that was originally intended for French C tuba.

Other prominent uses of the euphonium or related instruments prior to World War II include Igor Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* and two of Dmitri Shostakovich's ballets, *The Bolt* and *The Golden Age*, which all use a euphonium in a manner similar to Ravel. Béla Bartók's *Kossuth* and several of Leoš Janáček's works (*Capriccio*, *Sinfonietta*, *Totenhaus Suite*, and the *Violin Concerto*) are scored for *tuba tenore*. In these instances, the euphonium has been almost exclusively used as a melodic voice or as the bass line.

During the period since World War II, only a few British and American composers have used the euphonium: most notably Havergal Brian (in twelve of his 32 symphonies) and Roy Harris (in nine symphonies and nine other orchestral works). By this time in the U.S., the baritone had become a popular band instrument, but was generally not accepted in orchestras. American wind band composers used the

... see ***Euphonium***, p. 5

How Do I Get To The Stearns?

The Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments is located in the Margaret Dow Towsley wing at the south end of the Earl V. Moore Building of the School of Music on Baits Drive in the University of Michigan North Campus area. Enter through the doors nearest to the parking lot. The McIntosh Hall is just across the lobby and to the right of the entrance. The Stearns galleries are down the stairs at the end of the lobby to the right.

Admission: Free at all times.

Exhibit Hours: Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Group Visits and Tours:

To arrange for group visits or guided tours, please call (734) 763-4389.

Parking: Metered parking is available south of the entrance doors.



Euphonium, continued from p. 4

sound primarily for harmony parts; so when it was used in the orchestra, it was used in the same manner. Roy Harris also found that that brighter sound blended well with both the trombones and horns, thus adding extra strength to the inner harmonies.

Although the euphonium has made only a brief appearance in the modern orchestra, its presence will continue to be felt. After all, it is still a relatively young instrument and its capabilities have not been thoroughly explored.

A New Flute

Mrs. Glennis Stout, a flautist and flute collector of Ann Arbor, has recently donated a flute to the Stearns Collection. A "C. Nicholson Improved" model built by Clemente & Co., London in 1822, the instrument is made of dark golden boxwood with removeable foot joint and barrel, and features eight sterling saltspoon keys, ivory rings and caps.

Stearns Website

The Stearns website has just been launched and is now available with the latest information on the collection and its activities. The site is still growing and in the next few months will have online exhibits and archived newsletters. Visit us at:

<http://www.music.umich.edu/resources/stearns>

Become a Friend and Support the Stearns

With your help, precious instruments in the Stearns Collection may be restored, played, displayed and appreciated by the musical public. Friends receive the *Stearns Newsletter* and invitation to the Virginia Martin Howard/Stearns Lectures. Your contribution will help support all activities of the Stearns Collection.

Membership in the Friends of the Stearns Collection is available in the following categories:

Benefactor \$1000; Patron \$500; Sustaining \$100; Friend \$30

I/We enclose my/our check for \$_____ to the following funds to support the Stearns Collection:

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