


Starting Tuba Players at Any Age

*Midwest Clinic
12/19/2013*

Northern Illinois University
Director of Athletic Bands

www.niu.edu/band
www.ThomasBough.com



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- Yamaha Band and Orchestra Division
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Starting Points:

- Many people are naturally inclined to play tuba or euphonium but don't know it
- The size and physical condition of the player is ONLY one factor among many
- Size and physical strength is a bit more of a factor in marching band
- Gender is NOT a factor

Practical Concerns

If you are physically able to pick up the tuba, and are willing to do so regularly, you have a much better chance of becoming a capable player. However....



Female Tuba Virtuosi

- Some of the absolute finest musicians playing the tuba or euphonium today happen to be women.
- Dr. Deana Swoboda, ASU, President of ITEA
- Prof. Velvet Brown, Penn State
- Dr. Joanna Hersey, UNC Pembroke
- Carol Jantsch, Philadelphia Orchestra
- Dr. Stacy Baker, Morehead State University

Female Euphonium Virtuosi

- Lauren Veronie, US Army Field Band
- Laura Lineberger, US Army Band
- Dr. Gail Robertson, Eastern Michigan University
- Dr. Mary Ann Craig, Director of Bands, Montclair State University
- Dr. Sharon Huff, Millikin University and President, International Women's B.C.

Set High Expectations

Available in May, 2015 from Summit Records:

Concertos for Brass: The Music of Thomas Bough

Concerto for Euphonium
Suite Tuba
Concerto for Horn
Concerto in Eb by Neruda, transcribed for band

Compositions for Solo Brass and Band Accompaniment, published by Cimarron Music



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY WIND ENSEMBLE & FRIENDS
CONCERTOS FOR BRASS
 — THE MUSIC OF THOMAS BOUGH —

CONCERTO IN E♭ FOR HORN BY THOMAS BOUGH • CONCERTO FOR EUPHONIUM AND WIND BAND
 CONCERTO FOR HORN AND WIND BAND • SUITE TUBA
 MARK PONZO • TRUMPET • JEFF MALLECO • EUPHONIUM • LARRY WILLIAMS • HORN • THOMAS BOUGH • TUBA

Seek out Players likely to Succeed

- Self-Disciplined, intrinsically motivated
- Relatively little curve of jaw
- Relatively full lips
- Taller students are likely to have more lung capacity
- Personality (a little crazy is probably good)
- Willing and able to transport the horn.

....likely to succeed

- Utilize 5 minute “test drive” to identify students with natural ability
- Recruit competent players from other sections, not those the least skilled
- Seek players outside your program via academic counselors, friends of your students, or former band members

Gear Matters!

Give Students Equipment that works!

A functional instrument that is also cosmetically pleasing can be very encouraging.



Gear Matters!

Broken braces, stuck slides, valves that don't work or a horn that smells like gym shoes is discouraging and DOES NOT promote excellent musicianship.



Support Players Learning Any New Instrument

- Weekly training sessions with director
- Frequent training with peer tutors
- Flashcards/software to assure notation fluency and accurate fingerings
- Characteristic tone from first lesson!
- CD's, YouTube videos, guest artists, private teachers, TubaChristmas, ITEA, etc.
- Breathing Gym and Brass Gym

Support = Expectations

- Frequent playing tests!
- Require students to contribute musically, not just hold the horn
- Consider a trial period and/or application process
- See authors article with Ami Custodia, Instrumentalist Magazine, July 2007 for sample contract

5 minute test drive

1. Warm up the air via Breathing Gym
2. Buzz the mouthpiece....any note! Glissando lower.....lower still??
3. Hold the horn standing to establish playing posture, then sit down and maintain
4. Play any note
 1. Emphasize Resonant Tone
 2. Lower is better!

.....5 minute test drive

5. Experiment with lip slurs
6. Teach chromatic pattern by rote

0 2 1 1,2 2,3 4 2,4

7. Combine lip slurs and chromatic pattern

Evaluation

- Characteristic Sound = Top Priority
- Low Range determines instrument
 - Octave or more of range right away
 - Great sound
 - Great Articulation
- Some people sound fantastic on both!

Evaluation

- Listen for clues:
 - “the mouthpiece is too big/too small”
 - “my whole head is buzzing” (normal)
 - “I’m getting a head rush” (normal to a point)
 - Watch reaction of players
 - Listen for sound and range
 - Find the students that can contribute musically by next week!

Interventions

- “Fog the bell”
 - Slows down air
 - helps open mouth and throat
- Articulation Trainer:
 - “TOH” or “DOH”
 - Tongue between teeth and lips (unique to tuba)
 - Spittin’ seeds!
- Good to GREAT!
 - More air = More Sound (Breathing Gym)
 - Big Sound, Full Sound, Resonant Sound

Resources

- Breathing Gym Daily Workouts (*builds air*)
 - Published by Focus on Music
 - Sam Pilafian and Patrick Sheridan
- Brass Gym (same authors) (*builds chops*)
 - CD to model tone quality
 - “ninja” level training
- Method for BBb tuba, Volume 1 by Walter Beeler (old school but very good)

...Resources

- Method Books
 - Learn entire beginner books in a week or less
 - Yamaha method books have great on-line resources
- All-State or All-District Method Books
 - High Expectations are good!
- “Band Boot Camp”
 - Self Published by Author
 - Full Ensemble method
 - www.ThomasBough.com

...Resources

- International Tuba-Euphonium Association
 - www.iteaonline.org
 - Student memberships only \$28
- Tuba Christmas
 - www.tubaChristmas.com
 - Events all over!
 - One day, open door, very low cost
 - Big fun, good music, and the melody!

...Resources

- Guest soloists, clinicians, workshops
 - “Starting Tubas” workshop at your school
 - Military bands, college ensembles, local professional players
 - Utilize grant writing, Arts Endowments, PTA, Boosters, and Teacher Development grants for funding
 - Solos for tuba and band, band parts Grade 3 – 5, at www.ThomasBough.com.

Thanks!

- Thanks for coming!
- Listen to the tuba and euphonium sections of the bands here
- Take steps to develop your players back home to sound like that!
- **Merry TubaChristmas!**