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Voices of the Australian Tuba: A consideration of factors influencing its changing sound and musical status.

Jy-Perry Banks

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of

Master of Music (Performance)

Sydney Conservatorium of Music

University of Sydney

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Statement of Originality

I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

Signed: ..............................................................................................................

Date: ..................................................................................................................
Abstract

The tuba has been used in Australia for more than a century, yet little has been documented regarding its use. In this thesis, archival material has been used to document the tuba’s entry into Australia and to track prominent stages of its early use through a variety of ensembles that include Service bands, Town and Industrial bands, the Salvation Army Band and early Australian orchestral endeavours. The evolution of the orchestral low brass sound aesthetic in Australia has been investigated and the impact of the British Brass Band tradition has also been assessed. Primary data generated through the collection of interviews was used to assess the current musical status of the tuba in Australia and to identify elements that led to a change in our orchestral low brass sound aesthetic, between 1974 and 2012. The experiences of nineteen musicians and composers who represent Australia’s seven professional orchestral tubists, postgraduate tubists, brass composers and musicians from the related orchestral brass community were documented in these interviews. The interviews addressed early pedagogical and performance experiences; orchestral experience and influences; reasons for the change from the traditional British orchestral low brass sound aesthetic to an American orchestral low brass sound aesthetic; overseas study practices/benefits and career options; composer’s views, inspirations and composition process as well as the promotion and future musical status of the tuba in Australia.
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Chapter One

Introduction

The tuba has been played in Australia for more than 125 years and yet sources documenting its use, musical status and sound are scarce. While research has been carried out in both America and Europe, as yet there is no comparable literature documenting these aspects of the tuba in an Australian context. The people who can best provide insight into these aspects are mature professional musicians and composers who are still active in the Australian brass community. Research is required to document these aspects as there is the possibility that key personnel may no longer be available to assist in providing valuable primary data due to their age or their pursuit of further overseas orchestral opportunities.

This project aims to explain aspects of the history of the low brass sound aesthetic in Australian orchestras and to investigate how the changing sound and musical status of the tuba have been shaped and developed, with particular reference to the last forty years in Australia. It also aims to explore the possible emergence of a specific Australian tuba sound.

Research was carried out to investigate when the tuba made its entry into Australia and to track prominent stages of its development through a variety of ensembles. This included the introduction of the British brass band tradition and the E-flat tuba as well as the evolution of the low brass sound aesthetic with the introduction of the F and C tubas in Australian orchestras. The status of the tuba as both a solo and a chamber music instrument was explored, as was evidence of a
The history and impact of the British brass band movement in Australia was assessed by examining existing literature and accessing online archival documentation from prominent Australian brass bands and concert bands. Further archival information was provided by The Salvation Army Heritage Centre, the Band of the South Australian Police and accessing the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra’s Heritage site.

Much of the information required for this study involved the collection of primary data that was obtained through personal interviews and email correspondence with nineteen key members of the Australian brass community. Interviews with the tubists of the state orchestras, members of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra brass section, key brass composers and postgraduate tuba students provided valuable data. Issues addressed included the changing sound aesthetic of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra brass section and its impact on the orchestral tuba’s sound aesthetic; the impact of the low brass sound aesthetic of overseas and touring orchestras; postgraduate student’s overseas study experiences and career options and the perception of the musical status of the tuba in the broader musical community.

Research revealed Australia’s early British brass band sound aesthetic was altered during the mid 1970s, when a North American orchestral influence was introduced by trumpeter Gordon Webb who bought about a change from B-flat to C trumpet and started the push to replace the British orchestral E-flat tuba with American C and F tubas. Webb’s adoption of the C trumpet was as a result of his
earlier training at several prestigious American music institutions where the C trumpet was the accepted instrument rather than the British B-flat trumpet. This transition was further strengthened by Steve Rossé (Principal Tubist of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra) when he encouraged his student’s to move to C and F tubas. Opinion however is divided regarding the existence or emergence of a specific Australian tuba sound.

A divergence in the undergraduate study patterns between the professional orchestral tubists and postgraduate students was noted and this divergence proved to be even greater at a postgraduate level. Despite their more in depth overseas study, Australian postgraduate students have failed to succeed in most of the recent Australian orchestral auditions and three of the seven orchestral tuba positions are now held by American tubists.

The musical status of the tuba as both a solo and chamber instrument continues to remain low with few composers recognising its potential. However, Australian brass composers interviewed as part of this research feel that the future musical status of the instrument relies on Australian tubists commissioning works that display the tuba’s full potential. It is anticipated this research will be of significant benefit to the Australian tuba community.

Chapter one begins with a brief history of the serpent, the ophicleide and the tuba and discusses the invention of different keyed tubas. It addresses the tuba’s entry into Australia and uses archival photos and documentation to give a brief history of the service band, town band, industrial band and the Salvation Army band in Australia. It acknowledges the influence the British brass band movement had on
these bands and addresses their acceptance of the early British brass band sound aesthetic. The chapter concludes with a section on the tuba’s use in Australian jazz and further archival information relating to its move into Australian orchestras with particular reference to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Chapter two documents the interview study process, the ethical considerations, analysis of the process and lists the themes that emerged. It outlines the interviewed musician/composer categories and analyses their responses, categorised under relevant headings. These headings include early pedagogical and performance experience; orchestral experiences, influences, changes and sound aesthetic; overseas study practices and career options; the emergence of an Australian tuba sound; compositional views and inspirations and the promotion and future of the tuba. A summary of the responses is provided at the end of each interview category.

Chapter three contains a detailed discussion of both the expected and unexpected findings of these interviews while the conclusion acknowledges Australia’s indebtedness to Britain for its brass band culture and our long-term acceptance of a British brass band sound aesthetic. It outlines the process of change that led to a move from this early British sound aesthetic and resulted in the final acceptance of an American orchestral low brass sound aesthetic but it is inconclusive in its consideration of the existence of a specific Australian tuba sound. The status of the tuba as both a solo and chamber instrument is further discussed and suggestions are made as to how its status could be improved.
**Background**

The tuba is one of the most recent additions to the modern symphony orchestra.\(^1\) An instrument with the capabilities of the tuba had been needed by composers and performers for many years before its invention. Previously, the bass role had been provided by either the serpent or the ophicleide.\(^2\)

Invented in France in approximately 1590, the serpent was a very cumbersome instrument and its coiled, conical body resembled a snake. It was originally made from carved wood that was bound together with leather and was played with a cupped mouthpiece that was made from either ivory or horn. Originally it had six finger holes but these were later developed into keys.\(^3\)

The ophicleide was a later invention than the serpent and preceded the tuba by only eighteen years. Like the serpent, it also had a conical bore however it was made of brass, looked similar to the bassoon and was operated by keys.\(^4\) The ophicleide however, was more popular than the serpent and was used as the bass instrument in compositions well into the nineteenth century. It should be noted however that, “neither the serpent nor the ophicleide was a contrabass instrument”.\(^5\) Unlike these predecessors that used keys, the tuba was reliant on a valve system in order to change the pitch of the notes. A valve system produced pitches that were close together, that meant the player was not reliant on the

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\(^1\) Geoffrey Whitehead, A College Level Tuba Curriculum: Developed Through the Study of the Teaching Techniques of William Bell, Harvey Phillips, and Daniel Perantoni at Indiana University (New York: The Edwin Meller Press, 2003), iv.


\(^4\) Ibid., 61.

\(^5\) Bevan, “A Brief History of the Tuba,” 2.
instruments open harmonic series.

The first tuba was patented by the Prussian bandmaster Wilhelm Wieprecht and instrument maker Johann Moritz in 1835. Wieprecht was very active in the manufacturing and design of the tuba as he thought there was no true contra-bass brass instrument that could effectively play very low pitches. The Wieprecht and Moritz tuba however more closely resembled an ophicleide in terms of its shape, bore and bell size than the tuba as we know it today.\(^6\) Their tuba used Berliner-Pumpen piston valves, was pitched in F and “first appeared on 27 February 1835 in the Second Infantry Guard Regiment, Berlin”.\(^7\)

Hector Berlioz was extremely excited by the invention of the tuba and when he found that an ophicleide was unavailable for the performance of one of his works he wrote, “I was offered as a substitute a bass tuba (a magnificent instrument ... )”.\(^8\) He also chose in the Dies Irae of his Symphony Fantastique to instruct “his publisher to substitute tubas in the score”,\(^9\) instead of his original scoring for two ophicleides. The three to four valved and wider bored bombardon was also introduced by Wieprecht, later in 1835 however, “Berlioz considered its tone less noble than that of the Bass-Tuba”.\(^10\) By 1845, Vaclav Cerveny had invented the BB-flat and CC tubas and Geoffrey Whitehead attributes the standardisation of the tuba by 1860, to the work of Cerveny.\(^11\)

The original tubas manufactured in Prussia were in the keys of F and C and as

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\(^6\) Ibid., 3.
\(^7\) Bevan, The Tuba Family, 86.
\(^8\) Ibid., 87.
\(^9\) Ibid., 65.
\(^10\) Ibid., 86.
\(^11\) Whitehead, A College Level Tuba Curriculum: Developed Through the Study of the Teaching Techniques of William Bell, Harvey Phillips, and Daniel Perantoni at Indiana University, 1.
Winston Morris and Goldstein mention in *The Tuba Source Book*, “that while Wieprecht stated that he invented the bass-tuba for use in bands, the pitches of his instrument (F and C) came to be associated with the orchestral tuba”.\(^\text{12}\) Adolf Sax however, made his instruments in the keys of B-flat and E-flat and these keys would then form the basis of the British Brass Band and this is still the case.

Today, “there is substantial variation in the size of tubas, not only in bore and bell diameter but in overall dimensions and weight”.\(^\text{13}\) Tubas come in a variety of keys, may have pistons or rotary valves and can be compensating or non-compensating. There are however two main categories, the bass and contrabass tuba. The F and E-flat are considered bass tubas but the wide bored E-flat can be referred to as a EE-flat. The C and B-flat (often referred to as CC and BB-flat) are considered contrabass tubas. “The variety of available tubas reflects the need for more specialized and improved instruments to fit different performance situations.”\(^\text{14}\) Orchestrally, the BB-flat and CC are more commonly used in large Romantic period works such as those by Bruckner and Wagner while the E-flat and F tubas are more commonly used for high register orchestral excerpts.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 74.  
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 76.
**The Tuba in Australia**

In order to assess the development of the symphonic tuba in Australia it is first necessary to trace the arrival and use of the instrument in Australia prior to its introduction into Australian orchestras. However, substantiating exactly when the tuba was introduced into different ensembles in Australia is very difficult. As Herbert states, “band histories have been written by band enthusiasts rather than by professional historians”.¹⁶ Some band histories are now available on the band’s websites but they have been compiled by band members only. Some sites do include valuable archival photographs but the dates given for some of these photographs often cannot be substantiated.

**Service Bands**

The first evidence of any band in Australia was in 1788 at Sydney Cove with the reading of the Governor’s commission. The band that accompanied this momentous occasion would have been the typical military fife and drum band of the time. This however, led to the emergence of other Service bands.¹⁷ One early Australian military band was formed in Fremantle, Western Australia, in 1879. Known as the Fremantle Naval Volunteers, it was another fife and drum band. In 1893 there was a twenty-two piece band set up in NSW, called the ‘NSW Naval Brigade Band’ however there is no record of the type of instrumentation used in this band.¹⁸

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The Victorian Naval Brigade band was another early Australian Service band and the following photograph from the Australian War Memorial Official website dates from 1898. This was the first Australian Service band to actively serve in the line of duty when the band set sail for “China as part of the naval contingent to suppress the Boxer rebellion”.¹⁹ This photograph shows a very different band from the earlier fife and drum bands. It shows a Service band made up of both woodwind and brass. In total there are twenty-seven members in the band including the band master. The instrumentation includes a standard woodwind section, tenor horn, baritone, flugelhorn, cornet and French horn. This photograph is very interesting as it shows that the tuba was a member of the band, so we know that the tuba was in use in Australian Service bands by at least 1898. It could be assumed then that the tuba would have been a member of the Royal Australian Navy Band when it was started in 1901.

¹⁹ “Military Music.”
Victorian Naval Band in 1898

The Royal Australian Air force was the last of the military services to form a band in 1923 and it could be assumed that the tuba would probably have been included in that ensemble.\textsuperscript{21}

The following photograph, taken from the official site of the Australian Army Band Corps Association archives shows that in 1950 the tuba was still very much in use in Australian Service bands.


\textsuperscript{21} “Military Music.”
11. On 27 September 1950 the 3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment embarked at Kure, Japan, for Korea. With it went the bandsmen and their instruments. Although he never played it in Korea (he gained the Military Medal as a fighting infantryman at Kapyong in April 1951), Private Dunque went to war armed with both bass tuba and Owen sub-machine-gun.

Australian Army Band Corps – 1950

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The formation of brass bands in both the police force and the fire brigade was also common and the first official police band formed was the Band of the South Australian Police, in 1895. The following photo was taken in 1885 and is of the volunteer, part time band that preceded it. Two E-flat tubas are visible centre front in this photo.

Band of the South Australian Police in 1885\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{23} photo image sent as part of personal correspondence with Senior Constable First Class Neil Percy from the Band of the South Australian Police archives.
This photo was provided by Senior Constable First Class Neil Percy of the Band of the South Australian Police. In personal correspondence with me he stated, “The earliest known photograph in 1885 shows a band of seventeen members of which there are two tubas and one euphonium. This band was a volunteer part-time brass band that obtained its instruments via financial donations from within the Force or from members supplying their own instruments. Hence the tubas appear small and in poor condition. A document dated 1889 provided a list of current band members which found Marsh & Goldsworthy playing E-flat basses and a single euphonium player, Sandercock.”

There is also evidence of the tuba in early fire brigade bands. The following photograph of the Buninyong Fire brigade Band from Victoria is undated however the inserted text reads: “This is thought to be the band of the Buninyong Fire brigade. The Buninyong Telegraph of 1880 carries a report of a Drum and Fife band and Arthur Coxall was the band leader in 1901.”24 This is obviously not a drum and Fife band however it is an archival photograph and the tuba was definitely part of this early Australian ensemble.

Town and Industrial Bands

Brass Bands had emerged in Britain around the 1840s-1850s, at about the same time as industrialisation was taking place there. Brass bands were one of the many by-products of industrialisation and are a “product of the nineteenth century”. 

Besides new urban areas being created, factories were also built, communities

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developed and cheap instruments became commercially available.\(^{27}\) As a result of the creation of new work places, particularly factories, there was an increase in the number of workers and it was these workers and at times their employers who saw brass bands as a community activity that was enjoyable, social and rewarding. As a result of this, community or town brass bands became extremely popular between the 1840s-1880s. It is said that “almost every village and group of mills in the North of England has its own band”.\(^{28}\) In some cases, employers used the brass band as a way of bringing culture to the towns and their citizens.

British brass bands fell into three broad categories that were determined by how a band was formed and funded. Subscription bands existed and almost entirely relied on support from the greater community and organisations for financial assistance. Many bands that originated in the work place were seen as subscription bands however wealthier companies/workplaces were responsible for the second category of brass bands. These bands relied on the money of the company or a wealthy patron who would entirely fund the band.\(^{29}\) The third type came about in 1859 and was closely interlinked with the volunteer movement. This type of brass band relied entirely on subscription money and money from middle class donors.\(^{30}\)

In Australia, these types of British brass band were the accepted models and they all typically were comprised of: one E-flat cornet, nine B-flat cornets, one B-flat flugelhorn, three B-flat tenor horns, two B-flat baritones, two B-flat euphoniums,
three B-flat trombones, one bass trombone, two E-flat basses (tuba), two BB-flat basses (tuba) and percussion. Not only were the same instruments used but the British brass band repertoire was also adopted. Australia also did not have any brass instrument manufacturers and had to rely solely on the importation of Besson or Boosey and Hawkes instruments from Britain.  

It is not hard to see why the British Brass band scene flourished in Australia as a result of “the period of recurrent mass immigration from the gold rushes of the 1850s to the depression of the 1930s”. As Australia was already heavily modelled on British culture before the brass band tradition came about, it is not at all surprising that the movement would also have become extremely popular in Australia.

Australia’s oldest brass band is credited as being The Tanunda Town Band. Situated in the Barossa Valley, in South Australia, it is a perfect example of Trevor Herbert’s belief that “civilian banding in South Australia owed something to German immigrants of an earlier era”. In 1848, talented Prussian brothers Ferdinand and Carl Wilhelm Draeger arrived in South Australia and soon after their arrival Wilhelm started the Tanundra Brass Band, that later had a name change to Tanundra Town band. Carl Draeger, who had been a Professor of Music at Dresden University, formed a band at Gawler (South Australia). It would perhaps have been quite unusual for a small Australian country town band to have been formed by such a
highly educated musician. 

Unfortunately, there are no publically available photographs from the band’s very early days and a request made to the current administrators of the band for further information has been unsuccessful. The following photograph taken from their website gives an insight into the band in the 1920s and the tuba was obviously a member in this era of the band.

![Tanundra Town Band, circa 1920](image)

By looking at the photo of the band we can see that there are twenty-six members photographed. However, on closer inspection, it is apparent that they do not exactly follow the standard British Brass band instrumentation. In the front row (left to right) there is one BB-flat tuba, two E-flat tubas, the solo cornet, percussionist and three tenor trombones. A bass trombone is not sighted. In the second row (from left to right) there is a baritone, tenor horn, euphonium, baritone, bandmaster and four tenor horns. The back row is entirely made up of the nine

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35 “Band History.”
36 “Band History.”
cornets that traditionally, were part of the British Brass band.

Canberra City Band claims to be Australia’s oldest concert band. 37 Established in 1925, the Federal Capitol Commission formed the band in the hope that it might prove to be more attractive to the workers building the Australian Federal Capital city, than visiting hotels situated just outside the Australian Capital Territory. Obviously, it proved to be a success as it continues to function to this day. 38 The following two photos, taken from the Canberra City Band website, give some insight into the instrumental developments of the band.

Canberra City Band-1929

The first photo of the Canberra City band shows an all brass ensemble with no woodwinds at all, suggesting that it was actually a small Brass Band and not a Concert Band when this picture was taken in 1929. This band is small in size

38 “History of Canberra City Band.”
39 “History of Canberra City Band.”
compared to the traditional British brass band instrumentation, as it has only fourteen brass players, two percussionist and possibly two band masters. No section is completely covered apart from the percussion in this band. One BB-flat tuba and one E-flat tuba make up the lower end of the band as there is no evidence of a bass trombone.

Canberra City Band in 1934

There have been some obvious instrumental changes in the five years between these two photographs. The most obvious difference is that this band

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40 “History of Canberra City Band.”
includes saxophones, a clarinet and possibly an oboe as well. No trombones are evident, but the band now appears to have three tubas (two BB-flat and one EE-flat). The following photo of the Tooth’s Brewery Band from Sydney is also a valuable source as it is a visual example of the subscription band.

Formed in 1927, its instruments and uniforms were, “entirely paid for by the company–at a cost of one thousand pounds” and “the company was initially

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persuaded to give priority in employment to experienced players from outside who
would strengthen the band".\textsuperscript{43} Made up of voluntary employees, this band was
supported by Tooths Brewery who provided the band with cash donations and
rehearsal facilities. The company also allowed band members time off for
performances and free transport and beer as well. Unfortunately, the depression of
the 1930s meant that many jobs were lost within the Tooths Brewery and as a result
of this there was a loss of many of the strong players that made the band what it
was.\textsuperscript{44} From this photograph it is obvious that money was not a problem as the band
has a complete bass section of two BB-flat tubas and two EE-flat tubas, as well as a
bass trombone and these instruments would have been quite expensive.

As bands became more established, it was inevitable, that the competition
between them that was so common in Britain, would also be transported to
Australia. Although this is not the focus of this thesis, it is important, as Trevor
Herbert and Margaret Sarkissian feel that this competition led to an increase in
instrumental proficiency amongst the players, particularly as most of them were
amateurs who were instructed by other band members or by the band leader.\textsuperscript{45}

The Brass Band culture that Britain instilled in Australia turned out to be just
as successful and long lasting as it did in Britain itself and unlike America, that
appears to have actively fought against tradition,\textsuperscript{46} Australia has stayed very faithful
to the true British brass band sound and ideology.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 156.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 156.
\textsuperscript{45} Herbert and Sarkissian, "Victorian Bands and their Dissemination in the Colonies," 168.
\textsuperscript{46} Herbert Hazelman, “The British Brass Band,” in Brass Anthology, ed. The Instrumentalist Company
Salvation Army Bands

The Salvation Army had been formed in the UK by William Booth, in 1865. The Salvation Army quickly adopted the instrumental services of Charles Fry and his sons, to act as crowd control, to help tame the often rowdy crowd at Salvation Army rallies/marches, so that the Salvation Army’s word could be spread more easily. This was the beginning of the Salvation Army’s long band history.

It was not long however, until the Salvation Army was introduced to Australia and in 1881, the first Salvation Army band was established in Adelaide.\(^{47}\) We can see from the following photo that it was a small band made up of two clarinets and assorted brass (cornets, tenor horns, baritones and euphonium) but there was no tuba. As the Salvation Army was new and did not have much money, they initially relied on instrument donations from ordinary people in Australia. Apparently, the following request, “Will any friend who owns brass instruments and is willing to donate them to help God’s work, send them to Captain Sutherland ... as he wants to form a band at once”\(^ {48}\), was published in a very early edition of the Sydney Salvation Army ‘War Cry’. As the Salvation Army started its mission in Sydney on 2 December, 1882, we could assume that this request may have been made in early 1883.

\(^{47}\) Information was sent as part of personal correspondence with Lindsay Cox from the NSW Salvation Army Heritage Centre and was taken from unpublished Salvation Army research titled *Australian Bands* by John Cleary (page 1).

\(^{48}\) Information was sent as part of personal correspondence with Lindsay Cox from the NSW Salvation Army Heritage Centre and was taken from unpublished Salvation Army research titled *Australian Bands* by John Cleary (page 1).
The image above shows the first Australian Salvation Army band. The band members are seated in front of the 1881 Adelaide Corps. The bandmaster is James Hooker, second left on clarinet.\textsuperscript{49}

The First Australian Salvation Army Band

There is reference to the formation of a band to open the Australasian Headquarters of the Salvation Army in North Melbourne, on 12 June, 1883. Staff Officer, Jeremiah Eunson, who later was credited as being “the father of Salvation Army music in Australia”\textsuperscript{50}, rigorously trained the group of Salvation Army corps members for this event however they must have been awfully nervous and scared of playing at their first public performance, as just before the band was due to play, the

\textsuperscript{49}Photo image sent as part of personal correspondence with Yasmin Van Gaalen-Prentice (National Salvation Army Heritage Centre) and is from the Salvation Army Heritage Centre Archives in South Australia.

\textsuperscript{50}Information was sent as part of personal correspondence with Lindsay Cox from the NSW Salvation Army Heritage Centre and was taken from unpublished Salvation Army research titled \textit{Australian Bands} by John Cleary (page 3).
whole band ran away and the band master was left wondering where they were. This shows how the early Salvation Army musicians were quite inexperienced and that the idea of a public performance was quite traumatic for them.\textsuperscript{51}

In 1885, Jeremiah Eunson created and published the first Australian Band Journal that contained simple instrumental arrangements of Salvation Army hymn tunes. There were many issues in relation to sending music out to Australia as it was so far away from Britain and the publication of an Australian band Journal made arrangements immediately available to Australian Salvation Army band members.

Apparently, Australian Salvation Army congregations also had difficulty singing along with the higher pitched British music. As much as Australia and Britain were very similar in their brass banding, there was one major difference between them when it came to the Salvation Army. In Britain, the Salvation Army manufactured their own instruments from 1890\textsuperscript{52} and had their instruments tuned to $A=452\text{ hz}$ which was known as Philharmonic pitch, however other instrument makers had their instruments tuned to Continental or International pitch which was $A=440\text{ hz}$.\textsuperscript{53} Through the Australian Band Journal, Eunson could lower the pitch of the hymns to make them more easily sung by Australian Salvation Army congregations.\textsuperscript{54}

The Salvation Army is a highly organised international religious organisation
and it has kept thorough records of its music making in Australia. If any Australian Salvation Army Band required new instruments, Army orders and regulations required them to contact the International headquarters in London and the relevant instruments would be shipped out to Australia. If these instruments were in need of repairs however, they were repaired in the workshops of major music stores in the cities around Australia.

The Salvation Army Heritage Centre in South Australia has been very helpful in providing details of the early Salvation Army bands. Apparently, they have evidence of basses being used in the original Adelaide First Corp in 1881 however they do not seem to have been in use at the very beginning of the band as they are not in the previous photograph. Even though they do not have any definite information on when the tuba started to be used in their bands, they do have a helicon in their instrumental collection in South Australia, that was used around 1880–1910. Yasmin van Gaalen-Prentice, from the Salvation Army Heritage centre, has also verified that they do have reference to an E-flat being manufactured between 1896 and 1901 and that both E-flat and B-flat basses were in use in Australian Salvation Army Bands as of 1890.⁵⁵

**The Brass Band Sound Aesthetic**

Australia adopted the British brass band model of twenty-six brass instruments plus percussion however the sound aesthetic of the early bands was possibly more influenced by the wealth of the community and the band members than this British

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⁵⁵ Information sent as part of personal correspondence with Yasmin Van Gaalen-Prentice from the National Salvation Army Heritage Centre in South Australia.
model. Some of the archival photos show that the exact British brass band instrumentation was not used. This was probably due to the fact that most bands were made up of volunteers and therefore they used whatever instrumentation was available. The Bunninyong Fire Brigade Band photo has three E-flat basses and one B-flat bass which is the correct number of basses however technically they should have two E-flat basses and two B-flat basses. This would have impacted on the sound aesthetic of the band and it would not have the expected bass end. The sound aesthetic of most bands in the early part of this era would have been governed by the specific instrumentation that the band used. Too few basses or the incorrect distribution of basses would create an unbalanced sound aesthetic.

The sound aesthetic however would have become more standardised with the introduction of the subscription bands and as companies paid for the instruments, they were probably of a better quality. The Tooth Brewery Band photo does show the correct number and ratio of basses and they also appear to be a matched set. This would have allowed the band to produce the typical blended, mellow British brass band sound aesthetic.

**Australian Jazz and the Tuba**

The tuba was also involved in the Australian jazz scene, in particular, in Traditional/Dixieland/ New Orleans style and Louis Collin Silbereisen (also known as Lou or Baron Silbereisen) was a key person in the tuba’s use in jazz, in Australia. Silbereisen was influenced by the jazz he heard in silent films and as a result, in 1935, when he moved to Melbourne he started going to the Melbourne Swing club. There, he listened to the music that inspired him to take up the double bass so he would be
able to play written arrangements of the time. During the Second World War, from 1940-1945, Silbereisen served in the Royal Australian Air force in the U.K. and Middle East which meant he was removed from the Australian jazz scene. There is every chance however that he may have been exposed to British and even American jazz bands while serving overseas.

On his return to Australia, he joined the Graeme Bell All-Star Jazz Band who played traditional style jazz and this is when he took up the tuba; one would assume to create an authentic jazz brass bass sound. Interestingly, he chose to perform an earlier style of Jazz than was fashionable at the time and also chose to play a tuba with a forward facing bell. This perhaps had better sound projection than the upright belled tuba. He was also the bass string/tuba winner of the Australian Music Maker poll in 1952.56

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Recording tuba played by Louis Silbereisen\textsuperscript{57}

The Tuba Moves into the Orchestra

Whilst the Tuba continued to develop into a key instrument in the Brass Band, Concert Band and Jazz scene, it had also begun to be used in Australian Orchestras. At the start of the twentieth century, Australia had less than four million people.58 Despite this low population and its remoteness from the rest of the world, Australia had a fairly healthy number of classically orientated ensembles despite the fact that it “suffered for at least three decades from an inadequate training system for Australian musicians”.59

Melbourne claims to have had the “most continuous history of orchestral music of any Australian city”60 with its first recorded “choral and instrumental concert given on 23 December 1839”.61 However, a classical musical culture was developing in most of the major cities and it is the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra’s heritage site that best documents the development of one of Australia’s orchestras.62

Their heritage site has musician’s lists for a variety of orchestral type ensembles and the tuba is absent in the listing for the Heinicke’s Grand Orchestra membership list - first concert 189563, the Adelaide Grand Orchestra membership list - Original members 189864 and the Gounod’s Redemption (Adelaide Choral Society Concert) 4th October 1900 - Adelaide Grand Orchestra (Augmented)65 but the

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59 Phillip Sametz, Play on!: 60 years of music-making with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (Sydney: ABC Enterprises, 2001), 1.
60 Stella M. Barber, Crescendo: Melbourne Symphony Orchestra: celebrating 100 years (Melbourne: Melbourne Symphony orchestra, 2007), 1.
61 Ibid., 1.
Euphonium, played by W. Gooley is included.

We can see there is no tuba in the Heinicke’s Grand Orchestra photo but there is a euphonium. This is very unusual for an orchestra but perhaps this is evidence of a bridging period between the Australian brass band, with its British origins and the development of the symphony orchestra in Australia. The first evidence of the tuba in their heritage site is in the 1920 South Australian Orchestra

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listing that has Mr C. J. Job listed as the tubist. Adelaide seems to have had quite a supply of tubists as the tuba position changes quite frequently over the following listings. Unfortunately the listings do not state the key of the tuba used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Musician</th>
<th>Orchestra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>C. J. Job</td>
<td>South Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>R. J. Ramsey</td>
<td>South Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Harold F. Paeth</td>
<td>South Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>S. Shearer</td>
<td>South Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>H. Shearer</td>
<td>South Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>H. Cornish</td>
<td>Adelaide Symphony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>No tuba (perhaps tuba was not needed for this programme)</td>
<td>South Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Gordon Burnside</td>
<td>South Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Cyril Britton</td>
<td>South Australian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Orchestra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Cyril Britton</td>
<td>South Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-present</td>
<td>Peter Whish Wilson</td>
<td>Adelaide Symphony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The photo of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra circa 1937-1939 does however show a tubist. The tubist is probably S. Shearer or H. Shearer as this

matches the musicians listing dates. Most likely the tuba is an E-flat or a small B-flat and this further reinforces the link between the British brass band tradition and the emerging symphony orchestras in Australia.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra however has emerged as one of Australia’s most prominent orchestras. The predecessor of this full symphony orchestra was the Sydney Studio Orchestra that was set up by the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

The photo of the Sydney Studio Orchestra shows a bass brass instrument as part of the ensemble however it is not a tuba, but a Helicon, which again shows a link to the earlier brass band tradition. The longest serving tubist of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, to date, has been Cliff Goodchild, who “joined the orchestra

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full time in 1951 at Goosens’ invitation”. He held this position for thirty-six years before retiring in 1987. Goodchild states in ‘Play On’ that his “immediate predecessor was a Borstal boy called Frank Lomas … Dooley Ward was the tuba player before him, an old Irishman”. Cliff Goodchild was the first tuba player in an Australian orchestra to hold the Principal Tuba position for a very extended period of time, which is a definite contrast to the numerous tuba changes listed in the South Australian/Adelaide Symphony in the period from 1920-1970. This extended tenure however, now appears to be the normal situation in Australian orchestras, where some tubists hold their orchestral positions for the length of their professional careers. Little, however, has been formally documented regarding the tuba, from an Australian orchestral perspective and there is a need to interview specific members of the Australian tuba and brass community to provide more current data.

83 Stametz, Play On!, 116.
84 Ibid., 117.
Chapter Two

Interview Study

The aim of these interviews is to research and document the influences, sound and status of the Australian orchestral tuba in the period from 1974 to 2012. Questions raised will address the type/key of tuba played, early ensemble experience, teacher background in terms of brass/community band or orchestral influence as well as undergraduate study and the possible benefits of overseas postgraduate study. The sound aesthetics of the Australian tuba during that period, the impact of British, European and American orchestral approaches to tuba playing and the influence of renowned orchestral low brass sections will also be addressed as will the career prospects of aspiring young Australian tubists.

An examination of contemporary Australian tubists’, composers’ and brass section members’ experience and the previously presented archival material, will help paint a picture of how the tuba is viewed in Australia. What is the tuba’s musical status? How is it now viewed by tubists, composers and the low brass orchestral section in general? Has its sound aesthetic altered in that time? Is its sound aesthetic still changing? What are the orchestral prospects for up and coming Australian tubists? How do composers view this instrument and where might it be in twenty years time? Unfortunately, little is documented relating to any of these issues. To assess the current tuba situation in Australia and its orchestras, it was necessary to generate my own data through the collection of interviews.

Interviews with orchestral tubists were undertaken to answer the questions
posed above. Potential participants were approached regarding their interest and availability to be involved in this research. Nineteen musicians and composers who represent the Australian orchestral tuba community, Australian postgraduate tubists, Australian brass composers and musicians from the related orchestral brass community took part in this research.

The interviews were conducted with the current tubists from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, the Western Australia Symphony Orchestra, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra in Sydney, Australia. The six postgraduate tuba students interviewed have all studied in Australia, are currently undertaking postgraduate tuba study overseas or have recently undertaken postgraduate tuba study overseas and have all at one time been tuba students of Steve Rossé (Principal Tuba in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music).

The three composers interviewed, are all prominent in the brass composition community and were chosen as each one has written at least one concerto for solo tuba. The three professional orchestral brass musicians are all current members of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra brass section, one since 1979.

Interviewees were sent relevant university documentation prior to the interview explaining the aim of the research and asking them to indicate their willingness to take part. Permission was given to use respondent’s real names. The interview method involved a series of semi-structured interview questions that were carried out either in a face-to-face situation, via Skype communication or by landline.
telephone. One professional tubist chose to respond to the interview questions by email as no mutually convenient time could be found. The semi-structured interview method resulted in additional information being provided that was an unexpected bonus and useful for this research. Interview durations varied from eight minutes to one hour and twenty-seven minutes and this reflected the interviewee’s directness and/or wealth of knowledge.

**Analysis**

All interviews were recorded with ‘Audacity’ used for Skype interviews while a Zoom H2 recording device was used for live interviews. A general content analysis was then carried out where each interview was summarised and categorised under each question, before being compiled, question by question into four separate documents that represented the group responses from the brass section players, orchestral tubists, postgraduate students and composers. These documents more easily enabled a constant comparative analysis of the data to be carried out that led to the identification of relevant themes and these were then further analysed in the Discussion section.

**Findings**

The following themes emerged from this research.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>RELEVANT GROUP</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influence:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- British brass band influence</td>
<td>Brass Orchestral Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gordon Webb</td>
<td>Professional tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- American orchestral tuba approaches</td>
<td>Postgraduate tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- German orchestral tuba approaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background of teacher:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Availability of trained tuba teachers</td>
<td>Professional tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brass Band</td>
<td>Postgraduate tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Orchestral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early Performance Experience:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brass Band</td>
<td>Professional tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Community band</td>
<td>Postgraduate tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Orchestral</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Youth orchestras etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tertiary</td>
<td>Professional tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Overseas Postgraduate study</td>
<td>Postgraduate tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Female tubists</td>
<td>Brass Orchestral Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Well renowned Internationally</td>
<td>Professional tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Well renowned in Australia</td>
<td>Postgraduate tubists</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Career Opportunities:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Audition experience</td>
<td>Professional tubists</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Within Australia</td>
<td>Postgraduate tubists</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Globally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>An authentic Australian tuba sound:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Australian opinions</td>
<td>Brass orchestral section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- American observations</td>
<td>Professional tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Well renowned Internationally</td>
<td>Postgraduate tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The tuba as an instrumental choice</td>
<td>Professional tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In the composition community</td>
<td>Postgraduate tubists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Impact of commissions</td>
<td>Composers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In 20 years time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>QUESTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ORCHESTRAL CHANGE AND INFLUENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What do you feel was the biggest change in the Australian Tuba scene? When did this come about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you think the sound aesthetics of the tuba or your playing has changed during your years of experience in the orchestra and is there a distinct Australian sound? <em>If so how would you describe it?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What orchestra (National or International) produces the best low brass sound and what is it that appeals to you about their particular sound?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three members of the Sydney Symphony brass section were included in the research. All are long-term members of the orchestra having been appointed to their positions in 1979, 1986 and 1990. Their assessment of the changing orchestral low brass sound aesthetic and its implication regarding the transition from the British Brass band influence was considered a vital study for this research.
Orchestral Change and Influences

Q.1 What do you feel was the biggest change in the Australian Tuba scene? When did this come about?

The biggest change was the move from Brass band style tubas (E-flat and B-flat basses) to orchestral style tubas (F and C tubas). Both Ron Prussing and Scott Kinmont acknowledge this change was occurring in other orchestras in Australia in the mid 1970’s, before it started in Sydney when two Miraphone C tubas were bought for Cliff Goodchild, who was Principal Tubist of the Sydney Symphony at the time.

Paul Goodchild outlined the background to this change and the importance of Gordon Webb’s appointment to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, as Principal Trumpet in 1974. Prior to his appointment, the orchestra primarily used B-flat trumpets however Gordon Webb, who had many years of professional playing in London “was using C trumpet pretty much one hundred percent of the time”. Paul Goodchild believes Gordon Webb was influenced by the American trumpet and trombone sound he heard in touring American orchestras in the United Kingdom and by American recordings. He says it was Gordon Webb who suggested Cliff Goodchild try the Miraphone C tuba as “clearly the sound of the small E-flat tuba was actually being left behind with Gordon Webb’s concept of where he wanted the brass section to be”.

This use of the C trumpet was further reinforced when Gordon Webb left in 1978 and was replaced by Dan Mendelow who, “was an American trumpet player
who also played C trumpet and then came from this American style of playing ...

New York, Philadelphia, Chicago”. Paul Goodchild believes Dan Mendelow’s style of playing influenced the current style of the orchestra. The use of larger brass instruments has meant “the overall volume of the brass section has increased immensely.”

When Cliff retired, Ron Prussing says he and Tim Dowling made a decision to run the audition similar to those being held in Europe at the time. This involved the playing of high and low orchestral excerpts that required the use of both C and F tubas. Ron Prussing commented that no Australians were successful in the initial audition and so an international audition was called that resulted in seventy five applicants.

The end result was that American Steve Rossé was appointed as Principal Tubist of the Sydney Symphony in 1990 and both Ron Prussing and Scott Kinmont credit him with having the most impact on the Australian tuba scene, by reinforcing this move to C and F tuba. Scott Kinmont agrees there were others making the change to European and American style tubas, but he describes it as being a “fairly slow take up” and that the E-flat English system was still being used by most students. He says, “It wasn’t that those tubas weren’t being used here, but it was only at the professional level and it was when Steve arrived and he more or less insisted on his students playing those instruments (C and F)” and that was when “the change really started to filter down through the student level as well”.

Q.2 Do you think the sound aesthetics of the tuba or your playing has changed during
your years of experience in the orchestra and is there a distinct Australian sound? If so how would you describe it?

Ron Prussing and Scott Kinmont both agreed that there had been change. They outlined the change from medium bore to large bore trombones and the impact of purchasing a set of German trombones in 1995 that Scott Kinmont explained were used on repertoire up until Wagner. American instruments were used on repertoire post Wagner and Scott Kinmont believes the Sydney Symphony Orchestra may have been the first non-German orchestra, apart from the Chicago Symphony, to purchase German trombones.

Ron Prussing commented on the improvement in the breadth of sound and dynamic range while Scott Kinmont outlined how each musical director wanted something different from the orchestra; some liked the low brass sound and others preferred less low brass. None of the interviewees felt that there was a distinct ‘Australian’ sound however Scott Kinmont commented that initially it was a cross between the English and the American style however he now feels the American style is more dominant.

Q.3 What orchestra (National or International) produces the best low brass sound and what is it that appeals to you about their particular sound?

Ron Prussing commented on how the Sydney Symphony brass section is styled on the Chicago Symphony brass sound but that Sydney is a little lighter. He likes how the Chicago Symphony plays Mahler but prefers the German orchestras when it comes to Bruckner and Brahms. Scott Kinmont felt that it really depended on
the repertoire. He listed the Montreal brass section with Dutoit in the 1980s, some of the Chicago Symphony recordings from the 1990s, the Scottish National Orchestra in the 1990s when they played Shostakovich and Prokofiev and the Berlin Philharmonic; although he felt the Philharmonic were not at their best when performing modern repertoire. Paul Goodchild did not have a particular favourite but mentioned the San Francisco, Boston and London Symphony low brass sections as well as the Chicago Symphony low brass section from 1944 to 1988 when Arnold Jacobs, renowned tuba pedagogist was Principal tubist of the orchestra.

**Summary**

The changing sound aesthetic of the orchestral low brass section involved the transition from the British Brass band tradition of E-flat and B-flat tuba to the American orchestral style of C and F tubas. The catalyst for this change was Gordon Webb who used the C trumpet and established a different concept of sound for the Sydney Symphony brass section. This was further shaped by the appointment of Dan Mendelow, an American C trumpet player and the initiation of European style auditions for the tuba position that required the use of multiple tubas. The appointment of Steve Rossé to this tuba position in 1990 reinforced the orchestral use of C and F tuba that continues to filter through his students.
**Australian State Orchestral Tubists Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EARLY PEDAGOGICAL AND PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Why did you take up the tuba and who taught you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Could you outline your early performance experiences on the tuba and the key of the instrument you used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Could you outline your study on the tuba to date?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What was the background of your teachers and how have they influenced your sound on the tuba?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ORCHESTRAL EXPERIENCES, INFLUENCES &amp; SOUND AESTHETIC</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you know what it was about the quality of your sound that appealed to the panel and gained you this position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Why do you feel Australian orchestras made the change from BB-flat to CC and EE-flat to F tubas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Do you think the sound aesthetic (tone, clarity, articulation) of the tuba has changed during your years of experience in the orchestra and is there a distinct Australian sound? If so how would you describe it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Have you had to change the way you play in the orchestra over the years to accommodate the changing sound aesthetic (e.g. the trombone section)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Text</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>How have touring international orchestras or recordings of international orchestras influenced/impacted on your tuba sound or the sound of the section that you play in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>What orchestra (national or international) produces the best low brass sound and what is it that appeals to you about their particular sound?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The seven full time tubists who hold positions in seven of Australia’s professional orchestras were interviewed. All male and aged between thirty two and fifty four years, three are Australian and have held their orchestral position from seventeen to thirty-four years. The youngest tubist is from New Zealand and has held his position since 2007. The remaining three tubists are American and took up their positions in 1990, 2010 and post 2010. These musicians provided valuable information regarding their original musical influences, their teachers, type of study, the change from the British brass band sound aesthetic and transition to C & F tubas and the increasing move towards an American concept of playing.

Early Pedagogical and Performance Experiences

Q.1 Why did you take up the tuba and who taught you?

Of the three Australians, one took up the tuba as his father played the instrument, the other, as part of his school’s instrumental program and the final one chose the largest instrument he could, as a way of irritating his parents who had
insisted he take up an instrument in year seven. The New Zealand tubist was asked to take up the instrument in year seven, as part of his New Zealand schools’ compulsory instrumental program. The three American tubists however, appear to have started instrumental tuition on a series of instruments in late infants or early primary school before they settled on tuba. One had studied piano then trumpet, the other euphonium and the final one studied violin, bass guitar and euphonium before taking up the tuba.

All of the Australian/New Zealand and American tubists had the same experience when it came to their first teacher. None had tubists as teachers with most teachers being the band director or another brass specialist. It was some years before most had a teacher who was actually a tubist and one American tubist reported he was twenty years old and in college, before he had a specific tuba teacher.

Q.2 Could you outline your early performance experiences on the tuba and the key of the instrument you used?

The Australians/New Zealander took up the E-flat tuba which is in keeping with our British brass band influence while the Americans took up B-flat tuba which is more in line with their band tradition. The majority gained their earliest tuba experience in school ensembles that ranged from wind and concert bands through to school orchestras. One Australian tubist gained most of his early performance experience through solo competitions, as from an early age he enjoyed the competition and the amount of practice required to succeed. Another two, gained
additional experience playing with community orchestras and brass bands which provided significant performance experience for these professionals before starting their pre-tertiary education and professional work with orchestras.

For the majority, their most significant pre-professional experience was as a member of either a city (New Zealand) or state youth orchestras (Australia). One American was part of the American state equivalent of the youth orchestra programme; another American was regularly involved in a well known summer music camp programme, where they performed as part of an orchestra. These experiences provided a very solid basis for their later professional positions as orchestral tubists.

Q.3 Could you outline your study on the tuba to date?

The data revealed that the three Australian tubists chose to undertake their tertiary study at the Victorian College of the Arts, in Melbourne. Cameron Brook mentioned he may have considered study at what was then the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music (now known as the Sydney Conservatorium of Music) however it was not possible to undertake tertiary study there unless you had taken music in your High School Certificate. Peter Whish-Wilson, as a professional had studied with Roger Bobo (ex L.A. Philharmonic), Arnold Jacobs (ex Chicago Symphony), Michael Lind (ex Stockholm Philharmonic), Zach Spellman (San Francisco Opera Orchestra) and Ian King (ex Melbourne Symphony Orchestra).

The three American tubists, Steve Rossé, Tim Buzbee and Ed Diefus studied at a variety of American institutions. These include the Julliard School of Music in New
York City, the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Texas A & M University in Commerce, North Texas and Arizona State University in Phoenix, Arizona. New Zealand national, Thomas Allely began his studies at Victoria University in Wellington before moving to Canberra in 2004 to study with Steve Rossé, who was then teaching at the Australian National University. This was followed by a short period of overseas study (September 2006-March 2007) at De Paul University, in Chicago. During this overseas study, he noticed differences between Australian and American orchestras. “One thing we have less of here in the orchestra than in the US, as far as I can tell is players don’t use vibrato as kind of a default.” Perhaps this movement away from a heavy vibrato, which is highly regarded in a brass band context, is evidence of our moving away from our strong English brass band tradition.

**Q.4 What was the background of your teachers and how have they influenced your sound on the tuba?**

The three Australian tubists (Cameron Brook, Tim Jones and Peter Whish Wilson) had all at some time studied with John Wood, who had played with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra however; they made no comment as to how he had specifically influenced their sound. Cameron Brook credits his early years as a member of the Willoughby Junior Band, under the direction of Sydney Symphony Orchestra trumpet player Peter Walmsley as being significant. “Unlike a traditional brass band, the brass playing in Willoughby was fairly symphonic in its approach ... there was minimal use of vibrato and lots of good basic brass teaching.” Willoughby “was much more concerned with intonation, building stable chords and good sound
rather than plying massive vibrato over the top to try and compensate”.

Peter Whish-Wilson had undertaken further overseas study from a variety of well known international tubists when he was already a professional player. These included Roger Bobo, Arnold Jacobs, Michael Lind, Zach Spellman and Ian King. These high profile tubists would no doubt have had a significant impact on his sound however he did not elaborate on this. Two of them had also studied with Peter Sykes who was also ex Melbourne Symphony tubist.

The New Zealand national had learnt from two New Zealand Symphony orchestra tubists before moving to Australia where he took lessons with Steve Rossé. He felt a lot of Steve Rossé’s approach was definitely American but he was surprised by the approach of American Floyd Cooley when he took lessons from him in Chicago. He had expected his study with Cooley would have focused on producing a sound similar to Floyd Cooley’s own sound that he described as “incredibly big, impressive, present and loud ... but not in a boisterous way”. He was however surprised to find that Floyd Cooley’s approach aimed at “making the best sound and keeping it very controlled”.

The three American tubists however had the opportunity to learn from well-known American tuba teachers. These included Dan Perantoni, Don Harry, Roger Bobo and Gene Porkony. It is Steve Rossé however who best explains how his teachers influenced his sound. His first tuba teacher, Brent Dutton, was not an Arnold Jacob’s student but was more of a natural talent and virtuoso, who wanted him to be able to play everything on the instrument. He focused on developing Steve Rossé’s technical facility however when Steve Rossé moved to lessons with Dan
Perantoni, who had been a Jacob’s student, he spent two years working solely on developing Steve Rossé’s sound:

My whole first year was basically spent on playing slow scales and Bordogni; he had a Yorkbrunner and he had the most beautiful sound ... and he would literally put the bell so my head was in the bell and I would just listen to his sound. He would play for me, we’d repeat, I’d play for him and we’d play together and I had the sound in my head for two years and I just was trying to get the sound.

**Orchestral Experiences, Influences and Sound Aesthetic**

**Q.5 Do you know what it was about the quality of your sound that appealed to the panel and gained you this position?**

There was no official audition feedback although most tubists had an opinion on why they had gained their positions. Tim Jones, Thomas Allely and Ed Diefus felt their ability to not dominate the particular orchestra with their sound was a significant factor in their success. The fact they auditioned on smaller tubas or were playing larger tubas with the intention of blending with the ensemble, rather than overwhelming it was also significant as was their awareness of the size and sound qualities of the halls or orchestra pits the ensemble performed in.

Tim Buzbee felt his panel may have been attracted to the very steady and in tune core of his sound while Cameron Brook felt the big, open sound of his Cerveny
Piggy C tuba may have won him his positions. Cameron Brook explained how times have changed since his audition:

I played everything on the Cerveny Piggy including Symphonie Fantastique and that sort of stuff ... I don’t think anyone could win a job now playing all of the excerpts on something like the Cerveny Piggy, no matter how good you are. Expectations have changed, you know, a different time in the early eighties.

Steve Rossé explained how his sound suited the playing of the trombonists and fitted the sound the section leader wanted to create. He also outlined three important factors to consider when auditioning. Firstly, know the size of the hall you are auditioning in; some require 6/4 tubas to fill them but others require smaller tubas. Secondly, how does your sound compare to the sound they already have and finally, you need to play with a sound they like.

Q.6 Why do you feel Australian orchestras made the change from BB-flat to CC and EE-flat to F tubas?

(Only four of the tubists were able to comment on this question as two of the remaining three tubists are recent arrivals to the country and the other tubist is too young to provide any background to this change.)

Peter Whish-Wilson suggested this may have been purely evolutionary, as there was a prevalence of American style recordings at the time and Cameron Brook felt the C tuba provided a better orchestral foundation. He also thought this change was probably prompted by Gordon Webb bringing the C trumpet to Australia in 1974
and using it in the State Orchestra of Victoria. He pointed out that other tubists started using the C tuba at around this time and these included his predecessor, who played C and F tuba as well as Peter Sykes of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. Tim Jones mentioned that John Butler, John Woods and Frank Barzyk were also playing C tubas around this time and agreed Gordon Webb was instrumental in this change, particularly when he was head of the Brass Faculty at the Victorian College of the Arts.

Steve Rossé uses a B-flat as well as the C and F tubas in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra but said we traditionally played E-flat “simply because this country, I feel, at least tuba wise, maybe brass wise; this country has been for years and years until about 25-30 years ago, has been sort of enslaved by a British ideal that this is the sound. When I came here, I basically said to my students, there are not going to be jobs in Australia for the next twenty years. If you want to get a job, you have to get a job abroad, which means you have to get a C tuba. So if you want to be a serious student, you have to get a C tuba. And for the small tuba, I was always open minded between E-flat or F. I said, You can stay with the E-flat, that’s fine, but just keep in mind, that when you are competing, I tell you this, when you’re competing, when the clarinets, the other woodwinds and the string players are hearing an E-flat and an F competing in the high register excerpts and the solos, they want to hear clarity and good pitch”. Peter Whish-Wilson however stated, that he still prefers the E-flat sound and that if a tubist has a good upper high register he sees no reason to change, while Cameron Brook commented that E-flat tuba would never be your first choice for any particular thing, but if you could have only one all round tuba, it would be an
Q.7 Do you think the sound aesthetic (tone, clarity, articulation) of the tuba has changed during your years of experience in the orchestra and is there a distinct Australian sound? If so how would you describe it?

All generally reported, there wasn’t a specific Australian tuba sound however most felt the influences on the tuba had broadened from its English brass band origins. Steve Rossé felt there was some change when he first started with the Sydney Symphony as the older trombonists started playing a little darker and fuller but he was also pushing the softer end of the dynamics as well. Prior to his arrival he felt the sound was more English however he now feels the fundamentals are American but they take the pluses from both the America and the European and put them together.

Cameron Brook, Peter Whish-Wilson and Thomas Allely felt the sound aesthetic has been influenced by an American sound however Peter Whish-Wilson and Thomas Allely also felt there has been a European influence as well, mainly German. Cameron Brook also mentioned that Australian tubists change their sound to fit the size of their ensemble and Tim Jones commented that repertoire and conductors are instrumental in the sound that an orchestra produces.

The two most recent American tubists however made interesting comments. Ed Diefus felt there were a variety of tuba sounds in Australia with him and Steve Rossé producing a typical American sound but that the English Brass band influence was still very prevalent and there were also tubists who had a German approach,
following their study in Germany. He welcomed this variety and commented, “I appreciate the German aspect and the English aspect for that matter, but you know, where as in the United States you don’t, you go over there and sound like a German player, you don’t do anything, you don’t work”.

Tim Buzbee however felt the principles were the same but the articulation was different, perhaps as a result of our different accent. He believes Australian English is a little thicker tongued and a little lazier and this impacts on our brass playing. He also feels that we produce a big warm sound that does not have as much core to it when compared to the Chicago sound.

**Q.8 Have you had to change the way you play in the orchestra over the years to accommodate the changing sound aesthetic (e.g. the trombone section)?**

Not all felt they had changed their approach but several made interesting observations. Cameron Brook plays in one of the smaller orchestras and said initially he faced a dilemma as to whether he was the bottom end of the orchestra or the bottom end of the brass section. He realised at times he needed to have more attack to his sound than at others. Cameron Brook had also purchased an F tuba but commented, “the Rudi was great but somehow I don’t know, it didn’t fit with our trombone section as much as I suspect it might of in another ensemble... it never quite blended”.

Steve Rossé mentioned, recently there had been a conscious decision by his brass section to modify their sound to accommodate a new trumpeter whose dynamic level is ideal for their performance space and string section. This at times
requires the brass section to cut back its volume and there has been general agreement to do this. Thomas Allely also faced a dilemma when he sold the tuba on which he had successfully auditioned (5/4 tuba) and purchased a 4/4 tuba. Some members of the section commented that they preferred the sound of the original tuba however he decided it was more important for him to play the instrument he liked and the section have now come to accommodate his sound. Tim Jones mentioned how the repertoire and artistic interpretation of the conductor can require you to change your sound, while Ed Diefus commented that he has had to modify his sound to meet the confines of an orchestra pit.

Q.9 How have touring international orchestras or recordings of international orchestras influenced/impacted on your tuba sound or the sound of the section that you play in?

All reported touring international orchestras had not impacted on their sound and Cameron Brook commented that you need to live nearby and hear them regularly for it to have any real impact. Steve Rossé felt serious musicians would have already travelled themselves and that professional tubists travel quite a lot and are able to hear how overseas orchestras sound in their own concert halls. Peter Whish-Wilson commented he listened to a lot of Jazz and other musical genres and this all contributed to the way he played while Tim Jones felt that recordings could inspire you to play a particular way but this may not be achievable, with the section you play in.
Q.10 *What orchestra (national or international) produces the best low brass sound and what is it that appeals to you about their particular sound?*

The replies to this question were quite similar with most naming both American and European/British orchestral low brass sections however two of the American tubists named American orchestras only and often mentioned particular players and particular periods, for instance the ‘70s, ‘80s etc. The most frequently mentioned European/British low brass sections were the London Symphony orchestra and the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic while the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra were the most common American low brass sections. Steve Rossé made particular mention of the London Symphony orchestra from the Star Wars recordings of John Fletcher through to now, with Patrick Harold. He stated:

They have all the technical qualifications of the top American orchestras but they are sweet, they are sweet and cultured and just incredible ... I mean they play in tune, they don’t split notes, they can sight read, they play with a wonderful sound, they don’t over blow. They all have masterful control of their instruments and they really fuse the beautiful traditional European orchestral concept and I think they took the good qualities of the brass band.

**Summary**

Most tubists were asked to take up the instrument however none initially had a specific tuba teacher. Their early experience came from school and community bands, youth orchestras or their US equivalent and US summer music camps. The three Australians all studied at the Victorian College of the Arts, while the New
Zealand national moved to Australia to continue his study with Steve Rossé. The American tubists studied at a variety of American institutions and had the benefit of learning from world-renowned tuba specialists, while only one Australian was able to do this as a professional musician.

The transition from the traditional English sound aesthetic of the E-flat and B-flat tubas to the American sound aesthetic of the F and C tubas was initiated by Gordon Webb’s use of the C trumpet and his desire to change the sound aesthetic of his Australian brass sections. None of the tubists could identify an Australian tuba sound, although one American welcomed our variety of influences from Britain, America and Germany and the tubists’ choice of influential orchestral low brass sound aesthetics also came from this British, American and European background. Currently all professional state orchestral tuba positions are held by males who traditionally become long-term members of their orchestras.
### EARLY PEDAGOGICAL & PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCES

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### OVERSEAS STUDY PRACTICES/BENEFITS & AUSTRALIAN TUBA SOUND

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### ORCHESTRAL INFLUENCES & CAREER OPTIONS

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The six postgraduate students represent a different generation of Australian tuba player. The five males and one female represent New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. Three are currently studying overseas, one has taken lessons overseas and two are now freelance tuba players in Sydney and Melbourne. All have studied with Steve Rossé. Some questions asked, are the same as the state orchestral tubists’ questions. This is so their instrumental background, teachers, study etc. can be compared. Questions also dealt with their overseas study experience, overseas and Australian career possibilities, as well as their long-term career plans.

**Early Pedagogical & Performance Experiences**

**Q.1 Why did you take up the tuba and who taught you?**

Alex Hurst was the only postgraduate student who chose to take up the tuba as part of his schools instrumental programme in year seven. The remainder were playing other instruments and most were asked to take up the tuba. Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano had been playing some keyboard in the school band, however he was asked to take up the tuba in year five as he was the tallest student in the ensemble. Duncan Spry, Scott Frankcombe and Karina Filipi played euphonium,
trombone and saxophone respectively in primary school and were asked by their band directors if they would consider taking up the tuba.

Scott Frankcombe learnt to play the trombone, then the tuba as part of Queensland’s state funded, school based instrumental program while Mark Shearn originally played trumpet but moved to the tuba with its larger mouthpiece when he had braces placed on his teeth. Only one started with a dedicated tuba teacher who was also his band director and the remainder learnt from trombonists, although one learnt from a French horn player. All teachers came from a brass band background with the exception of the French horn tutor.

Q.2 Could you outline your early performance experiences on the tuba and the key of the instrument you used?

Duncan Spry, Mark Shearn and Karina Filipi took up E-flat tuba while Scott Frankcombe, Alex Hurst and Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano started on B-flat tuba however Scott Frankcombe changed to playing E-flat. All stated their early performance experience was heavily based on school music ensembles, that included general school bands, concert bands, orchestras and quintets however five of the six were also involved in non school ensembles. Both Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano and Duncan Spry attended the Sydney Conservatorium of Music High School for part of their high school years. Within six months of taking up the tuba, Duncan Spry started to play with Willoughby Band, a prominent Sydney community band, while Scott Frankcombe also performed with a Queensland community band that was sponsored by the local council and performed regularly.
Mark Shearn played in brass bands and gained his first orchestral experience at university. Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano successfully auditioned for the N.S.W. Department of Education Arts unit Symphonic Wind Ensemble and attended state music camps from year seven, where he was a member of the orchestra and concert band. Karina Filipi was a member of numerous school ensembles and in year nine successfully auditioned for the Adelaide Youth Orchestra and held this position until her second year of university. She has continued to play in brass bands until recently. Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano, Mark Shearn and Karina Filipi have also, at some time, held the Principal Tuba position in the Australian Youth Orchestra.

Q.3 Could you outline your study prior to moving overseas?

Duncan Spry completed an undergraduate performance degree at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with Steve Rossé and during the first year of that degree started playing C tuba. In year eleven, Scott Frankcombe bought his teachers’ F tuba and during the first year of his music studies at Queensland Conservatorium he started playing the C tuba. He studied for three years at the Queensland Conservatorium before transferring to the Australian National University, where he studied with Steve Rossé. During the second year of his study there, he bought his own C tuba (B & S Pt-6).

Mark Shearn started his music performance studies at the Australian National University with Steve Rossé and during his first year bought a C tuba (B & S Pt-6). By the end of that year, he had also purchased an F tuba however he still
continued to play B-flat and E-flat tubas in brass bands. Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano’s experience however was quite different, as he had moved to Spain for a short period of time during in high school, to study with Mel Cubertson. At the end of high school, he also started his music performance studies at the Australian National University, again with Steve Rossé. However, during his second year he moved back to Sydney and learnt from Brendan Lukin at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Karina Filipi completed her undergraduate performance degree at the Elder Conservatorium of Music in Adelaide with Peter Whish-Wilson and took up the C tuba at this time. She then took a year of private lessons with Gary McGibbon and followed this with a performance Masters degree at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music with Steve Rossé. In the first year of her master’s degree she purchased an F tuba.

In year twelve, Alex Hurst started private lessons with Steve Rossé and started playing F tuba. During a gap year, where he continued to attend Steve Rossé’s group tuba and warm-up classes at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, he started playing C tuba. At the end of his second year of undergraduate tuba studies at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, he sold both his C and F tuba and enrolled in a non-music related degree. He later moved to the Australian National University to resume his study with Steve Rossé and completed an honours degree at Newcastle University that enabled him to undertake overseas study.
Overseas Study Practices/Benefits & Australian Tuba Sound

**Q.4 How has your overseas study changed your approach to playing the tuba and the sound you produce and did you have to change the key of your instrument?**

Duncan Spry currently studies at De Paul University, in Chicago, with Floyd Cooley and he has not had to change the key of his tubas. His time with Cooley has however resulted in subtle changes to his sound and tonguing but there has been no real change of technique as both Cooley and his previous teacher Steve Rossé, are American and teach an American method. He did however mention that he felt the variety of American styles and sounds are largely shaped by the acoustics of the halls they perform in. Scott Frankcombe also studied at De Paul University with Floyd Cooley but completed his studies several years ago. He also played F and C tuba prior to studying with Cooley; so again, there was no need for him to change tubas. Scott Frankcombe felt his study was more focused on musicality and blending with the low brass section but the basics of the sound he produced were similar to his study with Steve Rossé however; he now feels his sound is not as loud or forceful.

Mark Shearn was an interesting case, as he has studied in Australia as well as the USA and is currently studying in Germany. He studied in America with Dan Perantoni, at the University of Indiana, as part of his Australian undergraduate degree exchange program. Since then, he has been a fulltime member of the Royal Australian Navy Band and completed his Masters of Music (Performance) at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. At the moment he is studying at UDK in Berlin with Dave Cribb. Cribb is an Australian, who also studied with Steve Rossé and now
teaches at UDK as well as holds an orchestral position in a German orchestra.

Originally, Mark Shearn played both C and F tubas however his study in Germany required him to change to B-flat tuba and his sound has also changed. He said the Germans place enormous importance on technique and prefer a controlled, dark, fat sound that is not as forceful or ‘in your face’ as the typical American sound. The German approach does not use vibrato and this is very different from his brass band background, where vibrato is accepted.

Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano is currently studying in Switzerland and still plays his C tuba. He had intended purchasing a B-flat tuba but was unable to sell his C tuba so was advised by his teacher to audition on the C tuba. He was accepted and felt he has had to make significant changes to his sound, as the concept of sound is quite different in Switzerland. They have a more gentle approach that produces a more mellow sound and this provides a solid low brass foundation on which the rest of the orchestra sits. The loud, penetrating, ‘in your face’ American sound is not valued in Switzerland and he has been working on softening his articulation and changing his embouchure to utilise more of the upper lip.

Although Karina Filipi has not undertaken postgraduate study overseas, she has taken private lessons with tubists in America, the United Kingdom and Europe. Several years ago, she had lessons in America which she said was very similar to how she had been taught in Australia, except they felt she over articulated and was overly reliant on her tongue. She feels these two traits are probably as a result of her strong brass band background however she was surprised that they appeared more interested in how she interpreted orchestral excerpts, rather than her technique.
Karina Filipi was recently a recipient of a Big Brother Movement Award and took private lessons in the United Kingdom and Europe. In the UK, she felt they focused on global issues such as playing in tune and in time however in Germany and Switzerland they were very technique orientated, which she felt was a different approach to what she had experienced in Australia.

Several years ago, Alex Hurst studied in Germany at the Hofschul of Theatre and Music with an Austrian tuba teacher. He did not change his C tuba for a B-flat as was expected, as the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra tuba positions were all coming up for audition in Australia at the time and he knew these auditions would require a C tuba. Alex Hurst commented that the Germans had a great approach to playing European music such as Bach, Mahler and Bruckner and aimed to produce a different sound and timbre on the B-flat tuba. This was very different from the American approach which they did not understand at all.

Q.5 What are the benefits of overseas study for Australian tubists?

Every one said overseas study exposed them to different traditions, approaches and styles of playing that they felt could not be achieved by Australian study only. Duncan Spry felt it created a more inspiring and competitive atmosphere with the vastly increased number of ensembles providing the opportunity for professional auditions, unlike Australia, where they are usually student based, mock auditions:

It’s allowed me to really practice taking auditions because there have been
more opportunities to do auditions, so it’s given me a real insight into the art of how to take an audition and how to be successful at an audition... taking an audition is almost like a sport. And one of the things I have delved into a lot since I’ve been there is the psychology of taking an audition and how to prepare for it.

He also felt experiencing the unique orchestral sound that has developed from city to city plus the many teachers, tuba students and brass concerts coming through Chicago on a daily basis, could not be matched in Australia. Scott Frankcombe also commented on this idea of a more inspiring learning environment, where you are exposed to many more orchestras, teachers and students and where there is greater competition and opportunity.

Mark Shearn said, “It’s the opportunities. There’s like one hundred orchestras in Germany and there’s like more audition opportunities... I have done a lot of auditions since I’ve been here and I would not have had one opportunity in Australia to do one... there’s more opportunities to win jobs”. His overseas study allowed him to learn how to create the sound required for these auditions. Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano agreed with this and believed this technical precision could not be learnt in Australia. Karina Filipi explained how exposure to the variety of approaches and sounds gained overseas is critical for your development and Alex Hurst believes that overseas study provides you with a wider palette from which to create your own sound.
Q.6 In light of your studying overseas do you feel that Australia has developed its own unique tuba sound?

The responses to this question were inconclusive as one felt there could be, others felt it might still be developing and still others didn’t feel there was a specific Australian sound. This particular question however will be discussed later in the thesis as it has possible implications for the future voice of the Australian tuba.

Orchestral Influences & Career Options

Q.7 What orchestra (national or international) produces the best low brass sound and what is it that appeals to you about their particular sound?

All chose American and European orchestras, with Karina Filipi including the Sydney Symphony brass section because of its unified concept of how it wanted to sound. The Chicago, San Francisco, Boston and Philadelphia Symphony orchestras were named with Scott Frankcombe commenting he particularly liked the homogenous, blend of sound of several of these orchestras whereas Mark Shearn was attracted to the loud and forceful tuba playing of 1990s recordings of the New York Philharmonic. However, now that he is in Berlin, he focuses on the overall sound of the orchestra rather than a specific instrument. The Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic were also considered highly influential, but Alex Hurst commented that he felt it was very difficult to get a perfect brass section in any one orchestra and that he preferred parts of different orchestras.
Q.8 What do you see as your prospects as a professional tuba player if you return to Australia?

The replies to this question were not promising for the future of young Australian tubists. Both Scott Frankcombe and Alex Hurst returned to Australia at least eighteen months ago and neither has had the opportunity to audition for any Australian orchestras as there are no vacancies. Scott Frankcombe believes the next professional tuba position may well be the Adelaide Symphony which may not come up for audition for another five to 10 years.

Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano also agrees that the next professional job will probably be with the Adelaide Symphony but that it will not be for a few years. Mark Shearn and Duncan Spry both believe there are no professional prospects for them in Australia at the moment and Duncan Spry will only return to Australia if his US visa runs out and he fails to secure a further period of time with the Chicago Civic Orchestra or gain a position in a full professional orchestra. Karina Filipi is still completing her Australian postgraduate studies and also feels it will be at least five years before there is another audition for one of our main orchestras. She believes there is alternative professional tuba work available, but tubists will need to actively seek this work.

Q.9 Could you outline your current career path plans?

Again, the comments were not positive for the long-term future of Australian tubists. Duncan Spry would like to win an audition in America while Scott
Frankcombe would like to be successful at the upcoming Montreal audition however, if that doesn’t eventuate he plans to stay in Sydney and teach or perhaps have a complete change of career. Mark Shearn and Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano both want orchestral positions in Europe and Mark Shearn intends spending another year in Germany pursuing this. After that period of time, he plans to return to Australia and will hopefully have a career in some music related field but not necessarily tuba.

Antonio Neilley-Menéndez De Llano would also be happy to win a professional orchestral position in Australia, as would Alex Hurst however Hurst feels that there have been so many auditions in Australia in the past few years that it is unlikely anything else will become available in the foreseeable future. Karina Filipi’s ultimate goal is to also have an orchestral position however she agrees that it is unlikely any Australian position will become available within the next five years. She intends finishing her postgraduate study in Australia, taking further lessons in Germany or Switzerland and auditioning for several overseas orchestras, before returning home to try for any possible Australian positions.

**Summary**

All but one tubist were asked to take up the tuba and only one initially had a specific tuba teacher. School bands and community bands provided most of their performance experience however some were involved in State Youth Orchestras and the Australian Youth Orchestra. Half started on E-flat tuba while the other half started on B-flat tuba; both of which are in keeping with the British brass band sound aesthetic. Tertiary study was undertaken across five Australian institutions and
during that time all adopted an American sound aesthetic by taking up the C tuba, with some also taking up the F tuba. Therefore, overseas study in the USA did not require a change of tuba key and students experienced similar teaching methods to Australia. Study in most of Europe however, generally required changing to a Bb tuba but two students did not purchase this tuba, for various reasons and undertook their study on C tuba. European study did however result in all students significantly changing their approach to playing.

There was no general consensus regarding the existence of a specific Australian tuba sound and American orchestral low brass sections were more influential than both European and Australian. All students reported major benefits gained from overseas study and felt these could not be duplicated in Australia. Again, all felt their current professional orchestral career prospects in Australia were extremely limited and could not compete with the opportunities available in the USA or Europe.
### Composers Responses

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The following three composers were interviewed to discuss their approach to composing for the tuba, their recommendations for first time tuba composers, how
the composition community viewed the status of the tuba and if that status could be altered. All three composers have a background as brass players and two have played some tuba. All have composed at least one tuba concerto and written works for solo brass instruments and brass ensembles.

Views, Inspiration & Composition Process

Q.1 How do you think the composition community views the tuba?

Brenton Broadstock believes the tuba has a low status amongst the composition community and this was reinforced by Barry McKimm’s assessment that they considered the tuba a simple bass line instrument that held long notes at the bottom of the chord. Raffaele Marcellino agreed it was generally viewed as a bass line orchestral instrument that had difficulty in moving with any great speed and that composers did not understand its range, upper register or the various types of tubas. He went on to say “there was reluctance to use it as a solo instrument” and that it had a “bit of a public relations problem” in terms of its image; that was seen as an “oom-pah, oom-pah, bit of a comical instrument”.

Q.2 What inspired you to write for the tuba?

Peter Sykes from the Melbourne Symphony orchestra approached composer Barry McKimm to write a tuba concerto for him. McKimm had always loved the sound of the tuba with its rich sound qualities and was disappointed that composers
had not realised its potential, so he accepted this request. Raffaele Marcellino was also inspired by the tuba’s neglect and also realised the potential of the lower brass sound, where as Brenton Broadstock grew up playing in Brass bands and had always had a love of the tuba and wanted to showcase its incredible versatility and virtuosity.

Q.3 What prior knowledge did you have regarding writing for the tuba?

All three came from a brass band background. Two of them had played some tuba and this gave them a good understanding of the instrument and made writing for it more accessible. Barry McKimm however is primarily a trumpet player and did not have firsthand experience playing the instrument; he learnt how to write for the instrument as he composed, by listening to recordings that featured the tuba and studying scores.

Q.4 Was there any collaboration with a tuba player and if so can you outline your collaborative experience with them?

Both Barry McKimm and Brenton Broadstock said they did not collaborate in a conventional sense despite being approached by prominent tubists to compose the concertos. Each composed his concerto, had the first play through and was then happy to change things if the tubist encountered any problems. Raffaele Marcellino however, worked closely with Steve Rossé during the composition process and also mentioned that before composing for the tuba he asks himself; what things are idiosyncratic to the tuba that the performer likes doing and how can I promote a
neglected aspect of tuba playing in this composition?

Compositional Suggestions and the Promotion and Future of the Tuba

Q.5 In light of your compositional experience what suggestions would you have for a composer who has never written for the tuba?

Barry McKimm and Brenton Broadstock felt new composers should explore the tuba’s vast range and extreme dynamic contrast, while Raffaele Marcellino and Brenton Broadstock felt they should exploit the tuba’s lyrical quality, particularly in the upper register. Tone colour, the lower register and particularly the tuba’s dexterity in the lower register were also considered important features that should be explored by any composer considering composing for the tuba.

Q.6 What information would have made the compositional process easier for you?

All three felt composing had been quite straight forward as they came from a brass band background and therefore knew the compositional rules associated with general brass. The two who played tuba had additional insight into its capabilities.

Q.7 What do you think would need to be done to encourage more Australian composers to write works for the tuba?

Again, all felt the tuba would be ignored unless tubists commissioned or asked composers to write for the instrument and Barry McKimm suggested composers should be of the same generation as the performers. Raffaele Marcellino
believes more new ensembles should feature the tuba and these ensembles should approach composers to write for them. He did however make the following comment:

Australian Brass Chamber music isn’t as active as other chamber music forms ... and tuba may never be accepted in Musica Viva type circles. The trouble with brass is it has been associated with the working culture. You can almost map Australia by its socio-economic condition as to whether they had string and wind ensembles or brass. The tuba’s brass band origins may make it appear to be representative of a lower class of music and this may make it less attractive to composers.

**Q.8 What future do you think the tuba may have in the next twenty years of contemporary Australian art music?**

Brenton Broadstock feels that its future is hard to predict and both he and Barry McKimm felt that it would be determined by tubists themselves. Barry McKimm pointed out that the tuba is still a young instrument and is a long way behind string and wind instruments in terms of its acceptance. Raffaele Marcellino however, suggested that unless it was incorporated into a reasonably high profile ensemble, then its future would possibly be limited. All agreed that generating more tuba repertoire would improve its future and its musical status.

**Summary**

All felt that the tuba was unpopular and was viewed as a slow, simple bass line instrument. Although all had specific tubists in mind for their concertos, their
own substantial brass backgrounds inspired them to write for the instrument and assisted them in the technical aspects of brass composition. This resulted in two of them engaging in minimal collaboration during their tuba concerto compositions while the third, although equally skilled, chose to engage in substantial collaboration with the tubist.

Still considered a young instrument, they all believe the tuba is underutilised by composers, who they suggested should explore all registers of its vast range, its dexterity, tone colours and extreme dynamic range. A question was also raised regarding the status of Australian brass chamber music particularly with its brass band background, however all felt the tuba’s status could be increased by tubists commissioning more solo and ensemble repertoire for the instrument.
Chapter Three

Discussion

The findings of these interviews have resulted in the identification of a number of themes. Some were expected but other, equally important themes have also emerged and are having considerable impact on the ability of the Australian tubist to perform the role they have been trained to do, that is, to play the tuba professionally.

It is evident, that the sound aesthetic of the tuba in Australia, has undergone change and this change has come from a variety of sources and is ongoing. Undoubtedly, a British tradition has had significant impact and influence on the development of the tuba in Australia, dating back to our colonial beginnings and the adoption of the British brass band tradition in the nineteenth century. The original preferred choice of Australian orchestral tuba was the E-flat tuba, that is in keeping with the both the British brass band and the British orchestral tradition. This is confirmed by the Australian and New Zealand professional tubists who all started on E-flat tuba. Even with the later generation of student tubists, four of the six students initially started on the E-flat tuba while the other two played B-flat. This is an historically inherited influence that has come from the fact that we were a British colony and have maintained close links with the United Kingdom, even to this day. In his interview, Steve Rossé described this influence as an enslavement that lasted until twenty five to thirty years ago. This tradition has also been reinforced in Australia by the Salvation Army band culture that also originated in Britain and
spread throughout Australia.

There has however been a second wave of influence that bought the American orchestral style to Australia. This has come from older, professional brass players who studied in the United States in their earlier years and/or held orchestral positions around the world in the late 1950s and early 1960s. New Zealand born trumpeter, Gordon Webb is acknowledged, Australia wide as having had a tremendous impact on our move from the British orchestral B-flat trumpet to the American C trumpet. He is also credited with being the catalyst for a corresponding move from the British B-flat and E-flat tubas to the American C and F tubas. His adoption of the C trumpet was no doubt as a result of his study in the United States at the Eastman, Juilliard and Curtis Schools of Music, prior to him taking up the position of Principal Trumpet with the London Symphony Orchestra in 1963. His arrival in Australia, in 1974, to take up the position of Principal Trumpet in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, was the catalyst for a change in the sound aesthetic in the brass section of that orchestra. His appointment as a member of staff at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1979 and subsequent appointment as Head of Brass at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music from 1990 to 1996 further broadened his influence.

While Webb pushed for the change to the American style C trumpet and a changing sound aesthetic in the orchestra, that did result in a move amongst some professional tubists to C and F tubas; it would appear that student tubists were still
entrenched in the British orchestral E-flat tuba, as has been verified by Scott Kinmont. It is believed Steve Rosse, Principal Tubist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra since 1990, although not the first to introduce C and F tubas into Australia, has been a driving force in converting student tubists to the C and F tuba. This has been achieved through his promotion of these instruments in his teaching of an American method and his continual push to promote the tuba and increase its musical status.

There is now however a third, more current wave of influence. This comes from younger tubists who have left Australia to undertake postgraduate overseas tuba study and are then returning to take up positions as professional freelance tubists or tuba/low brass teachers or ensemble directors throughout our schools and community bands/orchestras. These tubists may have studied in America or Europe or both and it is this multinational influence that is now emerging in Australia. While the American system focuses on producing a big sound on the C tuba, the European system focuses on technical precision on the B-flat tuba. It should be noted that Steve Rossé has been incorporating this European influence into the low brass sound aesthetic of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra by using a BB-flat tuba in appropriate orchestral repertoire. This is as a result of Sydney Symphony trombonist, Scott Kinmont’s push to acquire a set of German trombones for the Sydney Symphony in the late 1990’s. When these trombones were purchased, Rossé also purchased a BB-flat tuba. These instruments are used for repertoire up to and including Wagner however they revert to American instruments in repertoire following Wagner.

The professional tubists, the post graduate tubists and other brass section
members of the Sydney Symphony were also questioned regarding the possible impact of the low brass sound aesthetic of both visiting orchestras and recordings of influential orchestras, in terms of how this might influence their sound in their orchestra. Their choice of orchestras ranged from well known European and American orchestras such as, the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra and New York Philharmonic to lesser known orchestras such as the Montreal Symphony during the 1980s. Steve Rossé selected the London Symphony, from the time of their Star Wars soundtrack recording with tubist Patrick Harold. He felt they had the same basic technical qualifications of American players but fused this with a beautiful, traditional European orchestral concept and the best qualities of the brass band sound.

However, while all were able to list orchestras that impressed them, none commented on how this had specifically changed their sound. Their responses are however best summed up by Cameron Brook’s comment that different orchestras play different things well, depending on their expertise and instrumentation and therefore no one orchestra has the perfect sound aesthetic; and Tim Jones’ comment that some recordings may make you want to play in a certain way, but that way may not be achievable with the section you play in. However, only time will tell as to what the end result might be with this combination of influences and what its long-term impact might be on the sound aesthetic of the tuba and low brass in Australian orchestras.

A question was also raised regarding the emergence of an ‘Australian’ tuba sound and the tubists, both professional and postgraduate, as well as the Sydney
Symphony brass section players provided a range of replies. Some thought there was definitely no identifiable Australian tuba sound, some thought there might be, but could not specifically define it, while others felt it might be a fusion of British, American and German influences or British and American influences and some felt it was still in a state of transition. However, two of the postgraduate students made very insightful comments. One felt that Australians don’t feel they have to play the tuba in any specific style; they can take an audition on any tuba and that we are a young country and we are still trying to find our own sound. The other postgraduate student supported this with his comment that Australians don’t strive to sound strictly the same as any one style; we just strive to be excellent and take what is best from all schools.

It is however the comments made by the two most recent American professional tubists that perhaps give us the greatest insight into this issue. Tim Buzbee commented that our basic principles of playing are the same as in America, but our English dialect effects our pronunciation and this transferred across to our brass playing and impacted on our articulation. He also felt Australian tubists produced a slightly different sound to the typical Chicago sound. Ed Diefus on the other hand, commented that he heard a variety of sounds in Australia. There is of course an American style but there is also a lot of English influence which he hears in our brass bands, as well as some German style, from players who have studied in Germany. He acknowledges that these are not unique to Australia but welcomes being able to hear them and emphasizes our tolerance, which is quite different from both America and Germany.
It may well be that tubists in Australia are too close to the sound they produce and it takes an outsider to recognise our distinctive qualities. Perhaps an Australian tuba sound is not so much developing in our orchestras, but rather in our community and non professional ensembles, as our younger tubists return from overseas study, cannot find professional orchestral work and so play in community orchestras, brass/concert bands and teach students in a style that incorporates all of the styles they have personally experienced. The emergence of an Australian sound may be based on the fact that we accept all tuba styles and sounds and as an isolated country we are not regulated or pressured by larger countries to conform to their style of playing.

There are also numerous factors to take into account when assessing the status of the tuba in Australia. Comparison between the professional and student tubists early pedagogical and performance experience shows the tuba was not always their instrument of first choice. Although the three Australian and New Zealand professional tubists chose to take up the tuba for a variety of reasons, the three American tubists went through a series of instruments before finally settling with the tuba. This is mirrored in the postgraduate students where only one chose the tuba as part of his school’s instrumental program, while the remaining five started on other instruments and moved to the tuba at the request of their band directors. This implies the tuba is still low on the list when it comes to students’ instrumental preferences and it is often taken up as a result of a request by a band director or to solve a problem, for instance, braces on teeth.

The professional tubists also had a variety of musicians as their first
instrumental tutors with all citing either their school band director or the school instrumental brass tutor as their first teacher. The directors/tutors taught general brass, trombone or French horn and it was several years before any of the tubists had a designated tubist as their teacher with one professional tubist not having a specific tuba teacher until he started tertiary study. Interestingly, one of the postgraduate students did have a tubist as their first teacher but this was because his band director was a tubist. The other five, also originally learnt from their band director, a trombonist or other brass specialist. The Australian instrumental tutors/band directors also predominantly came from a brass band background with the exception of one French horn tutor whose background was orchestral and it is perhaps of concern, that there is a lack of trained tuba teachers instructing our tubists, particularly in their early years.

The majority of the professional tubists gained their initial performance experience in school ensembles such as wind and concert bands, although two did gain orchestral experience in their schools. Two were also involved in community bands, while most of them were involved in city youth orchestras or equivalent American ensembles or camps. The postgraduate tubists on the other hand, all gained their initial performance experience at school with two of them attending the Sydney Conservatorium of Music High School. The postgraduate students combined performance experience was gained across a wide range of ensembles. Four of them further expanded their experience by being involved in community and brass band programs, while three were involved in city youth orchestras or pre-university enrichment courses. Interestingly, three of them have also at some time held the
tuba position in the Australian Youth Orchestra.

Beginner to very capable Australian tubists’ performance experience appears to be well catered for in state, catholic and private school systems and can be further enriched by involvement in community ensembles/orchestras and brass bands however Australia is not catering for the needs of our emerging professional tubists. We do attempt to do this with our city youth orchestras and our Australian Youth Orchestra but these offer an opportunity for just a few of our talented tubists. As Steve Rosse mentioned in his interview, he held one of the twenty tuba position in the California All State Band, an American State selective ensemble. We have one Australian Youth orchestra which would be our most prestigious student ensemble and it has a position for only one tubist.

It is however the Australian brass composers who perhaps shed the best light on the status of the tuba as a solo instrument, in Australia. All felt that the tuba was viewed by the Australian composition community and perhaps a large section of the Australian music community, as an orchestral bass line instrument with a comical ‘oom-pah’ image. They felt few Australian composers were aware of the tuba’s true potential as a solo instrument and they lacked an understanding of its huge range and contrasting tonal qualities and dexterity, across that range. They all acknowledged their interest in composing for the tuba had come from having a brass background and having personally experienced the true potential of the tuba, by either playing the instrument or hearing it played by skilled musicians. It is interesting that all three composers felt the commissioning of tuba compositions was a critical factor in encouraging more Australian composers to write for the tuba.
There is no doubt this has been taken on as a mission by Steve Rossé, either personally or through his organisation, ‘Tubamania’. He has consistently approached Australian composers to write compositions for solo tuba or ensemble works that include the tuba. It is of further interest, that all three composers felt the role the tuba in contemporary Australian Art music would be decided by tubists themselves. If tubists did not commission works from a wide base of Australian composers, in an attempt to promote the instrument to the wider Australian music community, then the tuba would continue to have a low musical status. This, when combined with the working class image the tuba has gained through its strong association with the brass band does not paint a very bright picture for the future status of the tuba in Australia.

Study pattern is also an area where there was significant divergence between the professional Australian/New Zealand orchestral tubists, the postgraduate tubists and the American orchestral tubists. It is significant that the older Australian professional tubists, although not all living in Victoria, all chose to study at the Victorian College for the Arts with John Woods, who had held the tuba position with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. From there, two of them continued study with Peter Sykes who had also held the tuba position in the Melbourne Symphony and one of these also studied with Frank Barzyk. It would appear however, none of them undertook overseas study prior to taking up their Australian, professional orchestral positions although one has worked with a number of highly regarded international tubists, since taking up his position. The New Zealand national however is from a younger generation and his study was slightly different. He began his tertiary study
in New Zealand and then moved to the Australian National University in Canberra to study with Steve Rossé. This was followed by a short period of overseas study at De Paul University, Chicago, before he returned to Australia and ultimately secured his professional orchestral position.

Interestingly, all of the postgraduate students also completed an undergraduate degree in Australia but chose to study at five different institutions; The Australian National University (Canberra), The Elder Conservatorium of Music (Adelaide), The Queensland Conservatorium, The Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Newcastle University. This perhaps indicates that quality tuba teaching is now taking place in a number of Australian music institutions rather than just the one, as is implied by the three older Australian professional tubists all choosing to study at the Victorian College of the Arts.

However, despite completing their undergraduate degree, all of the postgraduate students felt the need to either undertake fulltime study overseas or at least spend a period of time overseas taking individual tuba lessons with specific tuba teachers. This now appears to be the normal pattern of study for serious Australian tuba students, particularly those who aspire to an orchestral position, which is quite different from the study undertaken by the professional tubists. There is a perceived need on the part of the students, that to be competitive, to maximise their skills and fully realise their potential, they need to travel overseas and gain as wide an experience as possible, in the hope that they may be successful in gaining a professional orchestral tuba position. This is evidenced by the fact that some of these students have undertaken study/lessons in the USA and Europe, as well as
The American professional tubists however have all at one time, had the benefit of learning from at least one experienced, world-renowned tuba teacher while still residing in their own country. These teachers include, Gene Porkony, Roger Bobo, Dan Perantoni and Don Harry. This is as a result of them residing in a country with a large population that has many more professional orchestras, ensembles, music faculties and professional tuba opportunities; where the tuba has been valued and promoted for a significant period of time, by a series of high profile, committed tubists/teachers. Australian students have to travel overseas to get the variety and experience of teachers that Americans’ take for granted. Interviews with postgraduate students who have or are currently studying in America, portray it as a country with the real sense of a large tuba community, that Australia, as a much smaller country, population wise, can probably never hope to match; although American teachers such as Steve Rossé do provide this in Sydney, but on a much smaller scale. Rossé has further promoted the idea of a tuba community by holding tuba festivals and forming links with our Asian neighbours.

The prospect of career opportunities has however emerged as an unexpected, but major issue for Australian tubists. To gain an Australian orchestral position, a tubist must first take an audition and be successful at that audition. Australia has only seven professional orchestras which have full time tuba positions, The Sydney Symphony Orchestra, The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, The Adelaide Symphony orchestra, The Queensland Symphony orchestra, The Western Australia Symphony orchestra, The Tasmanian Symphony orchestra and the
Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra. The tubists in four of these orchestras are long-term members of their orchestra; most having held their positions for virtually all of their professional careers. The other three orchestral positions are held by younger, more recent appointees. Steve Rossé encouraged his advanced students to audition for these three positions and two were successful at the initial auditions, with one ultimately securing his position after completing the probationary period; however ultimately two of the positions went to more experienced tubists, both of whom were Americans, who had collectively held professional orchestral positions in America, Europe and Asia.

Australian tubists wishing to obtain professional orchestral positions in Australia face two major problems; the first, that only seven of the professional orchestras in the country have fulltime tuba positions and secondly, that appointed tubists tend to hold their positions for many years. This means the career prospects for a tubist in Australia, are extremely limited and the opportunity to take regular live auditions is equally limited. As one of the postgraduate students, who is currently studying in America and who also holds the tuba position in the Chicago Civic orchestra reported; Chicago provides a stimulating tuba environment that cannot be matched in Australia while America, because of its many tuba career options, provides the opportunity to take regular live auditions that enable you to improve your audition skills. Another postgraduate student, currently studying in Germany supported these comments as well when he commented that Germany had over one hundred orchestras and provided many more audition opportunities. If these two students still studied in Australian, they would be limited to student, mock
auditions, which although beneficial do not allow students to practice the required
degree of psychological, emotional and musical preparation that is needed to win a
dlive audition.

More Australian music institutions are producing very capable tubists but
again, our small population and extremely limited number of professional
ensembles, combined with the fact that our current orchestral tubists retain their
positions for many years; means most will never hold a tuba position in an Australian
orchestra. Australia is suffering a ‘tuba drain’, as young tubists are forced to
undertake further study abroad, in the hope of securing an overseas professional
ensemble position as a tubist and will only return to Australia when an audition is
advertised or as a last resort or when they have given up their dream of a holding a
professional ensemble tuba position. On their return to Australia, their professional
performance options are limited to positions in the Australian armed forces bands,
police bands or freelance tuba work. They could also set up a private teaching studio,
teach tuba in schools or community bands or direct instrumental programs in
schools, colleges or the community; these however would have limited personal
performance opportunities.

Surprisingly, gender has also arisen as an unexpected issue. It is significant
that of the nineteen brass musicians and brass composers interviewed, only one of
them was female. She is extremely motivated and a dedicated postgraduate tubist
who currently holds both the Australian Youth Orchestra tuba position and the
Sydney Sinfonia tuba position and has travelled to Britain, Europe and America to
take private lessons with prominent tubists. Her goal is to gain a professional
orchestral tuba position however, when interviewed, she recalled being unable to lift the tuba when first asked to play the instrument in primary school and explained how her band master had to place the tuba on her lap. My research has uncovered only one female who has held a tuba position in any Australian professional orchestra. She is Carolyn Johns, who held the Principal Tuba position in the Australian Opera and Ballet orchestra from 1987 to 2006 and who also studied at the Victorian College of the Arts. Even on the international music scene, only two female tubists are readily recognised. They are Carol Jantsch and Velvet Brown and I am unaware of any well known Australian or International, female, tuba pedagogues. The tuba’s image as a large, loud, heavy, ‘boy’ type instrument, that plays only the bass line; when combined with the fact that even the smaller tubas are indeed very heavy, may well be robbing the Australian and global music community of talented female tubists.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is clear that Australia is hugely indebted to Britain for the introduction and dissemination of its brass band culture and brass sound aesthetic that came to our shores during the nineteenth century, as a result of British migration. Australia’s adoption of the British brass band model resulted in the

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formation of many Australian town and community bands and the arrival of the Salvation Army in Australia further reinforced and broadened this trend, with its adoption of the brass band as a key component in the broadcasting of its beliefs. In certain areas of South Australia, again due to migration, the influence of a German brass band culture has also left its mark.

Through these bands, Australia gained access to the E-flat and B-flat tubas and they became the mainstay of our low brass sound aesthetic for almost a century. This saw the tuba used in a wide variety of Australian ensembles which included military, police, volunteer, community, concert and jazz bands before the E-flat tuba made its move into Australian orchestras as the preferred tuba, in line with British orchestral tradition. This British low brass sound aesthetic was the accepted sound aesthetic in all Australian orchestras up until 1974, when trumpeter Gordon Webb took up the Principal Trumpet position in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, following his time with the London Symphony orchestra and previous study in America.

Webb’s introduction of the American C trumpet into the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, rather than the accepted B-flat trumpet, was the catalyst for the change in sound aesthetic of the brass section of that orchestra that led to their adoption of C trumpets and larger bored trombones. This initial change in sound aesthetic was not fully realised until American Steve Rossé took up the Principal Tuba position in 1990 and replaced the British E-flat tuba with the American C and F tubas. His use of both the C and F tubas, particularly when teaching tertiary level tuba students, led to the acceptance of these instruments by those students. Gordon Webb’s later movement to the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the Victorian College of the
Arts allowed his influence to spread further across Australia. However, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, as one of Australia’s premiere orchestras has since broadened its low brass sound aesthetic to include a set of German trombones and a BB-flat tuba that are used in specific repertoire.

Since its arrival in Australia, the status of the tuba has slowly changed from being an instrument that was not always included in ensembles where convention would normally have dictated its use, to at least being included in most ensembles that you would expect to include the tuba. Students are taking up the tuba either out of genuine interest or at the request of ensemble directors and are undertaking long-term study on the instrument however the perception of it as a dowdy, slow moving bass line instrument still lingers. It appears the Australian composition community is still generally unaware of its potential as a solo instrument and those that are aware believe the commissioning of solo tuba works or chamber music compositions that feature the tuba will generate more performance material that will ultimately further improve the status of the tuba. Steve Rossé, in his position as Principal Tuba of the Sydney Symphony orchestra and founder of Tubamania, has actively commissioned both solo and ensemble tuba works by composers residing in Australia and this, along with his organising of international tuba festivals and concert performances is actively elevating the status of the tuba as a solo and small ensemble instrument in Australia. It may well be however, that the tubas association with the brass band and the working class image of these bands may negatively impact on its status in the music community, for some time to come.
There appears to be no general consensus regarding the existence of a specific Australian tuba sound, however those who do believe that such a sound could be emerging, feel that it involves a mix of American and European styles with some residual British style. Comments made by the two most recently appointed American tubists support the emergence of an Australian sound and highlight the tolerance of the Australian musical community in its acceptance of differing tuba styles. It is anticipated a specific Australian tuba sound will emerge in the long-term, however it will not necessarily come from our small number of professional orchestral tubists but perhaps emerge at a more ‘grass roots’ level as Australian tubists, who have studied a variety of overseas tuba styles, return to Australia to teach tuba, rather than gain one of our extremely limited professional orchestral tuba positions. It is anticipated that their teaching style will be a synthesis of the various tuba styles they have personally experienced both in Australian and overseas and this synthesized style will form the basis of the Australian tuba sound.

It is evident, as the status of the tuba has increased and more students have taken up the instrument and continued their tuba study at an undergraduate and postgraduate level, that Australia does not have the capacity to provide professional orchestral employment for these increasing numbers. This is because only seven of Australia’s professional orchestras have full time tuba positions and historically, once tubists win those positions and have passed their probationary period, they tend to retain the position for the length of their professional careers. Serious tuba students are faced with a dilemma when they complete their undergraduate study: do they settle for freelance professional tuba work and instrumental teaching positions in
Australia or do they undertake further tuba study overseas, in an attempt to better prepare themselves to potentially gain a professional orchestral position either overseas or in Australia, should a vacancy occur. Australia, because of its relatively small population cannot provide the same size of stimulating tuba community, number of live auditions or professional orchestral career opportunities or freelance work as can both America and Europe and these are issues that will ultimately need to be addressed by the Australian music community.

The low brass sound aesthetic has undergone significant change in Australia, particularly in the last forty years and the catalyst for this change was New Zealand trumpeter Gordon Webb. His study in the United States and professional work there and in the United Kingdom set the stage for significant change in the Australia orchestral brass sound aesthetic. His appointment as Principal Trumpeter of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 1974 and his vision for a change in the sound aesthetic of that brass section and ultimately the brass sections of other Australian orchestras, led to a gradual abandonment of the British orchestral low brass sound aesthetic and an adoption of the American orchestral low brass sound aesthetic. This set in place a process of change that saw the Sydney Symphony Orchestra move from the traditional British E-flat tuba to the accepted American C and F tubas. This American low brass sound aesthetic was also adopted in other Australia orchestras but was further consolidated into the Sydney Symphony when American, Steve Rossé was appointed to the orchestra’s Principal Tuba position in 1990.

The predominant use of the C and F tubas in the teaching of undergraduate and postgraduate tuba students across Australian tertiary institutions has led to a
further acceptance of the American orchestral low brass sound aesthetic. This orchestral sound aesthetic has also become increasingly reinforced with the appointment of American tubists to three of the seven full time tuba positions in professional Australian orchestras. There has however been an extension of this sound aesthetic with Steve Rossé’s use of the German style BB-flat tuba in appropriate repertoire with the Sydney Symphony. Although this sound aesthetic is not used in other Australian professional orchestras, it is a sound aesthetic that may become more prevalent in Australia as Australian tuba students undertake further study in Germany. With their return to Australia, to take up professional positions as tubists and/or tuba teachers, a distinct Australian tuba sound may well emerge that is a synthesis of the American, German and British sound aesthetics they have experienced in their tuba studies. It is anticipated this research will be of significant benefit to the Australian tuba community and will also benefit the wider Australian musical community.
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Books


**On line Journal**


**Website**


