

ITEA Journal

WINTER 2020

**HOW-TO:
ESTABLISHING
A PRIVATE
STUDIO**

Restoration
of the Harvard Tuba

PROFILE
of Euphoniumist
Ole May

IN DEFENSE
of the Ophicleide

TUBIST
John M. Kuhn

A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF
*Tubby the
Tuba* PART I



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On Our Cover

The cover of this issue is based on the cover of the printed music to *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© 1950, General Music; © assigned 1955 to RYTVOC), adapted by *ITEA Journal*. Used with the kind permission of RYTVOC.

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— A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF —

Tubby the Tuba

More than a Melody—More than Oompah

by Douglas Yeo



Figure 1. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba (© Cosmo, 1945), The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba (© RCA Victor, 1947), The Tubby the Tuba Song (© General, 1950; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955), Tubby the Tuba at the Circus (© Decca, 1950), Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town (© Golden Crest, 1960).

Editor's note: Douglas Yeo's comprehensive article about Tubby the Tuba appears serialized in eight consecutive issues of the ITEA Journal throughout 2020 and 2021.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND THE BIRTH OF THE KLEINSINGER/TRIPP COLLABORATION

The phrase has been with us for centuries, at least since the 1400s in English, but it is much older in many cultures around the world. Whether spoken or read by adults or children, it stimulates the imagination, and brings us to another place.

No matter the language, it always signals a beginning.

Il était une fois...

Es war einmal...

Einu sinni fyrir langa löngu...

Det var en gang...

Érase una vez...

Vienā kartā...

Ngày xùna ngày xura...

Once upon a time...¹

And so it is that *The Story of Tubby the Tuba* begins. "Once upon a time, there was an orchestra which was all busy tuning up."² Conceived in 1941, recorded in 1945, and first performed for an audience in 1946, Tubby's story is well known to tuba players as

well as the millions around the world who have heard it in concerts, read it in books, or seen it on film. Call it what you like—a fairy tale, a fable, a morality play—Tubby continues to captivate us. In addition to the story itself, *Tubby the Tuba* has played an important role in the history of literature for the tuba, as it was the first significant composition for tuba solo and orchestra, predating the *Tuba Concerto* of Ralph Vaughan Williams (1954) by a decade. It has been performed and recorded by some of the most famous tuba players in history as well as by amateurs and students. And the spin offs from the success of *Tubby the Tuba* are a story in themselves. Some of the tale of Tubby's creation has been told over the years in these pages,³ but as I was researching

Tubby the Tuba for an entry in my book in progress, *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Euphonium, and Tuba Player* (Rowman & Littlefield), I was struck by how much more there is to its history and place in history, and how newly available sources and research both adjust its currently received narrative and add more to what we have known. I decided to go down a rabbit trail (or, in this case, it's better described as a bullfrog trail), and began looking more deeply at Tubby's origin story and legacy. Here is some of what I found.

Anthropomorphic Characters In Children's Literature

Tubby the Tuba belongs to a genre of stories that anthropomorphize objects



Figure 2. Francis Barlow, *Æsop's Fables* (1687).

or animals and give them human characteristics. Such stories have been around for millennia, dating back to the anthropomorphic deities of ancient Egypt to the fables of Aesop. Aesop, a Greek slave who lived in the fifth century BC, told stories that were later codified and written down by writers in Greece and other European countries. Of course, such stories with a long, early oral history cannot always be neatly attributed, and some scholars have found evidence that many of the fables attributed to Aesop appeared in ancient Asian, middle eastern, and Indian cultures.⁴ These stories often featured anthropomorphized animals that spoke to one another across genus and species. From their beginnings, such fables were used as tools to teach both adults and children important lessons and virtues including the benefits of hard work (and the perils of the slovenly life), and the value of respecting authority figures. Later tellings of fables emphasized Biblical

values, often citing the book of Proverbs as their moral authority, such as in versions of “The Ant and the Grasshopper” (originally “The Ant and the Cicada”). The tale concerns an ant who, throughout the summer, collects food for the winter while a grasshopper spends his time singing. With the onset of winter, the starving grasshopper pleads with the ant for food but is denied sustenance. The moral is that idleness has consequences, as the story was featured in the object lesson “The Wasted Life” in the Victorian era publication, *The Sunday School Teacher* (1866), which admonished, “an idle soul shall suffer hunger,” which is drawn from Proverbs 19:15.⁵

Fairy tales, such as those popularized by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in the nineteenth century, brought additional lessons to readers. Stories such as *Aschenputtel* (Cinderella) spoke of injustice served to one who was undeserving of mistreatment,

replete with an evil step-mother and step-sisters, rescue by a fairy godmother (and in later tellings, industrious, anthropomorphized mice), and a handsome prince who finds value in one who others find valueless. “And they lived happily ever after.” Contemporary scholars go even further, often framing Cinderella and other such tales in terms of classism, feminism, and female psychology, to say nothing of how the old stereotype of the evil step-mother flies hard in the face of today’s blended family structures.⁶ The parallels between Cinderella and *The Story of Celeste*—a successor piece by the same creators of *Tubby the Tuba* that will be discussed later—are notable.⁷

Throughout history, musical instruments have also taken on zoomorphic characteristics. The *buccin* (dragon bell trombone) and *basson russe* (upright serpent with dragon bell) were popular in early nineteenth century France

I DECIDED TO GO DOWN A RABBIT TRAIL (OR, IN THIS CASE, IT'S BETTER DESCRIBED AS A BULL-FROG TRAIL), AND BEGAN LOOKING MORE DEEPLY AT TUBBY'S ORIGIN STORY AND LEGACY.

and Belgium, and the *buccin* often had a tongue of metal that vibrated while playing and

marching. The extraordinary serpent by Pelligrino de'Azzi (Venice, late eighteenth century)—since 1926 part of the Casadesus Collection of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and on display at Symphony Hall, Boston—has a carved bell in the shape of, well, a serpent.⁸ In certain African tribes, drums are infused with anthropomorphic characteristics, part of ritual/cult activities that equate the drums—some made from human skulls and skin—with human men. The bell—*Agogo*—is “thought of as an obedient man with a sonorous voice” in the Esan culture.⁹

From musical instruments in the shape of animals, or which are thought to possess qualities of humans, flowed fanciful literary and illustrative treatments of anthropomorphic instruments. The nineteenth century saw a flowering of these characters, none more fanciful than those from the pen of Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard (1803-1847), also known as Jean-Jacques Grandville. He provided illustrations for *Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux* (The Public and Private Life of Animals), a collection of stories by several writers including George Sand and Honoré de Balzac, published in 1842.¹⁰ All of the characters in the stories are animals who were given voices and human characteristics, and Grandville's illustrations that accompany *Oraison funèbre d'un ver a soie* (Funeral Oration of a Silkworm) include a funeral cortège led by a serpent playing beetle who would have been instantly recognizable to his French reading audience at the time.

His most bizarre anthropomorphic creations appeared in



Figure 3. *Serpent* by Pelligrino de'Azzi (Venice, late eighteenth century). Courtesy Boston Symphony Orchestra, Casadesus Collection. Photo by Michael J. Lutch.



Top: Figure 4. Jean-Jacques Grandville, *Funeral Oration of a Silkworm* (1842).
Bottom: Figure 5. Jean-Jacques Grandville, *Fireworks in D* (1844).

his *Le Autre Monde* (Another World) of 1844. Musical stories and drawings abound within its pages, and his mechanical creations of the most fanciful type include the unfortunate story of an anthropomorphic ophicleide:

An accident marked the end of this concert [that was organized by Dr. Puff]. In the fireworks in D when the fugue ends smorzando with a sweet and dreamy melody, an ophicleide, charged with too much harmony, burst suddenly like a bomb, throwing sharp and black and white notes, eighth notes, sixteenth notes—clouds of musical smoke and flames of melody spread through the

*air... Steps are being taken to prevent an accident from happening again.*¹¹

From Grandville's fanciful anthropomorphic musical creatures we come to something that was the precursor to a speaking tuba, the characters made from a string bass, lute, and bass drum in the illustrations for *L'Oie aux oeufs d'or* (The goose that lays the golden eggs) by Ennery and Clairville (Louis François Nicolaïe), published in *Journal Amusant* (1860).¹² Here, musical instruments had human features that were integrated into the instruments themselves. These we recognize as the direct ancestors to *Tubby*

the Tuba, even more so than Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* (1936) to which Tubby is often compared. Prokofiev assigned various musical instruments to represent characters in his story—the bird by the flute, the cat by the clarinet, the duck by the oboe,

Peter by the string orchestra, grandfather by the bassoon, the wolf by French horns, and the hunters by timpani. But only grandfather, Peter, and the bird are given voice by the narrator, and the listener is made privy only to the thoughts of the cat. The story



Left: Figure 6. Ennery and Clairville, *The goose that lays the golden eggs* (1860). Middle: Figure 7. George Kleinsinger and his first wife, Ruth Edelman (1941). Courtesy Fred and Jane Kleinsinger. Right: Figure 8. Paul Tripp and his wife, Ruth Enders (1952).



of *Tubby the Tuba*, on the other hand, with its musical instruments that not only speak but have human-looking physical attributes when the story came to print and film, was to become something else.¹³

George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp: A collaboration begins

Tubby the Tuba was the brainchild of George Kleinsinger (music) and Paul Tripp (story and lyrics). The stories of these two men inform their collaboration, and their lives and careers—while defined in large part by their works about a friendly, talking tuba—were wide-reaching.

Born in San Bernardino, California (February 13, 1914), George Kleinsinger’s family came to New York City when he was five years old.¹⁴ After initially pursuing a career at dental school, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and served as music director at several CCC camps. He studied music at New York University from 1930-1937 where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree (majoring in music), studying composition with Marion Bauer and Philip James.¹⁵ Among his early works were a string quartet

(1937) and, *I Hear America Singing* (begun 1932, completed 1940), a cantata based on poems of Walt Whitman. The International Ladies Garment Workers Union asked Kleinsinger to revise the piece and it was performed in June 1940 for Eleanor Roosevelt in Madison Square Garden, New York City. A few weeks later, NBC broadcast the piece during its coverage of the Democratic National Convention (held in Chicago).¹⁶ It was Kleinsinger’s first notably successful composition, and it was recorded in 1941 on Victor Records with John Charles London, baritone, and the I.L.G.W.U. chorus (directed by Simon Rady, who had a long association with Kleinsinger in the years to come and who produced the first recording of *Tubby the Tuba*), conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret.¹⁷

In 1938, Kleinsinger received a fellowship to attend the Juilliard School of Music where he studied composition for two years with Frederick Jacobi and Bernard Wagenaar. Following in the footsteps of Heinrich Schütz and many others who found the story to be intriguing, Kleinsinger composed a work (with a

text by Beatrice Goldsmith) based on the Bible’s King David, *Absalom, my Son*, for baritone solo and a cappella chorus (1940) which was later recorded on Victor, sung by George London (1947).¹⁸ But it was the composition of his cantata turned allegorical jazz opera, *Victory Against Heaven* (1940)—the libretto was written by Winthrop Bushnell Palmer—that brought George Kleinsinger into a collaboration that would change his life.

Paul Tripp was born in New York City on February 20, 1911. He enrolled at City College in New York when he was 14 and later Brooklyn Law School but he dropped out of both schools without receiving a degree.¹⁹ He was attracted to acting, and had a small part (“another Marquis”) in the revival of Walter Hampton’s production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* that had performances in numerous cities including Chicago, Washington D.C., and New Haven, Connecticut, before a run on Broadway in 1936. Other small parts followed, including a 1937 Broadway revival of Henrik Ibsen’s *An Enemy of the People*, and in 1939, he was selected for the part of “Speed” in

George Kleinsinger’s *Victory Against Heaven*.

Victory Against Heaven was described by contemporary media as a story about the struggle between science and nature, “the criminality of materialism, the salvation of spirituality, the war against the machine, the triumph of the good earth over science.” It received three performances in Hartford but the review in the *Hartford Courant* dripped with sarcasm and found little to recommend—“Mr. Kleinsinger’s score is a dainty form of swing, hardly jazz in any robust sense of the word.”²⁰ Still, Kleinsinger and Tripp formed a simpatico friendship and the two began exploring further collaborations. Kleinsinger suggested to Tripp that he write stories rather than sing and as things turned out, Tripp did write many stories—but he never gave up singing.²¹

Their first joint project was *Jack and Homer the Horse*, a story for children that received its premiere on December 12, 1941 at the WOR radio studio in New York City. Kleinsinger wrote the music and Tripp wrote the story.²² Conducted by Robert Russell Bennett, it was narrated by Ray



Top Left: Figure 9. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Jack and Homer the Horse (© Arrow Records, 1947).

Top Right: Figure 10. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Jack and Homer the Horse (© Chappell, 1955; © assigned to RYTVOG, 1989).

Bottom Left: Figure 11. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Pee-Wee the Piccolo (© RCA Victor, 1948).

Bottom Right: Figure 12. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Johnny Stranger (© RCA Victor, 1950)



Figure 13. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Little Star of Bethlehem* (© Columbia, 1957)

Middleton, who would later figure in recordings of *Tubby the Tuba* stories. When *Jack and Homer the Horse* was recorded in 1947 for RCA Victor, Tripp narrated the tale and assumed the role of all of the story's characters including Jack, his horse, Homer, a giant, a court page, the king, and the king's daughter. "Once upon a time, there was a little boy who wanted to be a hero. His name was Jack, and he had a horse whose name was Homer."²³ Each of the characters in the story were represented by a different musical instrument; this was a compositional device that was to run through several of Kleinsinger and Tripp's collaborative works. Tripp took on the various roles with charm and élan, and he supplemented his natural dialect with a masterful toolbox of voices. He had a way of ingratiating himself to listeners, as if he was one's favorite uncle or a friendly

neighbor who had just moved in across the street from another state.

The performance of *Jack and Homer* was, in Tripp's recollection, the seminal moment in the creation of the *Tubby the Tuba* stories, the seed of which was planted in the WOR studio thanks to a conversation with the studio orchestra's tuba player, Herbert Jenkel. That story unfolds in Part 4 of this article, but it is important to note that Jack and Homer was but the first of many collaborative works for children created by Kleinsinger and Tripp. In addition to the several *Tubby* pieces, there was *Pee-Wee the Piccolo* (1947),²⁴ the previously mentioned *The Story of Celeste* (premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra with Eugene Ormandy conducting),²⁵ and *Pancho goes to a Fiesta* (1949). *Adventures of a Zoo*, which was dedicated to the Philadelphia Zoo, was premiered by the Philadelphia



Figure 14. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Happy Instruments* (© Chappel & Co., 1958; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1989).

Orchestra in December 1949 with Tripp narrating.²⁶ All were recorded by labels large and small including Victor, Columbia, Decca, and Angel, as well as "kidisk" labels such as Cricket, Disney, and Peter Pan. Others, like *Johnny Stranger* (1947)—a story about a young immigrant to the United States—"My name is Johnny Stranger and I've come across the sea; if you've never seen an immigrant, just take a look at me"—were recorded on Victor's Youth Series and touched on relevant cultural themes which are still with us today.²⁷ Their collaboration, *The Little Star of Bethlehem*—the story was conceived by Tripp in 1944 as a Christmas gift to his wife, Ruth Enders—featured a foray into period instrument performance. Its 1957 recording on Columbia Records with the Orchestra of Ancient Instruments included oboe d'amore, viola da gamba, recorders, and

virginal in the orchestra.²⁸ In 1958, Kleinsinger and Tripp published and recorded a collection of eight songs for children, *Happy Instruments*, which included *Sliding Sam*, *the Trombone Man* and *Jojo, the Banjo*.²⁹ There was no tuba song in the set since by then, as we will see in Part 7 of this article, they had covered the genre of tuba song quite well.

While their lives were strongly intertwined by their many collaborations, George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp had independent careers that were exceptionally interesting, broad, and influential. For those who only know them because of *Tubby the Tuba*, a deeper look at their work will allow us to consider the breadth of their influence for the whole of the second half of the twentieth century and beyond.

Editor's note: Part 2: George Kleinsinger, will appear in

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to Louise Eastman Weed (RYTVOC) who generously gave permission to quote lines from the *Tubby the Tuba* story scripts and provided other helpful information. As a trombonist, I am quite aware that some might view me as an interloper in the world of tuba research, despite the fact that during my long career as an orchestral player, I sat next to and enjoyed unforgettable collaborations with some of the finest tuba players in the business, including David Fedderly, Chester Schmitz, and Mike Roylance. To this end, my good friend, Jerry Young, was particularly encouraging and helpful when I wanted to know who I might contact in the tuba universe to get a bit of information and if what I was writing was on the right track. Jerry is a fount of information and wisdom; I'm deeply grateful for his friendship and support. And Benjamin Pierce, editor of the *ITEA Journal*, didn't even blink when I proposed submitting one of the longest articles to ever appear in the *Journal*. I am also thankful for the help of many others who joined me along the way, including:

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Herbert Wekselblatt (1927-2019), *Tubby's* first tuba voice.

Citations

1. The sample of languages that express the sentiment "Once upon a time" includes French, German, Icelandic, Norwegian, Portuguese, Lithuanian, and Vietnamese.
2. Paul Tripp's earliest known manuscript for *Tubby the Tuba* was titled *The Story of Tubby the Tuba*. A slightly later manuscript Tripp used in his narrations featured the title *The Tale of Tubby the Tuba*.
3. Joe Saltzman, "How Tubby Was Born." *T.U.B.A. Journal*, Vol. IX, No. 4 (Spring 1982), 2-3; reprinted from the Los Angeles Times, October 26, 1980. Barton Cummings, "Tubby's Great Complaint." *ITEA Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Fall 2006), 113-117. Herbert Wekselblatt, "Introducing

Tubby the Tuba." *ITEA Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Fall 2006), 117.

4. Kenneth Cooper, "Aesop's Fables for Adults." *Peabody Journal of Education*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (November 1955), 143-147. Also, John F. Priest, "The Dog in the Manger: In Quest of a Fable." *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (October-November 1985), 49-58.
5. James H. Kellogg, "The Wasted Life." *The Sunday School Teacher*, Vol. 1, No. XI (November 1866), 334-337.
6. Elizabeth Panttaja, "Going Up in the World: Class in Cinderella." *Western Folklore*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (January 1993), 85-104. Also, Karyn Crowley and John Pennington, "Feminist Frauds on the Fairies? Didacticism and Liberation in Recent Retellings of 'Cinderella'." *Marvels & Tales*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2010), 297-313.
7. Both stories feature young girls whose beauty and talent are overlooked by a female authority figure (Cinderella and her step-mother; Celeste and Miss Squeak, the owner of a home for orphan tunes); the central characters (Cinderella and Celeste) are not allowed to go to a ball while others (Cinderella's step-sisters; Celeste's fellow orphans) do; both leading characters are rescued from their imposed imprisonment (Cinderella by a fairy god-mother; Celeste by a friendly mouse), and both Cinderella and Celeste attend a ball and are chosen by the handsome prince.
8. Douglas Yeo, "Serpents in Boston: The Museum of Fine Arts and Boston Symphony Orchestra Collections." *Galpin*

Society Journal, Vol. 65 (March 2012), 174-175, 177-195.

9. Charles Onomudo Aluede, "The Anthropomorphic Attributes of African Musical Instruments: History and Use in Esan, Nigeria." *Anthropologist*, Vol. 8/3 (2006), 157-160.

10. P. J. Stahl, editor; illustrations by Grandville [Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard], *Scènes de la vie privée et publique des animaux* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Paulin), 1842; also, P. J. Stahl, editor; illustrations by Grandville, *Vie privée et publique des animaux* (Paris: J. Hentzel), 1867, 108-112; also, J. Thomson, editor, illustrations by Grandville, *Public and Private Life of Animals* (London: Sampson Low,

Marston, Searle, & Rivington), 1877, 206-209.

11. Grandville [Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard], *Un Autre Monde* (Paris: H. Fournier), 1844, 23-24.

12. Ennery and Clairville, "L'oise aux oeufs d'or." *Journal Amusant*, No. 248 (September 29, 1860).

13. While most listeners today view *Peter and the Wolf* as a charming tale that introduces musical instruments to children, there is more to the story than meets the eye. Prokofiev intended the character of Peter to represent a Young Soviet Pioneer. The Pioneers were a Soviet-era youth movement, often compared to the Boy Scouts but with a political (Communist) edge; the work's original title was

How Pioneer Peter Caught the Wolf. Peter exhibits character traits that are consistent with those promoted by the Pioneers, including bravery and good planning. He also disobeys his grandfather for the good of the community (grandfather can be seen as a metaphor for stubborn, non-Bolshevik elders), and his cunning triumphs over the wolf (man over nature). *Peter and the Wolf* was premiered before an audience of Young Soviet Pioneers and its second performance was given at the Moscow Pioneers Palace. It received its United States premiere on March 26, 1938, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of the composer; Richard Hale narrated. See, Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's*

Soviet Years (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 46-48.

14. Some details of Kleinsinger's life have been pieced together from numerous sources including, David Ewen (editor), "George Kleinsinger," *American Composers Today: A Biographical and Critical Guide* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1949), 137-138; The Lynn Farnol Group (editor), "George Kleinsinger," *The ASCAP Biographical Dictionary of Composers, Authors and Publishers* (New York: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, 1966), 400. Other sources are separately cited.

15. Email from Keegan Scriber, Office of the Registrar, New

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York University, to Douglas Yeo, July 17, 2019.

16. Michael J. Maher, John Charles Thomas: *Beloved Baritone of American Opera and Popular Music* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006), 98-99.

17. George Kleinsinger (music) and Walt Whitman (text), *I Hear America Singing*. Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret, I.L.G.W.U. Radio Chorus (Simon Rady, director); John Charles Thomas, baritone. Victor DM 777, 1941, two 78-rpm discs.

18. George Kleinsinger (music) and Beatrice Goldsmith (text), *Absalom my Son* for baritone solo and chorus. George London, baritone; Josef Blatt, piano. Victor 12-0238-B, 1947, one 78-rpm side.

19. Some details of Tripp's life have been pieced together from numerous sources including, William H. Honan, "Paul Tripp, 91, Early Children's TV Host." *New York Times*, September 2, 2002, 34; The Lynn Farnol Group (editor), "Paul Tripp," *The ASCAP Biographical Dictionary of Composers, Authors and Publishers* (New York: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, 1966), 740. Other sources are separately cited.

20. "Jazz Opera Is Scheduled Here Tonight," *Hartford (CT) Courant*, January 17, 1941, 10; "Jazz Opera is Debuted at Museum," *Hartford Courant*, January 18, 1941, 12. Kleinsinger told Tripp that after reading the reviews, he referred to his opera as, "Victory Against Kleinsinger." Email



Cover of the printed music to *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© 1950, General Music; © assigned 1955 to RYTVOC). Courtesy Cotsen Children's Library, Princeton University.

from David Tripp to Douglas Yeo, November 25, 2019.

21. Leonard Lyons, "The Lyons Den," *Davenport (IA) Democrat and Leader*, October 23, 1946, 4.

22. Barton Cummings reported the date was December 19, 1941, but David Tripp has two references to the date as December 12, 1941, including Paul Tripp's inscription of the date on the bottom of a terracotta statue of Homer that remains in David Tripp's possession. Paul Tripp also recalled, "The headlines in the newspapers [relating to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941] were getting larger, blacker, and more lurid. Then Russell Bennett called to invite George and me to the concert hall at WOR to the premiere of our new work, Friday, December

12. We prayed our debut would not be spoiled by any more war communiques." See Barton Cummings, "Tubby's Great Complaint." *ITEA Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Fall 2006), 113; also, Email from David Tripp to Douglas Yeo, December 4, 2019.

23. George Kleinsinger (music) and Paul Tripp (story), *Jack and Homer*. Orchestra conducted by Charles Lichter; narrated and sung by Paul Tripp. Arrow Records AC-51, 78-rpm (1947).

24. In *Tubby the Tuba*, Tubby's friend is Peepo the piccolo, but for reasons unknown today, Kleinsinger and Tripp changed the character's name to Pee-wee for a new piece, *Pee-wee the Piccolo*. However, on the 1996 recording, *Tubby the Tuba and Friends* (Angel Records), which includes performances of five works

by Kleinsinger and Tripp and is narrated by Tripp, the piece was retitled *Peepo the Piccolo*.

25. ed. David Ewen, *The Year in American Music, 1948 Edition* (New York: Allen, Towne & Heath, 1948), 258.

26. "Tele Topics," *Radio Daily*, December 1, 1949, 1.

27. George Kleinsinger (music) and Paul Tripp (story), *Johnny Stranger*. Orchestra conducted by Russ Case, narrated and sung by Ray Middleton. Victor Y-358, two 78-rpm discs (1950). By the end of the piece, Johnny Stranger's name is changed to Johnny American.

28. Paul Tripp and Abbot Lutz (program notes), George Kleinsinger (music) and Paul Tripp (story), *The Little Star of Bethlehem*. Columbia Records CL 1046, 33 1/3-rpm (1957). The recording also included Kleinsinger's *The Toy Box* (Ballet Suite), a work that his daughter, Jane, remembers being broadcast each year on Christmas Day on WQXR-FM in New York City when she was a child. Email from Jane Kleinsinger to Douglas Yeo, December 7, 2019.

29. George Kleinsinger (music) and Paul Tripp (lyrics), *Happy Instruments* [Sliding Sam, the Trombone Man; The Country Fiddle and the City Violin; Peewee, the Piccolo Song; Jojo, the Banjo; The Big Bass Fiddle; The Happy Clarinet; Two Little Hammers (xylophone song); The Noisy Family (percussion)]. Orchestra conducted by George Kleinsinger. Vocals by Percival Dove and Johnny Anderson. Columbia 1206, LP (1956). Also, George Kleinsinger (music) and Paul Tripp (lyrics), *Happy Instruments: 8 Children's Songs* (New York: Chappell & Co., 1958).

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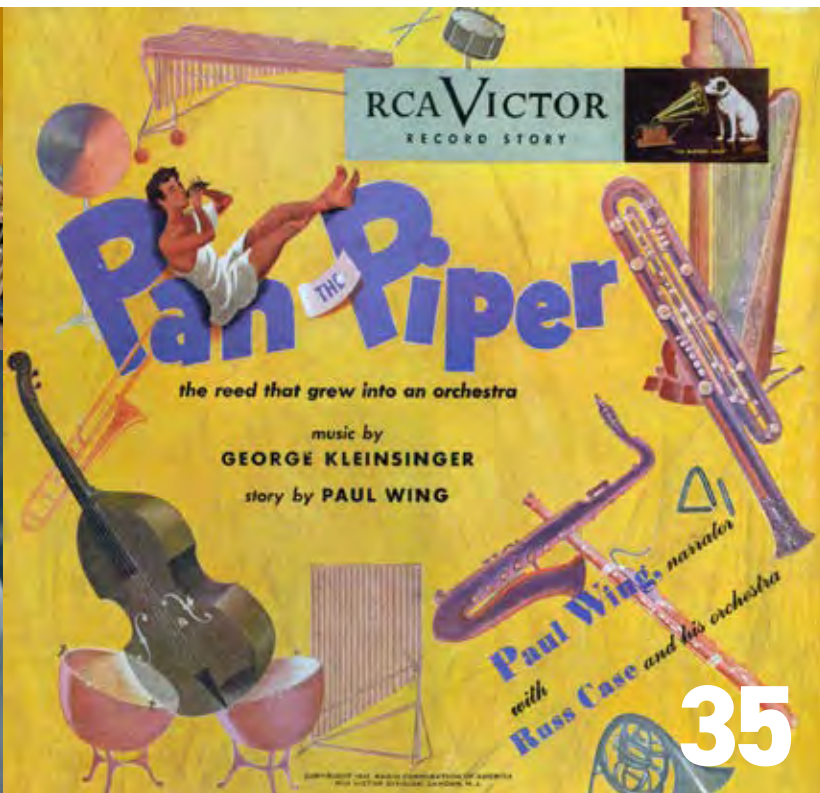
SPRING 2020



To all of our members and readers, stay safe.



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Featured on our cover (left to right):
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— A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF —

Tubby the Tuba

More than a Melody—More than Oompah

by Douglas Yeo



Figure 1. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba (© Cosmo, 1945), The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba (© RCA Victor, 1947), The Tubby the Tuba Song (© General, 1955; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955), Tubby the Tuba at the Circus (© Decca, 1950), Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town (© Golden Crest, 1960).

Editor's note: Douglas Yeo's comprehensive article about Tubby the Tuba appears serialized in eight consecutive issues of the ITEA Journal throughout 2020 and 2021.

PART 2: GEORGE KLEINSINGER

In Part 1 of this article (*ITEA Journal*, Winter 2020), readers were introduced to George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, whose many collaborations included *Tubby the Tuba*. Here, George Kleinsinger's life and work are explored in detail.

During World War II, George Kleinsinger served as music supervisor of the USO and later for the Second Service Command which was headquartered on Governors

Island in New York harbor. He primarily worked giving music therapy to wounded soldiers at Army hospitals; he also organized concerts and music classes. While, as we saw in Part 1 (*ITEA Journal*, Winter 2020), he wrote many compositions with Paul Tripp, Kleinsinger also collaborated with other writers in the children's music genre including *Pan the Piper* (1947), written with Paul Wing,¹ and *The Lollipop Tree* (1951), the first of several works written with Joe Darion. Kleinsinger wrote the first musical setting of the original story of *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* by Robert L. May (the story was written in 1939) which appeared on Victor in 1947, two years before Johnny Marks (May's brother-in-law) composed his famous song about Rudolph.²

The recording was narrated by Paul Wing and performed by Russ Case and his Orchestra; Case later led several recordings of *Tubby the Tuba* pieces.

For all of his success as a writer of music for children—a genre he mostly abandoned by 1960—George Kleinsinger was a prolific composer of music for the concert hall, stage, movies, and television. And popular song. In 1953, Kleinsinger wrote *Christmas Is a Feeling in Your Heart* with Joe Darion which enjoyed success as recorded by Andy Williams.³ He wrote a host of works for chorus, including *Farewell to a Hero* (1942), based on poems by Walt Whitman about Abraham Lincoln, a *Requiem for President Roosevelt* (1945) with text by

Whitman (premiered on the day of Roosevelt's funeral and recorded in 1997 by the Camerata Singers)⁴, the *Brooklyn Baseball Cantata* (1946) that appeared on RCA Victor with famed Metropolitan Opera baritone, Robert Merrill,⁵ and *Ode to Democracy* for chorus and concert band (1957). His harmonica concerto, *Street Corner Concerto: Three Moods of Manhattan* (1946), was composed for John Sebastian and recorded on Victor, and his *Cello Concerto* was premiered in 1950 by cellist Avron Twerdowsky with the National Orchestral Association conducted by Leon Barzin. The *Cello Concerto* is a work of depth and real quality (it was revised and re-premiered in 1965 at Carnegie Hall with Paul Olefsky, cello, and the Orchestra of America



Figure 2. George Kleinsinger (standing, center) leading a USO event (1940s). Courtesy Fred and Jane Kleinsinger.

conducted by Richard Korn), but reviews were mixed. *The New York Times* wrote, "The Kleinsinger work displayed the composer's gift for pleasant melody and distinctive orchestration. It was, however, episodic and without sufficient sense of direction for a work of its dimensions."⁶ But the *Brooklyn Eagle* disagreed, "Good concertos for this instrument are few and far between, and this shows signs of being taken into the active repertoire. It is extremely lyrical and clearly constructed, yet there is a freshness and originality."⁷

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of Victor records to record many of his works for chorus, performances of Kleinsinger's works proved to come up only periodically. That said, the New York Philharmonic performed his *Dance of the Sabras* (Andre Kostelanetz, conducting, 1974), and the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops have programmed a number of Kleinsinger's works (in addition to performances of *Tubby the Tuba*), including his *Overture on American Themes* (Dean Dixon, conducting, 1945), the *Street Corner Concerto* (Arthur Fiedler, conducting with John Sebastian, harmonica solo, 1948), *Dance of the*

Sabras (Harry Ellis Dickson conducting, 1971), *Tune and Workout: Variations on "Skip to my Lou"* (Harry Ellis Dickson, conducting, 1975), and the *Brooklyn Baseball Cantata* (Keith Lockhart, conducting, 2009 and 2012). While Kleinsinger never managed to break into the top tier of American composers of his time, upon reviewing scores and recordings, there is no doubt that he possessed a true compositional gift, and his prodigious output is certainly deserving of reexamination.

In the 1950s, Kleinsinger was occupied with three incarnations of his adaptation, with writer Joe Darion, of the *archy and mehitabel* verses and stories of Don Marquis. The characters—archy, a writer who was reincarnated as a cockroach, and mehitabel, a female alley cat who had been around the block more than a few times and was always looking for love in all the wrong places—were invented in 1916 as a literary device for Marquis' column for New York's *The Evening Sun*. archy's stories about life in Shinbone Alley were ostensibly written at night by the literary cockroach on Marquis' typewriter for the columnist to find in the

morning. Unable to use the shift key, archy always typed in lower case. The columns were wildly successful and widely praised for their inventiveness, and they spawned several collections of the stories that remain in print today.

It was perhaps unsurprising that the stories would eventually come in for musical and theatrical treatment. Working with Darion—who in 1965 would leap to fame as the lyricist (alongside composer Mitch Leigh) for the musical *Man of la Mancha*—Kleinsinger crafted a 30 minute "back-alley opera" that presented a storyline based on Marquis' columns. It was performed at New York City's Town Hall in 1954 with the Little Orchestra Society, Thomas Scherman, conductor.

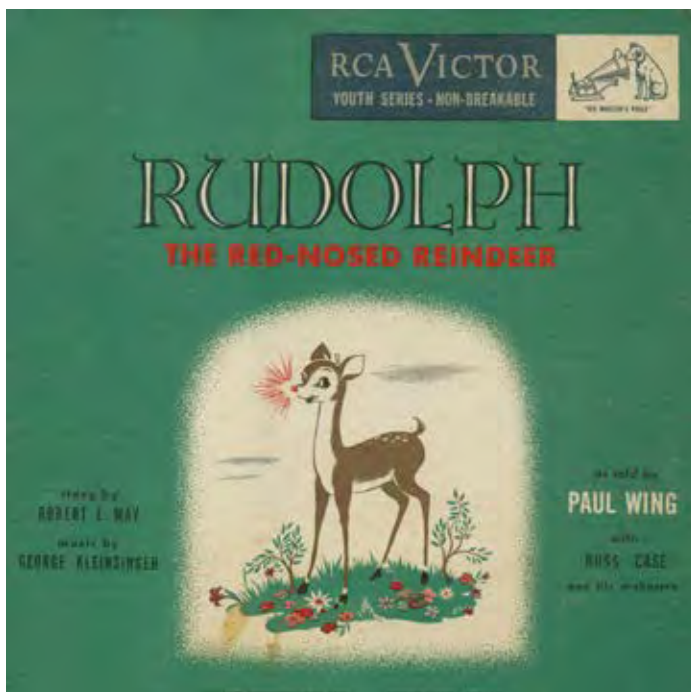
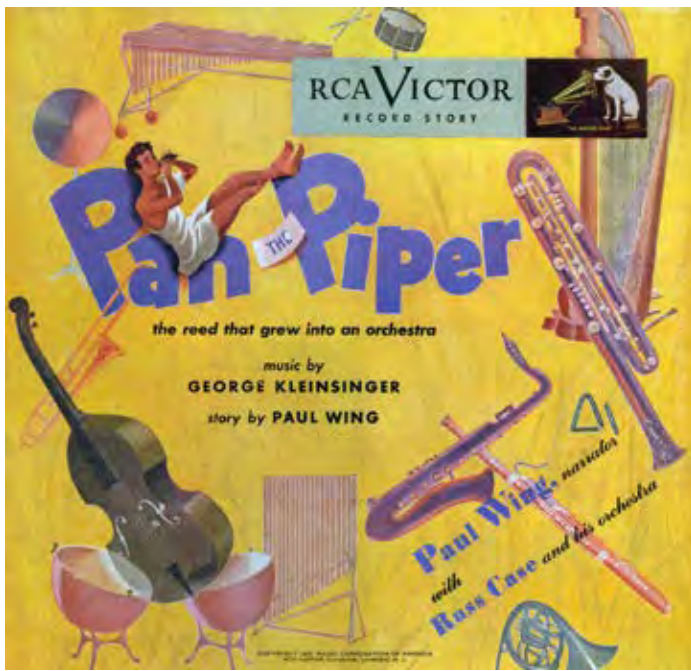
Kleinsinger's music came in for praise from Howard Taubman of *The New York Times*, "Mr. Kleinsinger, for his part, has written dances, blues, duets, quartets, a lullaby—using the idiom of the music hall, the honky tonk, and Tin Pan Alley. Scored for small orchestra of unconventional make-up, he has let his tunes prance and sizzle, languish and howl." The show as a whole found a niche, said the *Times*, and "Don Marquis' friends still have validity. Mr. Kleinsinger and Mr. Darion had the perception and talent to see that."⁸

A Columbia Records concept album came next. Featuring Carol Channing as mehitabel and Eddie Bracken as archy, the album (released in 1955) was narrated by David Wayne, and Kleinsinger conducted the orchestra.⁹ It featured two works, *archy and mehitabel*—essentially a recorded version of the piece performed at Town Hall a few months earlier—and

echoes of archy, some further exploits of Don Marquis' cockroach and cat world. *Billboard*, in its review of the disc, waxed enthusiastically over the "completely delightful, offbeat package" that was "tastefully produced, and performed with remarkable perception and sensitivity," and said, further "the Joe Darion-George Kleinsinger score strikes the perfect blend of fey frivolity and thoughtful satire."¹⁰

With the rave reviews of the one-act opera and recording in hand, a trip to Broadway in 1957 was probably inevitable but it proved to be anything but smooth. The show—retitled *Shinbone Alley*—was expanded to two hours, several ballet sequences were added, and a relatively unknown writer, Mel Brooks (yes, that Mel Brooks) was brought in to enliven Darion's book. Eartha Kitt was cast as mehitabel—the show was one of the first fully racially integrated shows on Broadway—and Eddie Bracken reprised his role as archy. Kitt's understudy was Chita Rivera, who catapulted to fame in the role of Anita when *West Side Story* opened a few months later at Broadway's Wintergarden Theatre. While Kleinsinger's music was once again positively received, the production struggled to gain unity and traction, as *The New York Times* reported:

"If you are wondering how a coherent show could be made out of the *archy and mehitabel* verses, you are on the right track. Although the authors have arranged some odd and interesting episodes, they have not been able to pull the work together, especially in that second act, which slowly disintegrates. Mr. Kleinsinger, the composer, is the man who has had most fun and been



Top Left: Figure 3. George Kleinsinger and Paul Wing, Pan the Piper (© RCA Victor, 1947). Bottom Left: Figure 4. George Kleinsinger and Robert May, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (© RCA Victor, 1947). Top Right: Figure 5. George Kleinsinger. Courtesy Fred and Jane Kleinsinger. Bottom Right: Figure 6. George Kleinsinger and Joe Darion, archy and mehitabel (© Columbia, 1955)

most successful. He has improvised an animal and insect world out of music with humor, drollery, street tunes and juke-box pandemonium; and the orchestrations, particularly for 'Cheerio, My Deario,' are spontaneous and inventive. Too bad *Shinbone Alley* does

not really come alive as a stage composition."¹¹

Despite the recognized quality of Kleinsinger's expanded musical score, *Shinbone Alley* closed on May 25, 1957 after only 49 performances. It was, in Broadway's cruel parlance,

a flop. In retrospect, the show probably would have fared better at a more intimate off-Broadway playhouse rather than at the 1,761 seat Broadway Theatre. The subject matter was edgy enough to keep many families with children away, and it had

competition from several other blockbuster musicals like *My Fair Lady*.¹² And two hours (plus intermission) proved to be rather long for the subject matter, especially given the success of the 30-minute long original version performed at Town Hall in 1954. Bigger



Left: Figure 7. George Kleinsinger and Joe Darion, *Shinbone Alley* (© Playbill, 1957).
 Right: Figure 8. George Kleinsinger, *Production Music* (© Major Records, ND).

proved it was not always better. Yet *Shinbone Alley* had one last gasp, as a 1971 full-length animated movie featuring the voices of Channing and Bracken. Hoping to recapture some of the magic of the Town Hall performance, the 93-minute long film did not succeed at the box office. While *The New York Times* praised Kleinsinger's "attractively jazzy orchestrations," it noted that the film suffered from a "split personality being based, as it is, on works that must go over the heads of 8-year-olds (at least those who won't know what's happening when archy gets rolled in a bordello staffed by ladybugs), but it's executed in a mostly juvenile style that's not too far removed from what the children see on television.

It's a very mixed bag and this, in case you hadn't guessed, is a very mixed review."¹³

In 1958, Kleinsinger turned to the wind band as a medium. The American Wind Symphony commissioned Kleinsinger to write *Symphony of Winds* for narrator and wind orchestra. Published by Edition Peters, the work is akin to Benjamin Britten's *A Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, but for wind band. The piece traces the origins of today's wind instruments from a child blowing on a piece of grass, to the nose flute, the shofar, and the serpent. Premiered by the American Wind Symphony (Robert Boudreau, conductor; Kleinsinger narrated) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on

June 15, 1958, the concert also saw the premiere of Kleinsinger's *Concerto for Three Percussionists and Wind Orchestra*. Of the *Concerto*, a critic wrote, "[It] is not very profound, but it is interesting and lively." But *Symphony of Winds* was praised for its "witty and informed narrative" that was "thoroughly enjoyed and heartily applauded by the audience" despite the triteness of its text ("Make those flutes go roun' and roun', show us all your happy sound," and "Oh, tuba now sing it big, lift your heels! dance a jig!").¹⁴ A year later, Kleinsinger and Tripp followed up with a similar work, *Once Upon an Orchestra*, that, according to *Billboard's* review of the recording on Cricket Records (with David Wayne,

narrator), "should capture the fancy of kiddies right away... Cute imaginative material... Winning kiddie fare."¹⁵ As we shall see, *Once Upon an Orchestra* proved to be their penultimate collaboration.

Most of George Kleinsinger's compositions in the last decades of his life were soundtracks for television shows and films. These included ten episodes of a CBS television production with Walter Cronkite, *The Twentieth Century* (1959-1963), *John Brown's Body* (sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, and aired on CBS television in 1962), a movie about immigrant union workers, *The Inheritance* (1964), that was sponsored



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Top Left: Figure 9. Doris Totten Chase and George Kleinsinger, Chelsea Hotel (1970s). Courtesy Fred and Jane Kleinsinger.

Bottom Left: Figure 10. George Kleinsinger, Symphony of Winds (© C. F. Peters, 1958).

Top Right: Figure 11. George Kleinsinger and pet tarantula, Chelsea Hotel (1972).

Bottom Right: Figure 12. George Kleinsinger and his third wife, Susan Bromberg, with pet iguana and turtle, Chelsea Hotel (c. 1980). Courtesy Fred and Jane Kleinsinger.

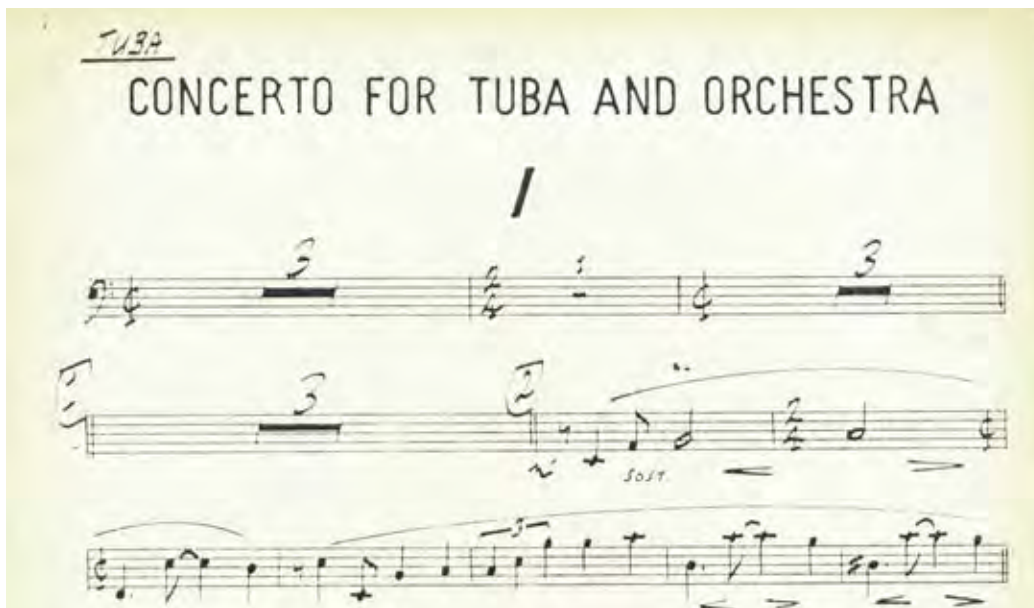


Figure 13. George Kleinsinger, *Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra (incipit)*, 1973 (© RYTVOC, 1986).

by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, and the soundtrack for the television documentary, *Greece—The Golden Age*, which won an Emmy award nomination in 1964 for Outstanding Achievement in Composing Original Music for Television. He also contributed dozens of tracks for Valentino Production Music's sound effect and background music catalog on their "Major Records" label. These were recordings that could be licensed for use on radio, television, and movies, and Valentino's stable of composers included Kleinsinger, Francis Trocaine, Bill Potts, and Domenico Savino among many others. The tracks—all recorded with the resources of a full symphony orchestra as well as other instruments, ranged from 15 seconds to several minutes and covered a wide range of characters, moments, and moods. Kleinsinger's tracks were far-reaching in scope and were superbly crafted. No matter the mood—"Ganges Farmer," "Cave of the Bats," "Child's World," "Long Night," "March

Grotesque," "Conferring Knighthood," "Twisted Mind," "Evacuation," "Dark Plan," "Clouds over Rice Fields," "Diabolical Plot"—George Kleinsinger could bring a listener right into the scene.

For the last twenty-five years of his life, George Kleinsinger lived in New York City's iconic Chelsea Hotel, a place that many musicians, artists, and writers (including Mark Twain, Sarah Bernhardt, Arthur Miller, Virgil Thomson, Jane Fonda, Patti Smith, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Dylan Thomas, and Christo) called home. He lived, in the words of his son, Fred, "a Bohemian lifestyle," which fit in among so many of the Chelsea's residents. "Kleinsinger is known," the *Daily News* wrote in a 1979 profile of the composer, "as much for the pleasure he has taken in women and drink and talk as for his plants and music."¹⁶ He married three times (to Ruth Edelman, 1940; Catherine Walsh, 1970; Susan Bromberg, 1979), had a seeming endless succession of girlfriends, shared a long

relationship during the 1970s with the noted artist Doris Totten Chase (Kleinsinger wrote the soundtrack for twelve of her now iconic computer imaging videos),¹⁷ was always a progressive (many of his compositions such as *Johnny Stranger* and *The Inheritance* championed the underdog), dabbled in left-wing politics in his 20s, and hosted memorable if eccentric parties in his 10th floor apartment, which was a veritable menagerie and jungle, replete with tropical plants, snakes (a python and boa constrictor), a monkey and a skunk, mice, a host of birds and insects, and a pet tarantula. Catherine Walsh set fire to the apartment, a dramatic ultimatum she delivered when she said "he could either stay married in some more conventional place or linger alone with his music in his exotic studio crammed with tropical birds and plants and reptiles right up to the 12-foot ceiling."¹⁸ He chose the birds, plants, and reptiles.

An account of one of Kleinsinger's famously

infamous parties is given a full-chapter treatment and told with uproarious panache by Judy Gail Krasnow, daughter of record producer Hecky Krasnow in her book, *Rudolph, Frosty, and Captain Kangaroo: The Musical Life of Hecky Krasnow*.¹⁹ It is worth tracking down for a rollicking, riveting read. Kleinsinger's Chelsea Hotel apartment was a three-ring circus and he reveled in his role as ringmaster.

Sometimes when you go looking for something, you find something else that is quite unexpected. Music Theatre International (MTI) is a theatrical licensing agency in New York City that rents the music for *Tubby the Tuba* and other pieces by Kleinsinger and Tripp and represents the rightsholders of *Tubby the Tuba* to performing arts organizations worldwide. When I contacted MTI and asked what it is that they actually have that relates to *Tubby the Tuba*, I learned that one of their boxes of Kleinsinger materials contained something previously unknown: several copies of the solo part to his *Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra*. No accompanying materials, just the solo part. Wait. *Tubby the Tuba* has often been described as Kleinsinger's tuba concerto. But this piece—an actual concerto—is in three movements, requires an accomplished player, and one of the MTI solo parts contains a pasted-on copyright notice, RYTVOC, INC., © 1986. But Kleinsinger died in 1982.²⁰ What is this? One question was answered by reading through a document Kleinsinger prepared, "George Kleinsinger (A Partial Listing of His Compositions)," that was provided to me by his daughter, Jane. The twenty-three page paper—typewritten, double spaced, undated (but

none of the works described therein have a stated date of composition later than 1973), and in the form of a long press release (replete with quotations from reviews)—mentions the *Concerto for Tuba* was composed in 1973. But no other details. Why did he write it? For whom did he write it? Was it ever performed? The finding of the concerto's solo part is big, but further research led to something bigger. While in the course of writing this article, I made a serendipitous connection with Louise Eastman Weed of RYTVOC and she located a piano reduction of the *Concerto* in the composer's hand, although page 1 (which includes measures 1-12) is missing.²¹ The discovery of a previously unknown tuba concerto by a major composer is now part of the *Tubby the Tuba* saga, and the search continues to find the complete accompaniment which hopefully will lead to a premiere performance.

Among George Kleinsinger's last compositions were two memorials. A viola concerto, *Prelude, Lament and Jig for Brendan Behan* (1977), was premiered by the South Dakota Symphony conducted by James MacInnes with soloist Emanuel Vardi.²² Kleinsinger and Behan—who was a noted Irish playwright and poet—"became," as *The New York Times* noted, "close friends and drinking companions, and Behan even got used to all the tropical birds blathering along when he sang his Irish songs in the middle of the night." In tribute to his friend, whose chronic alcoholism led to his death in 1964 at the age of 41, Kleinsinger composed a work "complete with rambunctious

brass, hiccupping piano, and the voice of Behan himself, singing 'Irish Soldier,' tape-recorded years ago when the two of them were having a good time at the Chelsea Hotel."²³ A more unusual tribute could hardly be imagined.

Kleinsinger's last published composition was for solo harp, *Pavane for Seskia* (1977). Unfortunately, the publisher failed to catch the misprint in the spelling of the dedicatee's name —Saskia, the wife of the great Dutch painter, Rembrandt van Rijn—but the score contains an enlightening note by the composer:

"Rembrandt, deeply devoted to his wife Seskia [*sic* Saskia], did many portraits of her. She, however, became ill and each succeeding portrait shows the increasing ravages of her illness until her death."²⁴

Writing in *American String Teacher*, reviewer G. Jean Smith noted the advanced nature of the piece, and referred to it as a "brief, beautiful *Andante* based on a recurrent theme."²⁵ What was the impetus for such a personal, touching tribute to the wife of the great artist? Fred Kleinsinger does not remember his father being particularly interested in Rembrandt or Flemish history. George Kleinsinger was in relatively good health at the time, but his son speculated, "Perhaps he was aware of his own gradually diminishing powers."²⁶

On July 28, 1982, George Kleinsinger died of malignant myeloma; he was 68 years old. *Smithsonian* magazine, in a 1983 article about life at the Chelsea hotel, concluded with

a paragraph about one of its most famous residents, "On the Kleinsinger section of the roof—in the garden they planned and planted together, within sight of a majestic skyline, a broad river and neighboring pockets of slums—broccoli and mint and sugar peas and collard greens came to life this year, fertilized by George Kleinsinger's ashes."²⁷


Editor's note: Part 3: Paul Tripp and an introduction to *Tubby the Tuba*, will appear in the Summer 2020 issue of the *ITEA Journal*.

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lecturer of trombone at his undergraduate alma mater, Wheaton College, Illinois. From 1985 to 2012, he was bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and he served as professor of trombone at Arizona State University from 2012-2016. In 2014, he was the recipient of the International Trombone Association's highest honor, the ITA Award. He is the author of several books including *Mastering the Trombone* (co-authored with Edward Kleinhammer, Ensemble Publications), *The One Hundred: Essential Works for the Symphonic Bass Trombonist* (Encore Music Publishers), and *Serpents, Bass Horns, and Ophicleides in the Bate Collection* (Oxford University Press), as well as


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dozens of articles for many music journals and magazines.

Acknowledgements

My long obsession with *Tubby the Tuba* was made all the more enjoyable by interactions with many people who provided help and encouragement along the way. I am especially grateful to David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain, and Fred and Jane Kleinsinger, children of Paul Tripp and George Kleinsinger, for providing me with both personal insights as well as invaluable source materials and photos from their family collections. David Tripp also served as a liaison with the Library of Congress which then

provided a number of items that are part of the Paul Tripp Papers. I am also grateful to Louise Eastman Weed (RYTVOC) who generously gave permission to quote lines from the *Tubby the Tuba* story scripts and provided other helpful information. As a trombonist, I am quite aware that some might view me as an interloper in the world of tuba research, despite the fact that during my long career as an orchestral player, I sat next to and enjoyed unforgettable collaborations with some of the finest tuba players in the business, including David Fedderly, Chester Schmitz, and Mike Roylance. To this end, my good friend, Jerry Young, was particularly encouraging and helpful when I wanted to know who I might contact in the

tuba universe to get a bit of information and if what I was writing was on the right track. Jerry is a fount of information and wisdom; I'm deeply grateful for his friendship and support. And Benjamin Pierce, editor of the ITEAJ, didn't even blink when I proposed submitting one of the longest articles to ever appear in the *Journal*. I am also thankful for the help of many others who joined me along the way, including:

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Barbara Wekselblatt, and the helpful staff at Buswell Library, Wheaton College (Illinois).

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Herbert Wekselblatt (1927-2019), Tubby's first tuba voice.

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Citations

1. *Billboard*, reflecting its bias toward entertainment rather than education, was unenthusiastic in its review of *Pan the Piper*: "It's entirely historical and educational, and while Wing narrates with conviction and interest, the spinning is entirely devoid of entertainment, making it almost an academic session which is hardly what the youngsters like to get from the spinning." "Album Reviews," *Billboard*, July 19, 1947, 130.
2. George Kleinsinger (music) and Robert Lewis May (lyrics), *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. Orchestra conducted by Russ Case. With Paul Wing, narrator. RCA Victor WY 353 47-0134, two 78-rpm discs (1947).
3. George Kleinsinger (music) and Joe Darion (lyrics), *Christmas is a Feeling in Your Heart*, 1953.
4. George Kleinsinger (music) and Walt Whitman (words), *Requiem for President Roosevelt*. Camerata Singers, Floyd Farmer, conductor, narrated by William Hipkiss. New World Records NW1772, compact disc (1997).
5. George Kleinsinger (music) and Michael Stratton [Michael Siegelbaum] (words), *Brooklyn Baseball Cantata*. Russ Case and his Orchestra and Chorus, Robert Merrill, baritone. RCA Victor CD 42, two 78-rpm discs (1946).
6. C.H., "Barzin Features Kleinsinger Work." *The New York Times*, January 10, 1950, 39.
7. [George Kleinsinger], *George Kleinsinger (A Partial Listing of His Compositions)*. Typewritten manuscript owned by Jane Kleinsinger, c. 1973, 22.
8. Howard Taubman, "opera: archy and mehitabel," *The New York Times*, December 7, 1954, 39.
9. George Kleinsinger (music) and Joe Darion (words), *archy and mehitabel and echoes of archy*. Orchestra conducted by George Kleinsinger, narrated by David Wayne. Columbia c14963, 33 1/3-rpm (1955).
10. "Reviews and Ratings of New Popular Albums: Archy and Mehitabel, Echoes of Archy," *Billboard*, March 12, 1955, 30.
11. Brooks Atkinson, "Theatre: Shinbone Alley," *The New York Times*, April 14, 1957, 23.
12. "As the original stories were a trifle salty, with occasional mild expletives and constant references to mehitabel's loose morals, additional elements such as the suicide and a strange encounter by archy with bug prostitutes kept this from headlining kiddie matinees." Jerry Beck, *The Animated Movie Guide* (Chicago: A Cappella Books, 2005), 248.
13. Vincent Canby, "Shinbone Alley Recalls Lives of archy and mehitabel," *The New York Times*, April 8, 1971, 32.
14. James B. Ball, "Point Park Concerts Off to Fine Start: American Wind Symphony Applauded by Big Crowd," *Pittsburgh Press*, June 16, 1958, 10.
15. "Reviews and Ratings of New Albums," *Billboard*, November 30, 1959, 30.
16. Joyce Wadler, "A Face in the Crowd: By a Waterfall on West 23rd St.," *Daily News* (Sunday News Magazine), October 7, 1979, 6.
17. Email from Jane Kleinsinger to Douglas Yeo, August 13, 2019.
18. Francis X. Clines, "About New York: The Chelsea is Still a Roof for Creative Heads," *The New York Times*, February 4, 1978, 17.
19. Judy Gail Krasnow, *Rudolph, Frosty, and Captain Kangaroo: the musical life of Hecky Krasnow, producer of the world's most beloved children's songs* (Santa Monica: Santa Monica Press, 2007). The story of a party in Kleinsinger's Chelsea Hotel apartment is told in Chapter 10, "A Rhino Named Rhumpy and a Tuba Named Tubby." It is difficult, however, to verify two important facts about Krasnow's story. She cites the events in the chapter as happening in 1950 but Kleinsinger was not living in the Chelsea Hotel until around 1957. Further, Columbia Records never recorded *Tubby the Tuba*; the only Columbia recording of *Tubby the Tuba* was a re-release of the original Cosmo recording (1945) with Victor Jory (narrator), Herbert Jenkel (tuba) and Victor Young (conductor); it appeared first in 1951 (MJV-69) on 78-rpm discs, and in 1955 (CL671) on an LP on a compilation with *Peter and the Wolf* (Leopold Stokowski, All-American Youth Orchestra) and *Pan the Piper* (Wilfred Pellitier, New York Philharmonic).
20. I am thankful to Andrei Strizek, Music & Materials Development Supervisor, Music Theatre International, for his assistance in locating the solo part to George Kleinsinger's *Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra*. Email from Andrei Strizek to Douglas Yeo, August 9, 2019.
21. Email from Louise Eastman Weed to Douglas Yeo, December 11, 2019 and December 13, 2019. The title page for 28-page piano reduction reads, "Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra—George Kleinsinger—Piano reduction by the composer."
22. "Festival of Strings a Weeklong Celebration," *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, October 2, 1977, 1C.
23. Francis X. Clines, "About New York: The Chelsea is Still a Roof for Creative Heads," 17.
24. George Kleinsinger, *Pavane for Seskia* (New York: Tetra Music Corp./Alexander Broude, 1977).
25. GJS [G. Jean Smith], "Reviews," *American String Teacher*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (May 1, 1978), 45.
26. Email from Fred Kleinsinger to Douglas Yeo, June 28 and July 6, 2019.
27. Helen Dudar, "It's home sweet home for geniuses, real or would-be," *Smithsonian*, Vol. 14, No. 9 (December 1983), 107.

ITEA Journal

SUMMER 2020

TUBA
ERGONOMICS

A VISIT WITH
*Elizabeth
Raum*

THE LIFE AND CAREER OF
**MIKE
ROYLANCE**

PLUS THE RETIREMENT OF
Micky Moore

ALSO INSIDE:
**TUBBY
THE TUBA**
PART 3

COMPOSER

Kevin Day

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SUMMER 2020, VOL 47, NO 4

On Our Cover

Composer Kevin Day

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— A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF —

Tubby the Tuba

More than a Melody—More than Oompah

by Douglas Yeo



Figure 1. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba (© Cosmo, 1945), The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba (© RCA Victor, 1947), The Tubby the Tuba Song (© General, 1955; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955), Tubby the Tuba at the Circus (© Decca, 1950), Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town (© Golden Crest, 1960).

Editor's note: Douglas Yeo's comprehensive article about Tubby the Tuba appears serialized in eight consecutive issues of the ITEA Journal throughout 2020 and 2021.

PART 3: PAUL TRIPP AND AN INTRODUCTION TO TUBBY THE TUBA

In Part 1 of this article (ITEA Journal, Winter 2020), readers were introduced to George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, whose many collaborations included *Tubby the Tuba*. Here, Paul Tripp's life and work are explored in detail and their most popular work is introduced.

Paul Tripp enlisted into the U.S. Army in May 1942 where he served in the Signal Corps. While he and George

Kleinsinger had agreed—in December 1941—to write a new piece for children that featured the tuba, they did not come together to actually complete the piece before Tripp entered the Army. However, later in 1942, Tripp received a 10-day furlough during which he and George Kleinsinger essentially completed *Tubby the Tuba*. As Tripp recalled,

I asked to see the Colonel in charge and demanded my ten-day leave.

The Colonel wasn't sympathetic to my request. "Haven't you heard, Tripp? There's a war going on."

"I know all about that," I protested. I had been promised my ten-day leave by the draft board.

"Look," said the exasperated Colonel, "it's a question of

money. If you sell stuff that you're going to work on, how much money will you miss making?"

"Ten thousand dollars!" I said. Not even thinking what I was saying...I had never even seen a hundred-dollar bill before. What was I saying?

"\$10,000?" blurted the Colonel. "Furlough granted!"

Looking back, there's no doubt that the furlough was productive—Tripp's \$10,000 estimate was woefully inadequate—and more of that story will be told later. But, before being shipped to India, Burma, and China, Tripp's theatre experience brought him once again to Broadway. In June 1943, the Army's Second Service Command, U.S.A., sponsored a theatrical production, *The Army Play By*

Play, that featured five one-act plays by the prize winners (out of 115 entries) of the Soldiers' One-Act Playwriting Contest. Entr'acte music was provided by the 369th Army Air Force Band. This was a far cry from shooting rifles in the battlefield, but it was part of the patriotic, morale-boosting theme of the home-side war effort. The show opened as a one-night production on June 14, 1943 at the 46th Street Theatre, and the performance was attended by Eleanor Roosevelt, New York City Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor; over \$100,000 was raised that evening for the Soldier's and Sailors' Club.² At the end of the evening, LaGuardia suggested that more performances be given and the Army ran with his idea. An additional 40 performances were scheduled



Figure 2. Paul Tripp as "Mr. I. Magination" (1952). Courtesy David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain.

to benefit Army Emergency Relief in the Martin Beck Theatre where it ran from August 2 to September 4. A final performance was given at the White House on October 4, 1943 for President and First Lady Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.³

The first of the evening's entertainments was "Where E'er We Go," written by Private First-Class John B. O'Dea of Ft. Lewis, Washington. Corporal Paul Tripp was the play's director and had the role of Tex.⁴ The production was highly and widely praised as "one of the most powerful liaison agents between camp and home that has yet been devised to acquaint the home front with the atmosphere, thinking and spirit of the barracks...*The Army Play by Play* is good for civilian morale."⁵

Paul Tripp's run on Broadway with his Army colleagues allowed him to stay home-side long enough to do something even more important. On August 8, 1943, Tripp married Ruth Enders. Born in in 1920 in Ridgefield Park, New Jersey, Enders' first acting engagement came at the age of 16, in *Lovers Are Fools* with the Studio Players at the John Drew Theatre, East Hampton,

Long Island.⁶ While working there with Betty Comden and Ernie Kovaks, she won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London but due to the outbreak of war, she was unable to attend. Instead, she toured the country in a successful one-woman show of her own devising.⁷ She made her Broadway debut in George S. Kauffman and Moss Hart's play, *The American Way* (January-June 1938). Enders and Paul Tripp collaborated, as discussed below, in many television and film projects, and theirs was truly a relationship "till death do us part." When Ruth Enders Tripp died on July 28, 1999, they had been married only a week shy of fifty-six years.

Tubby the Tuba changed Paul Tripp's life, and his work as narrator in the piece—as well as a host of other Tubby related pieces and other collaborations with George Kleinsinger—has been mentioned earlier and will be discussed more in upcoming installments of this article. While Tripp had a long and distinguished career as an actor for television, film, and the stage, his commitment to providing educational entertainment for children—which began in 1941 with *Jack and*

Homer the Horse—was something to which he remained devoted all his life.

In our time when children's television is crowded with cartoons and fast paced fare, it is well to remember Paul Tripp's pioneering work in the genre. Conceived in 1949, *Mr. I. Magination* was Tripp's brainchild, and it ran on the CBS television network in several major markets including New York, Washington D. C., and Philadelphia. Readers may recall *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* that ran in various incarnations from the early 1960s until 2001 (and continues today with rerun shows). But it is fair to say that there would not have been a *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* without *Mr. I. Magination*. Fred Rogers is justifiably lauded for his television work for children, but Tripp's now mostly forgotten contribution was actually more important because he—not Rogers—was the true pioneer.

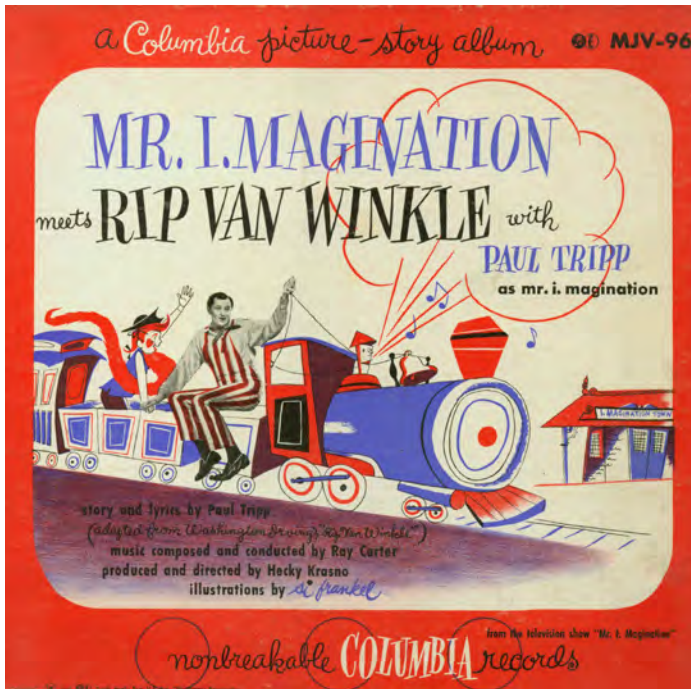
Broadcast weekly for 30 minutes from 1949-1952, the show used what today would be considered low-budget props. But the whole point of the show was to stimulate children's imaginations. The program opened with an early special effect—the viewer was brought onto the show's set while riding a train through a tunnel, a device Fred Rogers would later employ. Set in "Imagination Town," Tripp—always dressed in the striped overalls of a train engineer and referred to by those on the program as Mr. I.—introduced viewers to both historical characters and guests who spoke about and demonstrated their occupations. Tripp's wife, Ruth Enders, was a regular on the show, taking all of the adult female roles. With his

"magic whistle" (really a slide whistle), Mr. I. would take guests back in time to visit Christopher Columbus, Annie Oakley, George Washington, Rip van Winkle, and a host of others. All of this was done with a homey, disarming charm; it was never preachy, but Tripp's sense of humor always came through and children were treated with the utmost respect.

Mr. I. Magination made its debut on April 24, 1949 and met with immediate critical acclaim. The impact of the show was summed up by radio and television critic Sid Shalit's effusive commentary two weeks after its first episode:

For years radio has attempted unconvincingly to bring a convincing children's world into the family living room. But its infant prodigy, television, has finally approached the problem from an adult viewpoint in the new CBS-TV stanza, "Mr. I. Magination." Too many kiddie programs clog the air with patronizing talk on the assumption that children fall in the same category as lovers of soap operas. "Mr. I. Magination" is a refreshing departure. It is written and presented for the youthful set but does not treat them as overgrown infants. It treats them as young adults, and that is why a lot of "older" adults, too, are going to find themselves tuned in on CBS-TV Sundays at 6:30 P.M.

Paul Tripp, author of the children's classic record, Tubby the Tuba, stars as "Mr. I. Magination" and writes the book and lyrics to Ray Carter's bright music. A blend of fact and fantasy in terms of musical comedy and drama, the format features Tripp as engineer of a fairyland



Top Left: Figure 3. Paul Tripp with his daughter, Suzanne, and wife, Ruth Enders, on the set of “Mr. I. Magination.” Courtesy David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain.

Top Right: Figure 4. Ed Sullivan presenting Paul Tripp with the LOOK TV Award for Best Children’s Program, “Mr. I. Magination” (January 1951). Courtesy David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain.

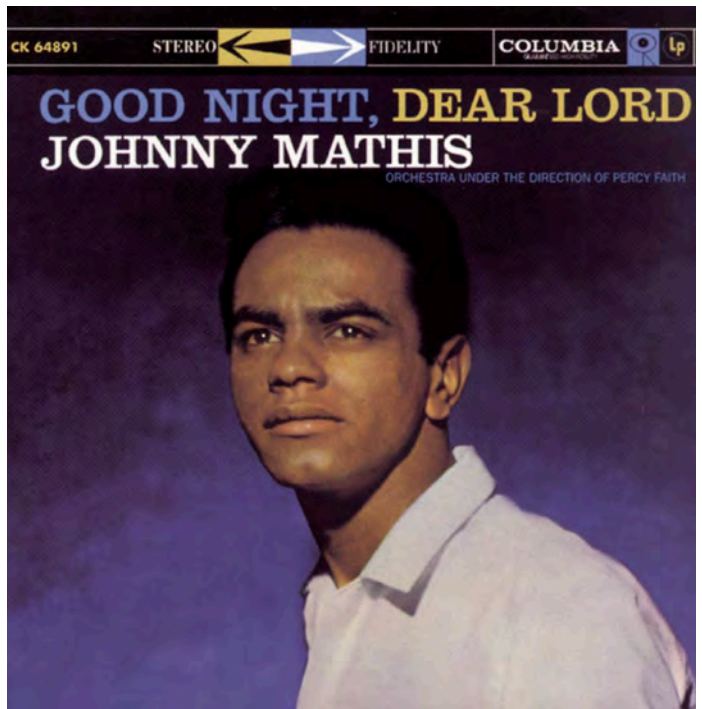
Bottom Left: Figure 5. Paul Tripp, Mr. I. Magination meets Rip van Winkle (© Columbia, 1951).

Bottom Right: Figure 6. Paul Tripp, Space Ship to Mars (© Columbia, 1952).

train who whisks viewers on fanciful excursions...They say imagination plays strange tricks. But the tricks played by “Mr. I. Magination” are more than merely strange. They’re vastly amusing, entertaining and, most important, authentically informative.⁸

Before the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences was established in 1955, Emmy awards for excellence in the

television industry were given by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences in Los Angeles, and only Los Angeles based shows were honored. The LOOK TV Award filled the need for national recognition, and in 1951, Paul Tripp and “Mr. I. Magination” were honored as the best children’s program of 1950. The award was presented to Tripp by television host Ed Sullivan, who himself



Left: Figure 7. Paul Tripp as he appeared on the episode “The Last Commencement” on *The Law and Mr. Jones* (1961).
 Right: Figure 8. Ray Carter (music) and Paul Tripp (lyrics), *Good Night, Dear Lord*. Recording by Johnny Mathis (© 1958, Columbia).

was honored as best MC (master of ceremonies) for his show, “Toast of the Town.”⁹

“Mr. I. Magination” spawned several records made in 1951 and 1952 on Columbia (produced by Hecky Krasnow), including *All Aboard the Showboat with Mr. I. Magination*, *Mr. I. Magination meets Rip Van Winkle*, and *Space Ship to Mars with Mr. I. Magination*. With music by Ray Carter, the records were highly successful, praised for their innovative stories. “By following the story,” *Billboard* wrote about *Space Ship to Mars*, “kids will hear something of the effect of space and acceleration on gravity and other phenomena.”¹⁰ Krasnow’s daughter, Judy, appeared on several of the

records. “Recording with Paul,” she said, “was a joy.”¹¹

Yet the critical acclaim the program received and the niche it filled in early educational television was not enough to keep it from struggling to keep a sponsor. The program was cancelled by CBS in 1951, and *New York Times* critic Jack Gould thundered against CBS, as he railed against the cancellation of *Mr. I. Magination* and two other children’s television shows, including *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*:

The fate of “Mr. I. Magination” has been even more distressing; the program has been taken off the air altogether. Yet without question, this was one of the finest presentations on the air for children... There were fresh songs and

*stories and always they were presented with originality and meticulous taste...An advertiser understandably may want to reach only the largest possible audience, but a broadcaster, on the other hand, has many different obligations, among them serving the minority. Without continuing efforts to that end, the broadcaster’s concept of majority rule in programming is only an illusory jest and a form of cultural totalitarianism.*¹²

CBS brought back *Mr. I. Magination* after an uproar, what the *Daily News* called a “loud, sustained holler” from viewers.¹³ Still, despite being reinstated by popular demand, the program’s last show was broadcast only a few months later, on June 28, 1952. In a 1970 interview, Paul Tripp

waxed nostalgically about those early days of television, and how his program—*TV Guide* said the show was “based on the premise that children have minds”—did something that, regrettably, had not been continued in earnest in the years that followed. “Television,” he said, “has become jaded—it has lost its sense of excitement and adventure. Shows are forced to copy what drew the best rating last year.” Children, he felt, have been cheated by “the cartoon age” and have “lost the thrill of identifying with living personalities.”¹⁴

In the years that followed, Paul Tripp continued writing and appearing in several more children’s television shows, including *On the Carousel* (CBS, 1954-1959; the show



SUNDAY AFTERNOON
November 10, 1974

I
ALLEGRO BRILLANTE
(See Friday's Notes)
INTERMISSION

II
TUBBY THE TUBA
(World Premiere)

Music by PAUL TRIPP and GEORGE KLEINSINGER
Tuba solo by GARY OFENLOCH
Choreography by RON CUNNINGH
Associate Producer, LORRAIN MICHELE
Narrated by PAUL BENZAQUIN

Tuby	Clyde Nantais
Tune	Stephanie Moy
Peepo, the Piccolo	Samson Candelaria
1st Violin	Robert Steele
2nd Violin	David Drummond
The Cello	Michael De Marco
The Flute	Ilene Strickler
The Trumpet	Mark Mejia
The Oboe	Adam Miller
The Bassoon	Augustus Van Heerden
Conductor	Leo Guerard
Frog	Larry Robertson
The Xylophone	Judith Shouff
The Trombone	Mark Johnson
Celesta	Carinne Binda
The French Horn	Pam Royal
Maestro Pizzicato	James Capp

INTERMISSION

III
GRADUATION BALL
(See Thursday's Notes)

— FINIS —

Top Left: Figure 9. Paul Tripp (left) as Sam Whipple with Alberto Rabagliati (right) as Santa Claus in *The Christmas That Almost Wasn't* (1966).

Bottom Left: Figure 10. Paul Tripp (standing) as Benjamin Franklin and William Jennings (seated) as Thomas Jefferson in *1776* (1971).

Top Right: Figure 11. Paul Tripp and Trina Scharf Hyman, *The Little Red Flower* (© Doubleday, 1968).

Middle Right: Figure 12. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© CBS/Israeli Broadcasting Authority, c. 1962). Scan by Charles McAdams, courtesy R. Winston Morris Tuba Collection, Tennessee Tech University.

Bottom Right: Figure 13. Program from Boston Ballet premiere production of *Tubby the Tuba*, November 10, 1974. Courtesy Gary Ofenloch.

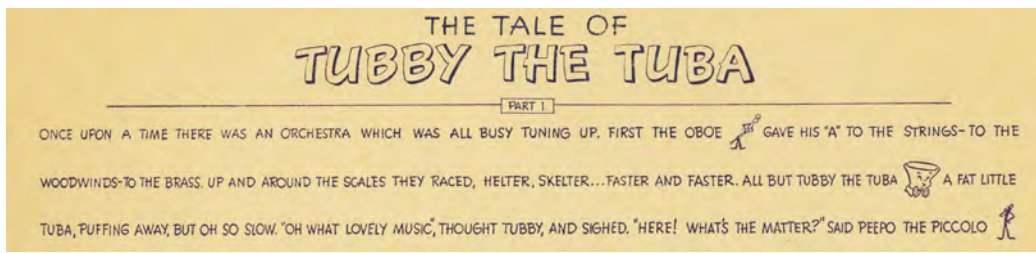


Figure 14. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (incipit, interior record sleeve, © Cosmo, 1945).

won the 1956 New York Emmy award for Best Children's Program),¹⁵ and *Birthday House* (NBC, 1963-1967), a show where Tripp (along with his wife) hosted a real birthday party for a child from the New York City area. The program featured stories, songs, games, and engagement with guests; it clearly built on the earlier model of *Mr. I. Magination*. He also had roles in a host of television programs and series, including *Perry Mason*, the *Dick Van Dyke Show*, *The Law and Mr. Jones*,¹⁶ and *Kraft Television Theater*. In 1952, he wrote the script for an episode of *Tales of Tomorrow*, "Ahead of His Time," a science fiction television series that ran from 1951-1953 in which he and Ruth Enders also had the leading roles. In the show, Tripp—thanks to time travel—managed to save Earth from destruction in 2052.¹⁷ And his 1958 song, *Good Night, Dear Lord* (music by Ray Carter), enjoyed success as the title track of a best-selling album of Christian and Jewish-themed songs recorded by Johnny Mathis.¹⁸ Tripp's work also extended to one man shows, including a theatrical portrayal of Will Rogers (1974) and one on television about Thomas Edison (1979).

In 1966, Paul Tripp wrote the script for the movie *The Christmas that Almost Wasn't*, a story/musical about Santa

Claus' landlord who planned to raise the rent on the jolly man with the white beard's house, and when Santa could not pay, planned to evict him from the North Pole and keep Christmas from coming. The film was directed by Rossano Brazzi (who also had the role of Santa's landlord, Phineas T. Prune, who was a cross between Dr. Seuss' Grinch and Charles Dickens' Ebenezer Scrooge), and featured Alberto Rabagliati as Santa, and Tripp in the role of Santa's friend, Sam Whipple. Ruth Enders and David Tripp (Paul Tripp and Ruth Enders' son) also appeared in the film although they were uncredited. Released in both English and Italian versions, it enjoyed modestly positive reviews, spawned a soundtrack album (music by Ray Carter; lyrics by Tripp) on RCA Camden (the soundtrack was nominated for a Grammy for Best Recording for Children in 1966),¹⁹ and, for a time, enjoyed a cult following with re-airings on television every Christmas.

Paul Tripp's stage acting roles were legion. Among his most notable was the role of Benjamin Franklin in the touring company of the musical *1776*. The show won three Tony awards and the New York Drama Critics award when it opened on Broadway in 1969 (Tripp was not in original the Broadway cast), and a touring company was organized in

1970 that traveled throughout the United States; the cast included William Jennings as Thomas Jefferson, and Don Perkins as John Adams along with Tripp. Due to his television work as *Mr. I. Magination*, Tripp, referred to in reviews as "one of the best-known children's entertainers," was often considered the star of the show, and his performance was widely praised:

*As Benjamin Franklin, Paul Tripp is marvelous, smiling his self-pleased, cat and canary smile, a charming old rounder who doesn't miss anything and never intends to.*²⁰

But while Paul Tripp was certainly a kind of theatrical everyman, his hand was never far from the education of children. In addition to his librettos and television scripts, he wrote several children's books, including *The Strawman Who Smiled by Mistake* (Doubleday, 1967; illustrations by Wendy Watson), *The Little Red Flower* (Doubleday, 1968; illustrations by Trina Scharf Hyman), and *The Tail that Went Looking* (Doubleday, 1971; illustrations by Tim Lewis). When he died in 2002 at the age of 91, he was eulogized as "a Pied Piper of early children's television,"²¹ but his most lasting legacy was the story of a tuba who wanted to play a melody and

whose oompahs were ultimately redeemed.

An introduction to *Tubby the Tuba*

Tubby the Tuba is more than a story, and it is much more than a musical composition. And, as both and more, it is about more than a melody and more than oompah. It became an industry unto itself, spawning recordings (in 78, 45, and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm incarnations, as well as cassette, compact disc, and streaming), narrations in English, French, Danish, Norwegian, Spanish, Hebrew, and a host of other languages, cartoons, a movie (featuring the voices of Dick van Dyke and Pearl Bailey), sheet music, and musical arrangements. In addition, it was father to several sequel compositions about Tubby, as well as a three-minute song based on Tubby's story. It was the first children's album to be recorded in Israel (1949)²² and Boston Ballet premiered a version for dancers.²³ Tubby has been recorded and performed by well-known narrators (including Victor Jory, Danny Kaye, Paul Tripp, José Ferrer, Sonny Fox, Annette Funicello, Julia Child, Carol Channing, Meredith Vieira, and the Manhattan Transfer), and tuba soloists (including Herbert Jenkel, Herbert Wekselblatt, Phillip Donatelli, George Boujie, William "Bill" Bell, Harvey Phillips, Martin Fry, John "Tommy" Johnson, and Chester Schmitz), and the story has been published in book form three times. How many copies have been sold? Did the first recording of *Tubby the Tuba*—as reported in the *New York Daily News* in December 1945—really receive 500,000 orders in the first few weeks after it was released? Did combined sales of *Tubby*

the *Tuba* recordings and books exceed 13 million as the book version of *Tubby the Tuba* by Dutton Children's Books reported in 2006? Maybe? Possibly? Probably? Definitely? Multiple millions, for sure, but estimates are impossible to confirm. Recordings of the *Tubby the Tuba* franchise have been released on dozens of labels, some of which long ago went out of business as others came along and flourished, with *Tubby the Tuba* helping them to keep the lights on at the factory for many years. And as the first bona fide "hit" in the history of children's records, it rocketed the genre into astronomical success, spawning an untold number of stories and recordings about musical instruments that

have taught generations of youngsters to love music and pick up and play the piccolo, and trumpet, and trombone, and violin. And the tuba.

For those who have never known and loved *The Tale of Tubby the Tuba* (as it was first named), the enormity of the phenomenon may come as a surprise. In the course of researching this article, I collected no fewer than 50 recordings of *Tubby the Tuba* and its successor compositions. And they are just the tip of a very large iceberg of Tubby recordings.²⁴ There are many, many more; there simply comes a time when one must stop obsessive collecting. A copy of the first edition of the book, *The Tale of Tubby*

the Tuba, published in 1948, took me over a year to locate. I'm not sure my grandchildren wholly appreciate the fact that the book they love so much that Grandpa has read to them over and over required him to lay out \$100 to purchase the only copy he has ever found—from a book dealer in Tacoma, Washington—but I count it as a prized part of my library. Other rare finds were shockingly affordable (probably because the seller didn't know the rarity of the item), such as when I paid 99 cents for a copy of Mitch Miller's recording of *The Tubby the Tuba Song* with William "Bill" Bell on tuba. Helpful librarians at Princeton University provided me with a (legal) scan of the only known copy of the sheet music for

The Tubby the Tuba Song, and through the kindness of a collector of tuba recordings, Stephen Shoop, I was able to hear—after an exhaustive search—the Holy Grail, the truest needle in a haystack of the Tubby universe: Harvey Phillips' 1960 recording on Golden Crest Records of *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town*. Say again? You've never heard of that piece? Well, that is part of the story that unfolds in upcoming issues of the *Journal*. Many stories about Tubby, actually, and the people who brought him to life. Stay tuned.

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Editor's note: Part 4, Tubby the Tuba first recordings and performances, will appear

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Douglas Yeo (yeodoug.com and thelasttrombone.com) is lecturer of trombone at his undergraduate alma mater, Wheaton College, Illinois. From 1985 to 2012, he was bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and he served as professor of trombone at Arizona State University from 2012-2016. In 2014, he was the recipient of the International Trombone Association's highest honor, the ITA Award. He is the author of several books including Mastering the Trombone (co-authored with Edward Kleinhammer, Ensemble Publications), The One Hundred: Essential Works for the Symphonic Bass

Trombonist (Encore Music Publishers), and Serpents, Bass Horns, and Ophicleides in the Bate Collection (Oxford University Press), as well as dozens of articles for many music journals and magazines.

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Acknowledgements

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Herbert Wekselblatt (1927-2019), Tubby's first tuba voice.

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— A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF —

Tubby the Tuba

More than a Melody—More than Oompah

by Douglas Yeo



Figure 1. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba (© Cosmo, 1945), The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba (© RCA Victor, 1947), The Tubby the Tuba Song (© General, 1950; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955), Tubby the Tuba at the Circus (© Decca, 1950), Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town (© Golden Crest, 1960).

Editor's note: Douglas Yeo's comprehensive article about Tubby the Tuba appears serialized in eight consecutive issues of the ITEA Journal throughout 2020 and 2021.

PART 4: TUBBY THE TUBA FIRST RECORDINGS AND PERFORMANCES

Story synopsis:

"Once upon a time there was an orchestra, which was all busy tuning up." Tubby is "a fat little tuba, puffing away, but oh, so slow." While all of the other instruments in the orchestra play pretty melodies, Tubby plays only his oompahs. When he asks his friend, Peepo the piccolo, why he couldn't play a melody, Peepo replies, "But people never write melodies for tuba, it just isn't done!" A

pretty tune is passed around the orchestra from instrument to instrument but when it gets to Tubby, he inadvertently sits on it and then tries to squeeze it back in shape. The violins call him a "clumsy fool" and the other instruments laugh at him when he explains he just wanted to dance with the tune. The conductor tells the orchestra to stop and he scolds Tubby, but Tubby explains, "Please sir, I wasn't laughing." After rehearsal, Tubby walks home dejectedly and asks Peepo to leave him alone. "I just feel so bad," explains Tubby.

Tubby sits down by the river on a moon-lit night and sings a sad soliloquy, "Alone am I, me and I together." Suddenly, a bullfrog jumps out of the water and sits down next to Tubby. He welcomes Tubby by singing a song, "Bug-Gup!

Bug-Gup! Lovely evening!" but Tubby ignores him. The frog, feeling unwanted, prepares to leave but Tubby asks him to stay. The frog explains that nobody pays any attention to him when, night after night, he sings his heart out. Tubby asks the frog to sing for him and after he finishes his melody, Tubby tells him "Oh, that's lovely." The frog encourages Tubby to play the melody, and after Tubby plays the tune, the frog tells Tubby, "You're a very fine tuba...you should try that with your orchestra sometime." Tubby thanks the frog and goes off with his new melody, "as happy as happy could be."

The next day, the orchestra awaits the arrival of "the great new conductor, Signor Pizzicato." Tubby practices his oompahs and Peepo notices that Tubby seems to be feeling

better. Tubby winks at him. When Signor Pizzicato asks the orchestra to begin, Tubby plays the frog's melody. He is interrupted by the indignant violins who are afraid that Tubby will disgrace them; the trumpets snicker and the trombone sticks out his tongue. But Signor Pizzicato is intrigued: "Tubby, I've never heard a tuba play a melody before. Let's hear the rest of it." Tubby begins to play, the other instruments are captivated by his tune, and the whole orchestra asks if they can join in playing Tubby's melody. Tubby agrees; he looks down and sees the bullfrog sitting beside him. "We have our points too, don't we?" says the frog. Tubby thinks, "Oh, how happy I am!"

George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp had a twenty-year collaboration that resulted

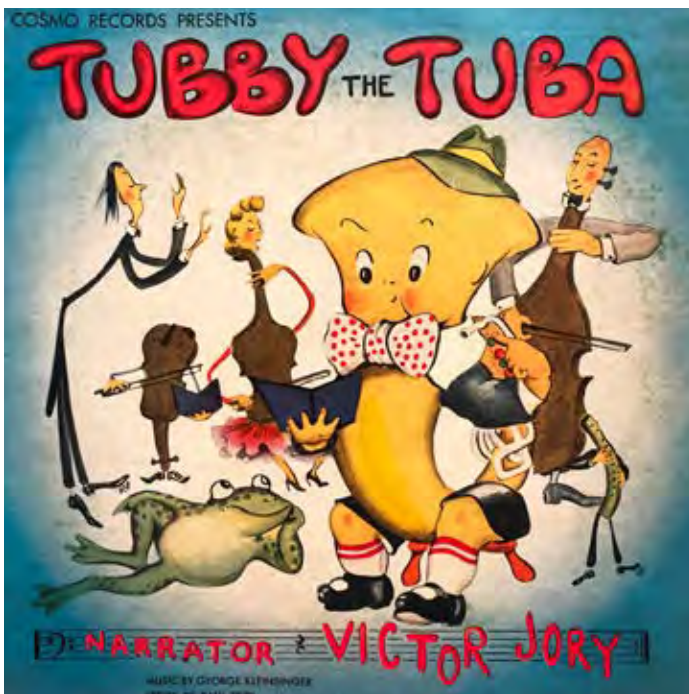


Figure 2. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Cosmo, 1945).

in many musical works for children. Yet, when looking back at their greatest success, *Tubby the Tuba*, they could not agree on exactly how and when the muse struck that led them to write a new piece about a tuba.

On the essential element of the Tubby creation story, Kleinsinger and Tripp always agreed. Tubist Herbert Jenkel asked them to write a piece. After that, their two narratives diverged. Kleinsinger recalled that he and Tripp attended a rehearsal of Kleinsinger's *Scherzo for Orchestra* with the NBC Symphony conducted by Milton Kamins. After the rehearsal—where Kamins kept telling Jenkel to play softer and softer during some arias sung by soprano Eileen Farrell before finally asking him to stop playing all together—Jenkel asked Kleinsinger, “Did you ever think of writing a concerto for tuba and orchestra?” Kleinsinger recalled, “I turned around to Paul and said ‘We have a story here. We

have a guy who wasn't allowed to play his oompahs and now he wants a concerto.”¹

For his part, Paul Tripp recalled that the encounter with Jenkel occurred after a performance of Tripp and Kleinsinger's first collaborative composition, *Jack and Homer the Horse*. Conducted by Robert Russell Bennett with the WOR (radio) Musical Network Orchestra, *Jack and Homer* was broadcast on December 19, 1941. As Tripp recalled, in notes he made documenting the birth of Tubby,

The players came out to congratulate George and me. We wiped our foreheads and thanked them all. Last of all [came] the tuba player, still holding his tuba in both hands. “Beautiful! Beautiful!, he kept repeating. “Such a lovely story, Mr. Tripp. Then he said, wistfully, “Beautiful music, Mr. Kleinsinger. Someday, Mr. Kleinsinger, you must write some special music for me—you know tubas can sing

*too—why don't you write me a solo, please! Nobody has ever written a solo for a tuba! Think about it Mr. Kleinsinger. Think hard, Mr. Tripp—please, please, please.” Absentmindedly we both said we would try, and we turned away to accept congratulations from others.*²

How to reconcile these conflicting accounts?

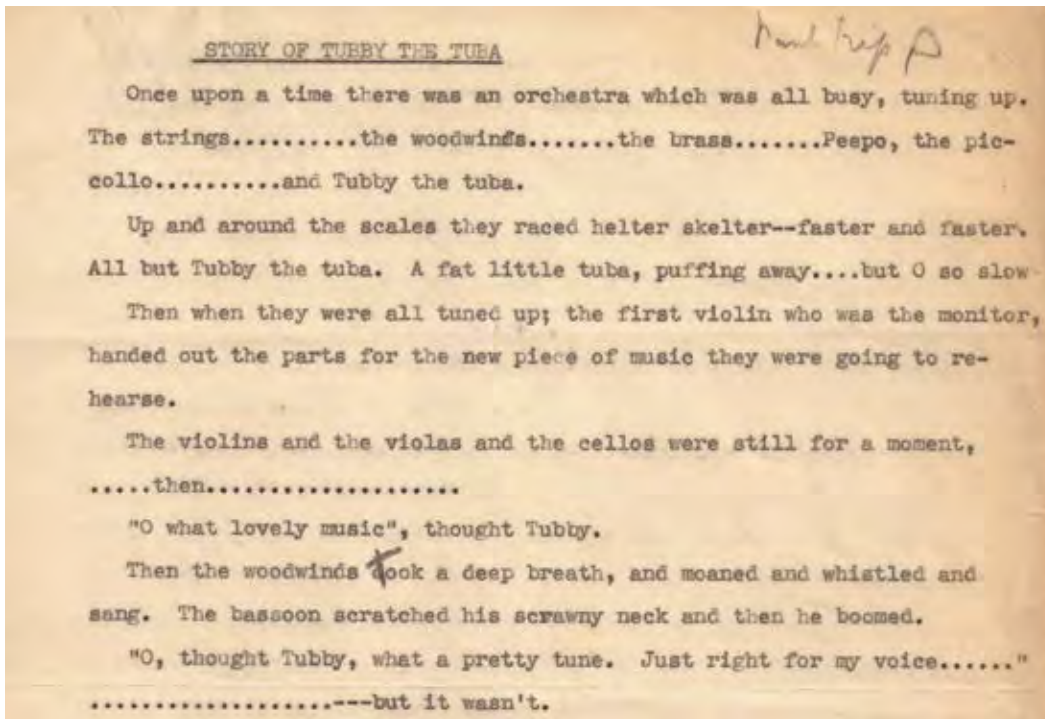
It is not easy to untangle stories like this when the two principals are no longer alive to defend their memories. But several facts seem to corroborate Paul Tripp's account. First, the encounter with Jenkel had to have happened in December 1941. As Tripp recalled, he jotted down some notes with an embryonic story line of what became *Tubby the Tuba* during the night following the *Jack and Homer the Horse* broadcast. During the next weeks, he sketched out the story more fully and on January 7, 1942, he sent a copy of the Tubby story to himself via registered mail (the manuscript is dated, in Tripp's handwriting, December 29, 1941) in what was a kind of poor man's copyright protection. That manuscript and the postmarked envelope have survived (they are part of the Paul Tripp Papers at the Library of Congress), and they allow us to establish a firm time frame for the origin of the Tubby story.

That in itself does not prove or disprove one man's story or the other. However, in digging a bit deeper, it should be noted that the tubist of the NBC Symphony in December 1941 was William “Bill” Bell, not Herbert Jenkel. Bell was a member of the orchestra from 1937-1943, and after he left to join the New York Philharmonic, Jenkel joined

the NBC Symphony. Also, while no sketches, manuscripts, or dated scores for Kleinsinger's *Scherzo for Orchestra* have surfaced, two important, contemporaneous sources give its date of composition as 1944 or 1945.³ That those sources don't agree on the date is a head-scratcher, but it seems that on the preponderance of the evidence (if not beyond a reasonable doubt), Kleinsinger's *Scherzo* could not have been rehearsed or performed by the NBC Symphony with Herbert Jenkel as the orchestra's tubist as early as 1941.

Does this matter? Not especially. This is not the only time in the *Tubby the Tuba* narrative when memories didn't line up with facts and a story has been told in different ways. What is important is what is important: In 1941, Herbert Jenkel asked Kleinsinger and Tripp for a piece for tuba, and Tripp immediately began thinking of a story.

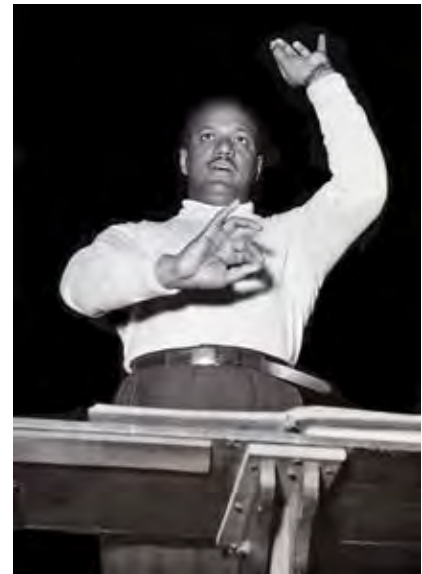
Paul Tripp's story for *Story of Tubby the Tuba*—sketched out in the middle of the night—remained just that, a story, when Tripp entered the U. S. Army in May 1942. But, as discussed in Part 3 of this article (*ITEA Journal*, Summer 2020), Tripp, with Tubby on his mind, managed to secure a ten-day furlough from the Army during which time he and Kleinsinger worked to move *Tubby the Tuba* from a conceptual idea to a musical composition. The original eight-page story was trimmed to three pages. Tripp later described that experience, saying, “What a heavenly lark it was—sitting next to George on the same bench in front of his piano.”⁴ Like *Jack and Homer the Horse*, Tubby was to have a narrator and singing with an orchestra.



Top Left: Figure 3. Paul Tripp, *Story of Tubby the Tuba* (earliest known manuscript, December 1941). Courtesy David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain.

Top Right: Figure 4. Dean Dixon (c. 1950).

Bottom Right: Figure 5. Herbert Wekselblatt, age 15 (Veterans of Foreign Wars Band, 1942). Courtesy Barbara Wekselblatt.



And, in this case, a prominent role for a tuba soloist. After the piece was completed and his furlough was over, Tripp returned to the Army and it was left to Kleinsinger and Tripp's wife, Ruth Enders, to pitch the piece to record companies and orchestras.

Enter Dean Dixon. A gifted conductor, Dixon (1915-1976) entered the music scene in 1931 and guest conducted the NBC Symphony and New York Philharmonic in 1941.⁵ Before leaving the United States to seek conducting opportunities abroad—Dixon, who was African American, felt his career was being held back at home due to racial bias—he founded the American Youth Orchestra (AYO) in 1944. George Kleinsinger and Dixon crossed paths and in May 1945, Dixon programmed Kleinsinger's *Overture on*

American Folk Themes on an AYO program at Carnegie Hall that included Symphony No. 4 of Johannes Brahms, Beethoven's *Leonore* No. 3 Overture, and arias sung by Metropolitan Opera soprano Regina Resnik. The orchestra's playing was highly praised, and later that year, Dixon's youth orchestra recorded Kleinsinger's piece for the Office of Inter-American Affairs which distributed it to radio stations in Latin America.⁶

George Kleinsinger's burgeoning friendship and collaboration with Dean Dixon provided an opportunity to test out *Tubby the Tuba*.⁷ Despite Kleinsinger's and Ruth Enders' efforts, interest in the piece was virtually nonexistent. However, Kleinsinger knew that when interest finally would materialize, it would be sensible to have tried out

the parts on an orchestra in advance of a performance in order to work out any problems. That interest finally came in 1945. Cosmo Records—the company's full name was Cosmopolitan Records, but it had no connection with Cosmopolitan Magazine—a small, new label with big plans broke out. Established by Harry Black, it made an immediate splash with a series of releases in a wide range of genres, including jazz, pop, rhythm & blues, and country western. Cosmo's stable of artists included Jerry Wayne, Larry Clinton, Hal McIntyre, Pat Kirkwood, and trombonists Bobby Byrne and Trummy Young.⁸ Their marketing was aggressive—they pushed the nickname "House of Stars" and their disc labels featured a firmament of constellations—and Kleinsinger approached

Cosmo about taking on *Tubby the Tuba* as a recording project. Wanting to get a foothold into the emerging "kidisk" market, Harry Black took a chance and agreed to record *Tubby the Tuba*. In advance of the recording session, Kleinsinger and Dixon planned to run through the piece at an American Youth Orchestra rehearsal in May 1945.

Enter Herbert Wekselblatt (1927-2019). Well known today for his distinguished career as tubist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra (1961-1996) and arranger of *Solos for*



Left: Figure 6. American Youth Orchestra, Dean Dixon, conductor. Concert Program, May 15, 1946. Courtesy Library of Congress, Paul Tripp Papers.

Bottom: Figure 7. Paul Tripp, *The Tale of Tubby the Tuba*; script used by Paul Tripp (final narrating manuscript, c. 1946). Courtesy David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain. Note Herbert Wekselblatt's name penciled in at the top of the manuscript.

to high A and B in the treble clef. Mr. Kleinsinger asked me how high I could play, and I told him that the first space F in the treble clef was my limit. All the manuscript parts were gathered up, and Kleinsinger and Tripp said they would be back in about a week. A week later Tubby's solo had been re-written to the way we know it today.⁹

Tuba performance to Dixon's youth orchestra at that time. Not in the Tripp or Kleinsinger family collections, nor the Library of Congress, nor in Dean Dixon's papers at the New York Public Library. Some things did not add up.

Stop. As Barton Cummings pointed out in his *ITEA Journal* 2006 article, "Tubby's Great Complaint," there was a problem with Herbert Wekselblatt's story. Paul Tripp was in China with the U.S. Army in 1945. He could not have been present at the American Youth Orchestra rehearsals where Tubby was first introduced. Further, Wekselblatt went on to write that he performed *Tubby the Tuba* in concert with Dixon's orchestra "four or five times" before he was inducted into the U.S. Navy in May 1945. But no programs or reviews have been found to link a *Tubby the*

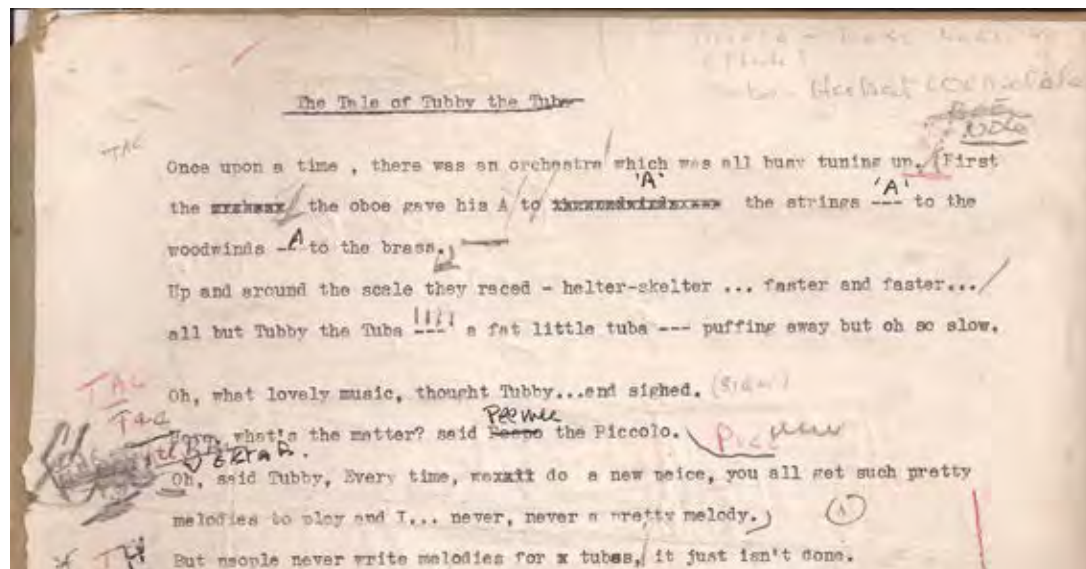
In an effort to sort this out, I called Herbert Wekselblatt in March 2019, and that lengthy telephone conversation was followed up with several email messages.¹⁰ He could not have been more gracious—or helpful—and together, we ironed out some of the details relating to his involvement with *Tubby the Tuba*. Mr. Wekselblatt allowed that his memory about his early encounter with Tubby was not as sharp as he wished it was, although given that he was 91 years old when we spoke, I was tremendously impressed with his memory regarding many events, his enthusiastic engagement throughout our conversation, and his willingness to consider some alternative narratives

the *Tuba Player* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1964) and *First Solos for the Tuba Player* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1972), Wekselblatt entered the Juilliard School of Music in 1943 and began playing in the American Youth Orchestra in the spring of 1945. When Kleinsinger brought *Tubby the Tuba* to an AYO rehearsal, it was Wekselblatt who first laid eyes on the solo part.

through the manuscript with the orchestra from beginning to end...words and all. Tubby's solo was written extremely high, at one point I told Mr. Kleinsinger that I couldn't play that high. If I remember correctly, the solo started as we know it but then jumped

At this point, we do well to hear Herbert Wekselblatt's own words as he described what happened next, as he wrote in the *ITEA Journal* in 2006,

...A few weeks later [in 1945], at one of the [AYO] rehearsals, were two new faces. They were George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, the composer and the narrator (wordsmith) of *Tubby the Tuba*. Dixon went



that might reconcile the many diverse pieces of the story. As we discussed *Tubby the Tuba*, Mr. Wekselblatt's memory was jogged, and he admitted that he had conflated two separate events that occurred at two different times. His performances of *Tubby the Tuba* did not follow immediately after the initial two rehearsals of the piece. Rather, they were separated by a year. After the reading rehearsals of *Tubby the Tuba* with the American Youth Orchestra in the spring of 1945, Wekselblatt entered the U.S. Navy. As discussed below, *Tubby the Tuba* was then recorded by Cosmo Records later in 1945, and, while on a furlough from the Navy before being discharged and then joining the National Guard, Herbert Wekselblatt gave *Tubby the Tuba* its world premiere performance on May 15, 1946, with the American Youth Orchestra with Dean Dixon in a concert at Heckscher Auditorium in Harlem, New York.¹¹ For that performance, *Tubby the Tuba* was narrated by Paul Tripp, who had been discharged from the U.S. Army a few months earlier on December 24, 1945. Program notes for the performance that accompanied the printed program were written by Ruben Cedeno of Harlem's Benjamin Franklin High School (now the Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics). Of *Tubby the Tuba*, he wrote, with no sense of the importance of the moment,

This beautiful and elegant work was composed by George Kleinsinger and the text written by Paul Tripp. In this composition, the basic elements of orchestration are displayed through the telling of a story in which the members

*of the orchestra are the leading characters.*¹²

Dixon and the AYO went on to give several more performances of *Tubby the Tuba*, both with Wekselblatt and later with tubist Don Butterfield, who played a 1948 performance in New York City's Town Hall.¹³

Before leaving Dean Dixon, one more thing should be said. Dixon's papers are now housed at the New York Public Library, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York City. While an examination of this copious collection did not turn up any additional programs or reviews about AYO performances of *Tubby the Tuba*, it did unearth a fascinating, multi-page document by Dixon. Undated and titled, simply, "American Youth Orchestra, Dean Dixon, conductor," the typewritten manuscript is an exceptionally detailed account of Dixon's philosophy behind the operation of the AYO, its programming, and educational mission. In it, Dixon outlined his concept in creating three different kinds of youth concerts: "Touch Concerts" for three and four-year olds, "Dramatic Concerts" for six through nine-year olds, and "Concerts for Young People" for sixteen-year olds. Dixon gave sample programs for each kind of concert along with a detailed explanation of how each composition fit into the educational and psychological needs and makeup of each age group. *Tubby the Tuba*, Dixon said, fit into a typical "Dramatic Concert" along with *Danse Macabre* of Camille Saint-Saëns, *Édouard Lalo's Symphonie Espagnole*, the second movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, and the

finale of Haydn's *Farewell Symphony*. He wrote,

Tubby the Tuba, by Kleinsinger, is a composition written for children and using a narrator as well as an orchestra. I put the tuba player in front of the violins, in the place soloists with an orchestra always occupy. The children were thus able to get the full impact of the sad-then-happy story of the big brass tuba.

*It may be seen from the above that I have tried to use as a starting point the symbols, the objects, the places and the people the child knows best, the emphasis constantly being placed on the attempt and desire to meet the child on the level on which he exists, with language he knows and understands. I go on from there, leading him forward toward the appreciation of good music presented in pure form without assistance from visual or other extramusical stimuli.*¹⁴

To those parents and orchestral musicians who have watched youth concerts devolve over recent decades into distracting presentations of puppeteers, chalk artists, dancers, films and videos, and actors, with the orchestra assuming a decidedly "back up" role, one can only look at Dean Dixon's words and respond with a hearty, "Amen!"

After the reading rehearsals for *Tubby the Tuba* with the American Youth Orchestra, the piece was ready for a recording session for Cosmo records; Tubby was Cosmo's only entry into the children's record market and was assigned catalog number DMR101. But before the recording session, there was another important

change to Tubby's melody. As Paul Tripp related,

The night before the recording, Si [Simon] Rady, who was producing the project, suddenly had a great adventurous idea, and phoned George [Kleinsinger] and told him he thought it would be more exciting if Tubby's theme was put in a minor key instead of major...George ran into the living room to try it out on the piano—then ran back shouting into the phone, "You're absolutely right—minor is better! Thanks, Si."¹⁵

With the piece in its final form, the recording was made, with Léon Barzin conducting a New York-based studio orchestra and Victor Jory narrating. These were heavy hitters and Cosmo scored a coup in engaging them. Barzin was born in Belgium and played principal viola in the New York Philharmonic before founding the National Orchestral Association in 1930, a training orchestra for young musicians that, like Dixon's AYO, gave concerts with some of the most accomplished and well-known soloists of the time. He was also music director of the New York City Ballet in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁶ Jory was a highly respected Canadian-born actor for stage, radio, movies, and television.¹⁷ And as a reward for his role in stimulating the creation of *Tubby the Tuba*, Herbert Jenkel—at Kleinsinger and Tripp's request—was hired as tuba soloist. This was an all-star cast, including the tuba player.

Born in Altenberg, Germany, Herbert Jenkel (1908-1968) emigrated to the United States in 1926 and became an American citizen. His career was one of musical chairs. He played cello with the

American Orchestra Society in New York City before joining the Cincinnati Symphony (as tubist) in 1937 when Bill Bell left that orchestra to join the NBC Symphony. When Bell left the NBC Symphony to join the New York Philharmonic in 1943, Jenkel succeeded Bell at the NBC Symphony. In 1951, Jenkel joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic, a position he held until 1964. When we connect the dots, we can see that when Jenkel played on the WOR broadcast of *Jack and Homer the Horse* (1941), he was a member of the Cincinnati Symphony; to play on the broadcast, he returned to New York City where his mother lived. And when he recorded *Tubby the Tuba*, he was a member of the NBC Symphony. One wonders what Arturo Toscanini thought about his tuba player moonlighting (during the summer off-season) with a studio orchestra.

On this, the great maestro's biographers are silent.¹⁹

Cosmo's recording of *Tubby the Tuba* was released in the fall of 1945 with an initial pressing of 6,000 copies,²⁰ at the same time the label released the single *Body and Soul* with Four Chicks and Chuck and in plenty of time for Christmas orders.²¹ *Tubby the Tuba* took off like a rocket and never looked back. Walter Winchell, mentioned it shortly after it was release in his nationally syndicated column, "Along Broadway," writing,

*Tubby the Tuba (a Cosmo recording), a grand novelty. It's the tragic tale of a tuba. Unhappy because the other instruments make fun of him as all he can do is go oompah-oompah.*²²

A mention by Winchell was the 1940s equivalent to a

title being chosen by Oprah Winfrey's book club in the 2000s. Sales skyrocketed. In January 1946, *Parents Magazine* praised the recording as "especially welcome," and the endorserment by its record reviewer, Beatrice Landeck—whose byline credential noted she was "Instructor in Music Education, Mills School for Kindergarten-Primary Teachers"—recommended *Tubby* as an educational, family-friendly recording that introduced members of the orchestra "in a most entertaining fashion."²³ On December 21, 1945, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that Cosmo's recording "now ranks as one of the best-selling albums, with a half-million orders on hand."²⁴ A half-million orders in just a few weeks after the record was issued? It's difficult to discern if this was actually true or simply a figure put out

by Cosmo's publicity machine. But there is no doubt that the recording of *Tubby the Tuba* was a meteoric success, and it is recognized as the first children's record that was a bona-fide hit.²⁵ *Tubby* proved that an independent label could more than compete with the big record companies like Victor and Columbia, and the success of *Tubby* led Cosmo to quickly open a west-coast studio and manufacturing plant.²⁶ Cosmo was riding high on *Tubby the Tuba*, but all was not as it seemed.

The ad was small, buried on page 37 of the June 21, 1947 issue of *Billboard*.²⁷ But the black border that surrounded the announcement was an ominous sign:



This was trouble; Cosmo was bankrupt. A year later, the public awoke to another shocking headline:

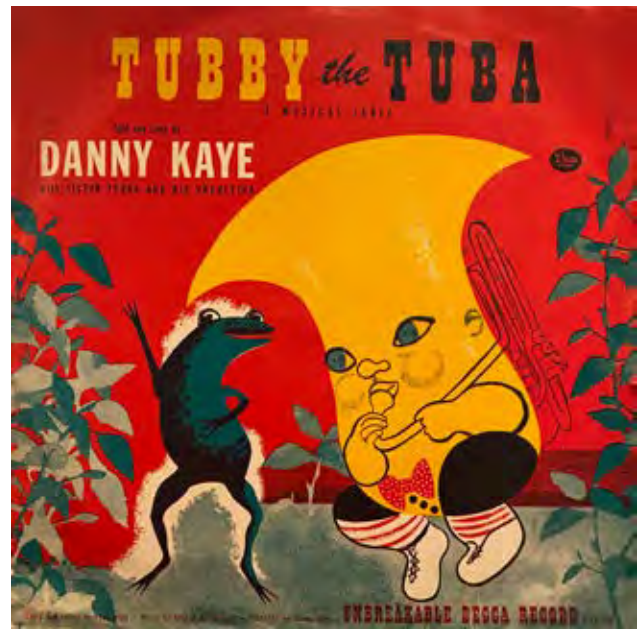
*7 Are Indicted In Cosmo Sale Of Securities.*²⁸

Named in the grand jury indictment were Harry Blank, Cosmo's former President, and its director and treasurer, Harry J. Weiner and Rubin Uslander. Apparently, Cosmo had decided to go public in June 1946, raising over \$1,000,000 for a common stock issue valued at only \$400,000. What investors did not know was that at the time of the stock sale, the company was



Above: Figure 8. Members of the Cincinnati Symphony: Adolf Schleue, Hans Lind, Herbert Jenkel, Fred Hendrickson (May 1941).

Above Right: Figure 9. Advertisement, *Billboard*, June 21, 1947.



Top Left: Figure 10. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba (© Cosmo, 1945).

Top Right: Figure 11. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba (© Decca, 1947)

Right: Figure 12. Recording session for Tubby the Tuba (Decca, 1947). Danny Kaye is center, wearing a hat. George Boujje is standing, left, hands on his hips, in the midst of string players. Note Boujje's tuba on the floor behind Kaye. Courtesy Library of Congress, Kaye/Fine collection, Box 8.



insolvent. *Tubby the Tuba* had padded the pockets of company executives, it had overreached with establishing new facilities, and was dealing with numerous lawsuits from artists who asserted that Cosmo advertised recordings with them when, in fact, they were not under contract. Hundreds of investors lost their money and the scandal

rocked the recording industry, but *Tubby the Tuba* emerged unscathed. Distributors picked up Cosmo's stock of Tubby records for pennies on the dollar and other companies began reissuing Cosmo's recording of *Tubby the Tuba* on their own labels. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp received their royalties. (Kleinsinger's son, Fred, told me that "Tubby

kept my family afloat for many years" and Tripp's son, David, related, "Tubby put me through college."²⁹) All's well that ends well. Except for Herbert Jenkel. Shortly after the recording was released, Kleinsinger received a phone call from his tuba soloist, "Didn't you like the piece," I [Kleinsinger] asked him

[Jenkel]? He told me, "I loved the piece, but I've just seen the record album and they left my name off the album."

The issue of the tuba soloist's name not appearing on recordings is one that would vex players for decades. In 1947, Decca Records, a major player on the recording scene, planned its own recording

of *Tubby the Tuba*, with celebrity actor Danny Kaye as the narrator and Victor Young conducting a studio orchestra. Simon Rady, who had produced the *Cosmo* recording of *Tubby the Tuba* two years earlier, reprised his producer role. This was a west coast production, with the orchestra populated with musicians from the MGM studio. George Boujje (1913-2005)—who had been a semi-professional boxer and wrestler early in his career as a string bass and tuba player, and then played tuba in the Honolulu Symphony in the late 1960s—was under contract with MGM and was called upon to play tuba for the recording. In a 2002 interview with Jim Self, Boujje discussed the recording session and the

all-important issue of receiving credit on the album:³⁰

Victor Young was the orchestra leader. And I argued with a guy from Decca Records over the salary. He didn't want to pay me a thing. I told him I wanted triple salary. I said, "That's a solo." And he says, "Oh, a-sis-sis-sis," and I said, "Well, I'm not going to play it. Get someone else." So, Vic Young said to him, "I'll tell you what to do. You either pay Boujje the money, or you take it back to New York and hope you get it recorded good, because there's nobody around here that will do it." So, the guy came through with the money. Here's where I made a mistake, I said, "I want my name on the record." But I didn't have it in writing. So, when it came out it wasn't on

it. I was at the fights one night downtown. One of the producers at the studio knew me, that same studio at Decca Records. He says, "Boujje, it came out today." I said, "Oh, wonderful," because, you know, I expected my name to be on it because he agreed to do it, but I didn't have it in writing and that was where I made my mistake. He said, "It came out today and your name wasn't on it." And I almost died.³¹

The contrast between conductor Victor Young—he was one of Hollywood's most respected and prolific film composers and conductors who earned twenty-two Academy Award nominations between 1939 and 1952³²—and the Decca producer who did not keep his word to George Boujje could not be starker. Young's respect

for Boujje's playing and the fact that he went to bat for his tuba soloist's request for soloist's pay—even to the point of threatening to cancel the recording session if Boujje was not paid—is admirable. But Boujje was not the last tuba soloist whose name did not appear on the album. Of the many recordings of *Tubby the Tuba* and its successor pieces I have acquired in the course of researching this article, more than half do not identify the tuba soloist. Some, like the 1966 release of *Tubby the Tuba* on Wonderland Records, went even further.³³ The 45-rpm disc changed the title of the piece to *I'm Tubby the Tuba* and does not even credit Kleinsinger and Tripp on the album jacket.

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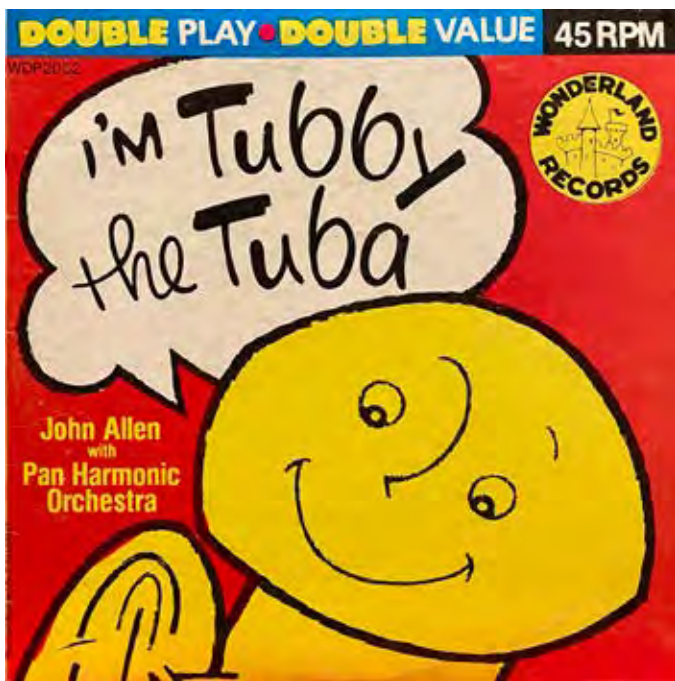


Figure 13. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *I'm Tubby the Tuba* [*Tubby the Tuba*] (© Wonderland, 1966)

Or the tuba soloist. Note to self: Get it in writing.

George Boujie went on to perform *Tubby the Tuba* on many occasions; he both played tuba and narrated his performances. By 1968, he claimed to have performed it over 100 times, including with the Los Angeles Philharmonic (1962, Walter Hendl, conductor),³⁴ the Long Beach Municipal Band (1964, Charles Payne, conductor),³⁵ and the Honolulu Symphony (1968, Yoshimi Takeda, conductor).³⁶ His name may not have appeared on the album, but George Boujie should be remembered as one of Tubby's greatest friends, a man who may have performed the piece more times than any other tuba player.

Decca's recording of *Tubby the Tuba* was another runaway success, in part because of Kaye's engaging narration and its wide distribution network. Conductor Leonard Slatkin named Kaye's recording as number three in a list of "20 albums that changed my life."

"Danny Kaye," Slatkin said, "was possibly, along with Sammy Davis Jr., the most talented person I have ever met. He could do anything and did not read music. This recording was another that I must have worn out."³⁷ Decca was the first major label to record the piece and it would not be the last. But in the summer of 1947, *Billboard* reported that Decca faced a threatened lawsuit from former Cosmo Records executives who claimed an exclusive right to record the piece. At the time, however, Cosmo was in no position to sue anyone, being bankrupt and the subject of investigations by the Securities and Exchange Commission. Decca's response was, in essence, "Go ahead, sue us." No lawsuit was ever filed.³⁸

Editor's note: Part 5, *Tubby the Tuba* later recordings and performances, will appear in

the Winter 2021 issue of the ITEA Journal.

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Acknowledgements

My long obsession with *Tubby the Tuba* was made all the more enjoyable by interactions with many people who provided help and encouragement along the way. I am especially grateful to David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain, and Fred and Jane Kleinsinger, children of Paul Tripp and George Kleinsinger, for providing me with both personal insights as well as invaluable source materials and photos from their family collections. David Tripp also served as a liaison with the Library of Congress which then provided a number of items that are part of the Paul Tripp Papers. I am also grateful

to Louise Eastman Weed (RYTVOC) who generously gave permission to quote lines from the *Tubby the Tuba* story scripts and provided other helpful information. As a trombonist, I am quite aware that some might view me as an interloper in the world of tuba research, despite the fact that during my long career as an orchestral player, I sat next to and enjoyed unforgettable collaborations with some of the finest tuba players in the business, including David Fedderly, Chester Schmitz, and Mike Roylance. To this end, my good friend, Jerry Young, was particularly encouraging and helpful when I wanted to know who I might contact in the tuba universe to get a bit of information and if what I was writing was on the right track. Jerry is a fount of information and wisdom; I'm deeply grateful for his friendship and support. And Benjamin Pierce, editor of the ITEA Journal, didn't even blink when I proposed submitting one of the longest articles to ever appear in the Journal. I am also thankful for the help of many others who joined me along the way, including:

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Herbert Wekselblatt (1927-2019), Tubby's first tuba voice.

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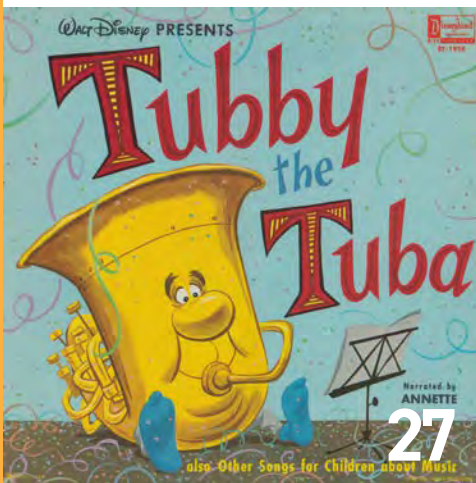
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— A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF —

Tubby the Tuba

More than a Melody—More than Oompah

by Douglas Yeo



Figure 1. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Cosmo, 1945), *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* (© RCA Victor, 1947), *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© General, 1955; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955), *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* (© Decca, 1950), *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town* (© Golden Crest, 1960).

Editor's note: Douglas Yeo's comprehensive article about Tubby the Tuba appears serialized in eight consecutive issues of the ITEA Journal throughout 2020 and 2021.

PART 5: TUBBY THE TUBA LATER RECORDINGS AND PERFORMANCES

Following the premiere of *Tubby the Tuba* in 1946 with Herbert Wekselblatt and Dean Dixon's American Youth Orchestra, other live performances quickly followed. The first performance of *Tubby* with a professional orchestra was auspicious. In residence at the Worcester (Massachusetts) Music Festival, the Philadelphia Orchestra gave a Concert for Young People on October 19, 1946.

Conducted by the orchestra's concertmaster and assistant conductor Alexander Hilsberg, the program concluded with *Tubby the Tuba*. The performance was narrated by Paul Tripp and the orchestra's tubist, Philip A. Donatelli—uncredited in the program—was soloist. The collaboration of the Philadelphia Orchestra with Paul Tripp and the pieces he created with George Kleinsinger became especially fruitful, and it resulted in many performances of *Tubby the Tuba* by the orchestra (in 1947 with Donatelli once again as soloist, 1949 with Clarence Carella, 1960 with Abe Torchinsky, and on multiple occasions with Paul Krzywicki), as well as *The Story of Celeste*, *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*, *Pee-Wee the Piccolo*, *The Little Star of Bethlehem*, *Pan the Piper*, and *Adventures of a Zoo*.¹

In 1951, Odeon records released the first documented recording of *Tubby the Tuba* in a language other than English.² *Tubaen Tubby* was recorded in Denmark with the Radiens Underholdingsorkester, Hans Peder Åse, conductor. Buster Larsen narrated (in Danish) and Erik Aakerwall was the tuba soloist—his name appeared both on the cover of the record and on the disc label. Odeon's release was also the first recording of *Tubby the Tuba* to appear as a 45-rpm (rather than 78-rpm) disc. Other international recordings followed, with *Toby le Tuba* in 1959 (a French release on *Le ronde des enfants* with an unnamed tuba player), and a later, undated Norwegian release on Lunde, *Tubaen Tobby* (paired with *Tubaen Tobby På Sirkus—Tubby the Tuba Goes to the Circus*), with Per Galborg,

tuba soloist. The story was eventually translated into over 30 languages.³

While it was originally scored for a small symphony orchestra with narrator (who also was called upon to sing on two occasions) and tuba solo, Robert Rýker arranged *Tubby the Tuba* for full orchestra in 2002.⁴ *Tubby* also found its way to other musical incarnations. In 1952, George F. Roach arranged the piece for concert band accompaniment. Published by G. Schirmer, Paul Tripp's libretto underwent several changes to accommodate the change of instrumentation.⁵ For instance, the opening line was changed to, "Once upon a time, there was a band, that was all busy tuning up." The "lovely little tune" was no longer passed around to violins and cellos but rather to cornet and



Top: Figure 4. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubaen Tubby (© Odeon, 1951).



Middle: Figure 5. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Toby le Tuba (© Le ronde des enfants, 1959).



Bottom: Figure 6. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba (© Zondervan, 1960).

the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1947 established the work as worthy of performance by ensembles at the highest level. But the performance escaped notice in the wider press, probably because it occurred at the Worcester Music Festival in central Massachusetts, far from the musical centers of Boston and New York. Not so for Bill Bell's performance with the New York Philharmonic in 1949. While his well-known solo recording, *Bill Bell and His Tuba* (1957), was still several years away, Bell was already known as one of the tuba's most high-profile exponents. His advocacy of the instrument, along with his holding the tuba chair in the NBC Symphony and New York Philharmonic—to say nothing of his larger-than-life personality—made him one of the most recognizable faces of the instrument.

Bill Bell's first performance of *Tubby the Tuba* came as part of a New York Philharmonic Young People's Concert held in Carnegie Hall on March 12, 1949; the program was conducted by Leopold Stokowski.¹¹ The combination of the famed conductor, famed tubist, famed orchestra, and famed hall led *The New York Times* to send a critic to the concert. He was charmed, and the review's headline blared, "Tuba Player Star of Youth Concert: William Bell Takes Triple Role for Philharmonic to Delight of Cheering Throng." To navigate the piece's nearly three octave range, Bell used both a euphonium and his BB-flat King recording bass. The *Times* wrote,

Not only did [Mr. Bell] play two tubas during the piece, but he told the story and sang the incidental songs. It was the first time the big Iowa-born musician had taken the

three roles, but he carried them off with such easy good humor that he seemed like an old-timer.

The applause was something to hear. And then Mr. Stokowski pulled a surprise on the children. Mr. Bell had another specialty. He was proficient in When Yuba Plays the Rhumba on the Tuba Down in Cuba. Would the children like to hear him do it? Of course they would. And singing with a robust baritone, the versatile Mr. Bell obliged. The orchestra played the rhumba rhythms like a dance band.

"Mr. Bell does another number," Mr. Stokowski said. "It's called When Veronica Played the Harmonica on the Pier in Santa Monica, but unfortunately we can't play it for you. We don't have the music."¹²

Fun stuff, and with *The New York Times* relating the musical hijinks, *Tubby the Tuba* was once again in the news. Bill Bell went on to perform *Tubby the Tuba* on numerous occasions although contrary to reports that have been repeated in various sources, he never recorded the piece. But he *did* record *The Tubby the Tuba Song*, something that is discussed in the next installment of this article (ITEA *Journal*, Spring 2021).

Celebrity narrators were often major marketing and selling points for recordings of *Tubby the Tuba*. While the names of many of them are no longer household words, audiences of their time certainly recognized them. Film, television, and radio personalities were obvious choices, and among them was José Ferrer, who had won an academy award for best actor in 1950 for his performance in the title role of Stanley Kramer's film, *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Ferrer's 1958 recording of *Tubby* appeared on an



Figure 7. George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyrics, arr. Eric Steiner. Tubby the Tuba: Six Selections for Piano Solo (© G. Schirmer, 1950; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955).

album titled "The Ferrers at Home" that also featured his then wife, Rosemary Clooney, who narrated Kleinsinger and Tripp's *The Story of Celeste*.¹³ Ferrer's performance of *Tubby*

the Tuba was nominated as Best Recording for Children at the first Grammy Awards in 1958 (the award ceremony was held on May 4, 1959) but it lost to Dave Seville (Ross

Bagdasarian, Sr.) and the Chipmunks' *The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)*.¹⁴

Long before Prince, Beyoncé, and Madonna were recognized by single names, listeners didn't need to know the full name of "Annette" who narrated Disneyland Records' 1963 recording of *Tubby*. Annette Funicello had been arguably the most popular Mouseketeer on the television variety show, "The Mickey Mouse Club," which initially ran from 1955-1959. Funicello was twenty-one years old at the time she narrated Disney's recording of *Tubby the Tuba*. She was already a star of several Disney movies, and was at the beginning of her appearances in "Beach Party" movies with Frankie Avalon. Twenty-eight-year-old John

Thomas "Tommy" Johnson was tuba soloist on the recording. And in a twist that would have made Herbert Jenkel and George Boujie smile, Johnson's name was included on the back cover of the album—he was paid \$60 for his work on the session; about \$500 in today's dollars—but conductor Salvador "Tutti" Camarata's name was nowhere to be found.¹⁵

Of the thousands of performances and dozens of recordings of *Tubby the Tuba*, some of the most wide-reaching were two 1971 performances with the Boston Pops Orchestra in Boston's Symphony Hall. "Evening at Pops" was, along with "Sesame Street," one of the earliest regularly produced television programs broadcast on PBS, the Public

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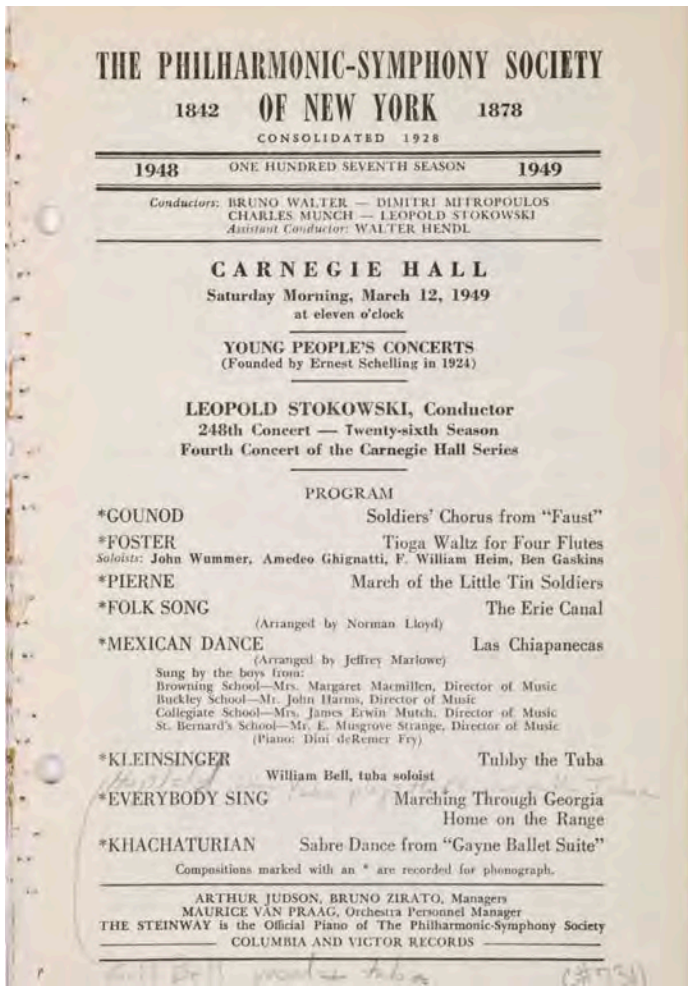


Figure 8. Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York, Leopold Stokowski, conductor. Concert Program, March 12, 1949. Courtesy New York Philharmonic Archives.



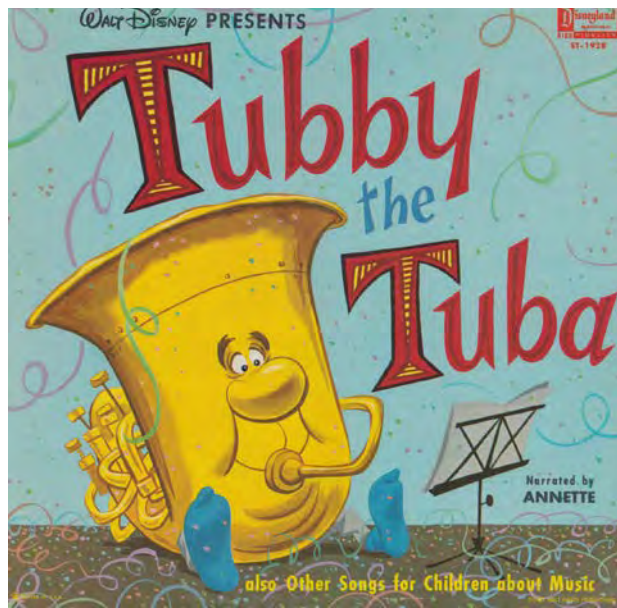
Figure 9. Leopold Stokowski and William "Bill" Bell; performance of Tubby the Tuba (Carnegie Hall, March 12, 1949). Courtesy New York Philharmonic Archives.

Broadcasting Service. PBS was established in 1969 and in 1970, "Evening at Pops" began its thirty-five-year uninterrupted run, bringing performances by the Boston Pops Orchestra into millions of homes.¹⁶ The Pops—the orchestra was and is, today, the Boston Symphony Orchestra minus its first chair players who form the Boston Symphony Chamber Players—was broadcast with its conductors Arthur Fiedler, John Williams, and Keith Lockhart, and shows featured well-known musicians, actors, and entertainment personalities. Certainly, one of the most unconventional guest artists to appear on "Evening at Pops"

was Julia Child, recognized as one of the first celebrity chefs owing to her best-selling book, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (published in 1961) and her television show on Boston's WGBH-TV, "The French Chef," that ran from 1963 to 1973. Child narrated *Tubby the Tuba* with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra on May 3 and 4, 1971; the performances were recorded and were broadcast on television later that year as part of "Evening at Pops." Julia Child did not sing either of the work's songs, and she changed the last line of the piece to, "And there was the bullfrog, sitting right beside him. 'Well, we did it, didn't we? And you see, Tubby, it only goes to show, there's more to a frog

than just frog's legs.'" The audience roared. Chester Schmitz, who was tubist with the Boston Symphony from 1966–2001, was soloist in the performances. Playing his Alexander CC tuba, Schmitz did not suffer the anonymous fate of Jenkel and Boujie. Julia Child introduced him on air: "And here is Tubby himself. This is Chester Schmitz, the tuba for the Boston Pops."¹⁷ When the performance was released in 1972 on a Polydor record album, a photo of Child, Schmitz, and conductor Arthur Fiedler appeared on the cover, and the album was titled, "Evening at Pops with Narration by Julia Child featuring Arthur Fiedler and

the Boston Pops with Chester Schmitz as 'Tubby the Tuba.'" The "Evening at Pops" performance was seen by millions. It thrust Tubby and Chester Schmitz into the spotlight through the medium of television, and Schmitz related what it was like to be part of that memorable performance, *Bill Cosel* [executive producer of "Evening at Pops" for WGBH-TV] told me that I would be playing Tubby with Julia narrating, and then confided to me that, "When we told the Maestro, Fiedler replied, 'What!? That kid out in front with me?'" Thus, I was thrust into the spotlight, playing under the baton of the man who first introduced me to



Opposite page, top left: Figure 10. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© MGM, 1958).

Top right: Figure 11. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Disneyland Records, 1963).

Middle left: Figure 12. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Polydor, 1972).

Middle right: Figure 13. Julia Child, Chester Schmitz, and Arthur Fiedler; performance of *Tubby the Tuba* (May 3, 1971). Photo by Michael Peirce, courtesy Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives.

Bottom left: Figure 14. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Contour, 1971).

Bottom right: Figure 15. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Caedmon, 1979).

classical music via recordings back in Dubuque, Iowa when I was in eighth grade, the most famous conductor in the world! Quite unexpectedly, I was to become the first Boston Pops member to be featured as soloist on national TV.

Julia was terrific, but somewhat unsettled and nervous doing this unusual thing, so alien to her normal appearances in the television kitchen. She was provided with a large book in which was her narration, with letters $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch high, so she could easily see them, complete with cues to “look at conductor for next narrative.” She did fabulously and delivered the humorous lines effectively. And Julia became my personal friend; whenever she visited the Pops in future years, she always stopped to shake my hand and say hello on her way towards the podium.

There were no retakes or splicing to be done on this performance. Whatever happened, it was in the can, ready for publication. That was appropriate for the Boston Pops, because no one in that orchestra made mistakes during performances.¹⁸

As mentioned earlier, Julia Child was not the only narrator to change the text of *Tubby the Tuba*. The 1971

recording of *Tubby* conducted by Geoff Love—a British-made recording on Contour records—featured British actor and comedian Norman Wisdom narrating and Martin Fry as tuba soloist. While (whilst?) not so well-known to audiences in the United States, Fry was a star to his British audience, having been Sousaphonist with The Temperance Seven, a novelty, “good time” band that made its mark in Britain in the 1960s.¹⁹ In the original *Tubby the Tuba* story, the bullfrog’s final line, addressed to Tubby, is, “We have our points, too, don’t we?” Contour Records evidently felt the line was too obscure for its British audience, and Wisdom said, instead (with his best Cockney accent), “There, see? Jus’ goes to show we got our advantages, ain’t we, Tubby?”

Tubby the Tuba has two songs, Tubby’s soliloquy, “Alone am I,” and the bullfrog’s song, “Buggup, Lovely Evening,” that need to be delivered one way or another. Kleinsinger notated the songs with pitches and the assumption was and is that they would be sung. Some narrators, like Meredith Vieira and Carol Channing bravely soldiered through the songs despite having voices that simply were not up to a professional standard.²⁰ Julia Child solved the singing challenge by not

singing the songs at all, a strategy that leaves some holes in the story’s narrative. However, some narrators, like Danny Kaye, gave superb vocal renditions. Paul Tripp’s own narrations also featured character-full singing. And the Manhattan Transfer, well, their narrations on the 1996 recording of all four of the major *Tubby* works on Summit Records are of a completely different stripe, with added harmonization to the songs and various singers taking the voices of each character in the stories.²¹ More than narrations with singing, their recording takes the *Tubby* stories into the realm of theatrical pieces.

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Editor’s note: Part 6, *Tubby the Tuba* films and books, will appear in the Spring 2021 issue of the ITEA Journal.

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books including *Mastering the Trombone* (co-authored with Edward Kleinhammer, Ensemble Publications), *The One Hundred: Essential Works for the Symphonic Bass Trombonist* (Encore Music Publishers), and *Serpents, Bass Horns, and Ophicleides* in the Bate Collection (Oxford University Press), as well as dozens of articles for many music journals and magazines. His newest books, *Homer Rodeheaver* and *The Rise of the Gospel Music Industry* (co-authored with Kevin Mungons, University of Illinois Press) and *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Euphonium, and Tuba Player* (Rowman & Littlefield) will be published later this year.

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Acknowledgements

My long obsession with *Tubby the Tuba* was made all the more enjoyable by interactions with many people who provided help and encouragement along the way. I am especially grateful to David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain, and Fred and Jane Kleinsinger, children of Paul Tripp and George Kleinsinger, for providing me with both personal insights as well as invaluable source materials and photos from their family collections. David Tripp also served as a liaison with the Library of Congress which then provided a number of items that are part of the Paul Tripp Papers. I am also grateful to Louise Eastman Weed (RYTVOC) who generously gave permission to quote lines from the *Tubby the Tuba* story scripts and provided other helpful information. As a trombonist, I am quite aware that some might view me as an interloper in the world of

tuba research, despite the fact that during my long career as an orchestral player, I sat next to and enjoyed unforgettable collaborations with some of the finest tuba players in the business, including David Fedderly, Chester Schmitz, and Mike Roylance. To this end, my good friend, Jerry Young, was particularly encouraging and helpful when I wanted to know who I might contact in the tuba universe to get a bit of information and if what I was writing was on the right track. Jerry is a fount of information and wisdom; I'm deeply grateful for his friendship and support. And Benjamin Pierce, editor of the ITEA Journal, didn't even blink when I proposed submitting one of the longest articles to ever appear in the Journal. I

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Herbert Wekselblatt (1927-2019), Tubby's first tuba voice.

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End Notes

1 Philadelphia Orchestra performance cards, courtesy the Philadelphia Orchestra Personnel Office.

2 A recording of Tubby the Tuba narrated in Hebrew was announced as being recorded in Israel in 1949 but no copies have surfaced. Leonard Lyons, "The Lyons Den." Montgomery (Alabama) Advertiser, March 26, 1949, 4.

3 Myrna Oliver, "Paul Tripp, 91: Father of Tubby the Tuba," Los

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Angeles Times, September 2, 2002, B-11.

4 The orchestration for the original version of Tubby the Tuba includes violin 1,2, viola, cello, bass, flute 1, 2 (2 doubling on piccolo), oboe, clarinet 1, 2, bassoon, horn 1, 2, trumpet 1, 2, trombone, celesta, and percussion, along with narrator and solo tuba.

Ryker's arrangement adds another flute (a total of three players covering flute 1, 2 and piccolo), second oboe, bass clarinet, second bassoon, horns 3, 4, and trombones 2, 3.

5 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, words, Tubby the Tuba. Arranged for band by George F. Roach (New York: G. Schirmer, 1952; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955).

6 "Bell to Perform Tubby the Tuba," Asbury Park Press, August 25, 1952, 11.

7 Tubby the Tuba: A Children's Concert by the Calvin College Band. Harold P. Geerdes, Director; Jim Muller, narrator; John Worst, tuba. Zondervan Victory Recordings ZLP 568, LP. c. 1960.

8 A video of a performance of Tubby the Tuba in Eli Newberger's "Cupcake Philharmonic" chamber orchestra version with Mike Roylance, tuba, Eli Newberger, piano and synthesizer, and David Tripp, narrator, is available on

YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbrlZ0QuzJQ

9 Jenn Smith, "Decades later, 'Tubby the Tuba' still hits high note with kids." Berkshire Eagle, October 8, 2018. www.berkshireeagle.com/stories/decades-later-tubby-the-tuba-still-hits-high-note-with-kids,552593

10 Telephone conversation between Eli Newberger and Douglas Yeo, November 23, 2019.

11 The official, legal name of the New York Philharmonic is the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York, Inc.

12 "Tuba Player Star of Youth Concert," New York Times, March 13, 1949, 69.

13 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, The Story of Celeste, Tubby the Tuba (*The Ferrers at Home*). MGM Orchestra, José Ferrer, narrator (for Tubby the Tuba), unnamed tuba soloist. MGM E3709, LP, 1958. Ferrer was married five times; Clooney was both his third (1953-1961) and fourth (1964-1967) wife.

14 1958 Grammy Winners. Recording Academy Grammy Awards, www.grammy.com/grammys/awards/1st-annual-grammy-awards-1958.

15 Telephone conversation between John Van Houten, Jr. and Douglas Yeo,

August 13, 2019. For the inflation calculator, see, www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1963?amount=60.

16 A History of the Orchestra and the [Evening at Pops] Broadcast, 2004. www.pbs.org/wgbh/pops/about/index.html

17 Chester Schmitz attended University of Iowa before joining the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" in Washington D.C. in 1963 where he played both tuba in the band and string bass in the White House "Strolling Strings." His tenure in the Army Band overlapped with that of James "Jim" Self and Daniel Perantoni. See Carole Nowicke, "Oral History Interview of Dr. James M. Self." International Tuba Euphonium Association Oral History Project, July 24, 2001, www.iteaonline.org/members/history/oral/oh_jamesself.php. Also, email from Chester Schmitz to Douglas Yeo, October 25, 2019. In 1985, John Williams composed his Concerto for Tuba on a commission from the Boston Symphony Orchestra to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Boston Pops. Williams dedicated the piece to Schmitz.

18 Email from Chester Schmitz to Douglas Yeo, July 23, 2019.

19 Martin Fry, whose Temperance Seven pseudonym

was Franklyn D. Paverty, succeeded Clifford Bevan on tuba in the group when Bevan moved to piano. Bevan is well known to tubists as author of *The Tuba Family* (Winchester: Piccolo Press, 2000). For a brief history of the Temperance Seven, see Martin Hutchinson's notes to *The Very Best of the Temperance Seven*. EMI 7243 597533 2 4, compact disc, 2004.

20 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, Tubby the Tuba, Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band, The Story of Celeste (Tubby the Tuba presents Play it Happy!). *Symphony Orchestra of Bratislava*, Stephen Gunzenhauser, conductor, jazz combo led by Marco Katz, Meredith Vieira, narrator, unnamed tuba soloist. KOCH KOC-CD 4179, 2006, compact disc. Tubby the Tuba. *Cincinnati Pops Orchestra*, Erich Kunzel, conductor, Carol Channing, narrator, Michael Thornton, tuba. Caedmon TC 1623, LP, 1979.

21 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, Tubby the Tuba, Tubby at the Circus, Tubby Meets a Jazz Band, The Further Adventures of Tubby the Tuba. *Naples (FL) Philharmonic*, Timothy Russell, conductor, the Manhattan Transfer, vocals, John Thomas "Tommy" Johnson, tuba. Summit DCD 152, compact disc, 1994.

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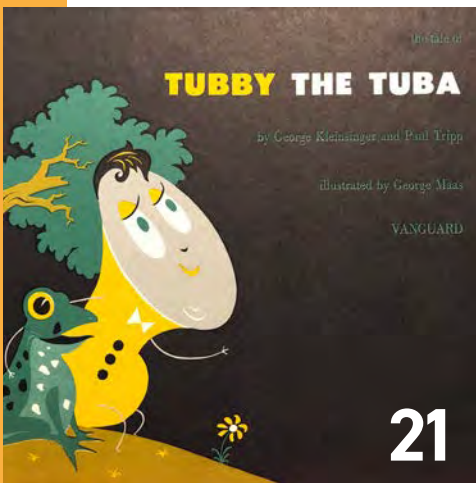
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— A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF —

Tubby the Tuba

More than a Melody—More than Oompah

by Douglas Yeo



Figure 1. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Cosmo, 1945), *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* (© RCA Victor, 1947), *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© General, 1950; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955), *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* (© Decca, 1950), *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town* (© Golden Crest, 1960).

Editor's note: Douglas Yeo's comprehensive article about Tubby the Tuba appears serialized in eight consecutive issues of the ITEA Journal throughout 2020 and 2021.

PART 6: TUBBY THE TUBA FILMS AND BOOKS

The success of the first recordings and performances of *Tubby the Tuba* spawned tellings of the tale in two other major media: films and books. The story was a logical candidate for both.

Long before the stop-action clay animation television shows and movies that featured Gumby (1955), Davy and Goliath (1961), and Wallace and Gromit (1989), George Pal (1908-1980), who was born Julius Gyorgy

Marczincsak, pioneered replacement animation films using small models. This was a time-consuming, labor intensive process in which all characters in the film were made plaster, wood, or plastic. After a frame of the film was shot, a part (or a new part all together)—such as a head, or arm, or leg, or eyebrow—that was positioned in a different way was inserted into one or more characters and another frame was captured. With the shooting of each subsequent frame, various parts were replaced, and when the frames were combined in real time, the effect of motion was achieved. By some estimates, up to 9,000 different character parts were used in a single short film. Pal, who was born in Hungary, moved to Germany in 1931, and emigrated to the United States in 1939,

produced his first replacement animation film in 1932 and went on to make many stop-action short features—dubbed Puppertoons—for Paramount Pictures. Of these, eight were nominated for an Academy award, including two based on stories by Dr. Seuss—*The Five Hundred Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins* (1943), and *And to Think I Saw It on Mulberry Street* (1944)—and his final Puppatoon, *Tubby the Tuba* (1947).¹

George Pal's Puppatoon version of *Tubby the Tuba* was released on July 10, 1947 and is generally faithful to the original story and music. Pal engaged Victor Jory to narrate the film which tied the cartoon closely to the original release of *Tubby* on Cosmo Records. Yet while Jory sang the two songs on the Cosmo release, a few small bits of dialogue and

Tubby's soliloquy, "Alone am I," was cut in the cartoon. The film is 9:34, considerably shorter than a typical performance or recording of the piece which usually clocks in around 14 minutes. It also has some new music: the Puppatoon theme which accompanies the opening credits (George Kleinsinger's name is misspelled as "G. Kleinssinger"), and some music at the end that covers the final "The End" frame. The opening and closing scenes of the cartoon take place on a set that is reminiscent of the Hollywood Bowl, and, as we have seen to be the case on so many recordings of *Tubby the Tuba*, the tuba soloist is uncredited.²

On April 12, 1965, Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's primary television channel, NRK1, broadcast a film of *Tubby the Tuba*, titled



Figure 2. George Pal [Julius Gyorgy Marczincsak]; model of Tubby the Tuba (plaster with plastic eyes) and the Bull Frog (plastic) for the Puppetoon film, *Tubby the Tuba* (1947). Courtesy Division of Cultural and Community Life, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

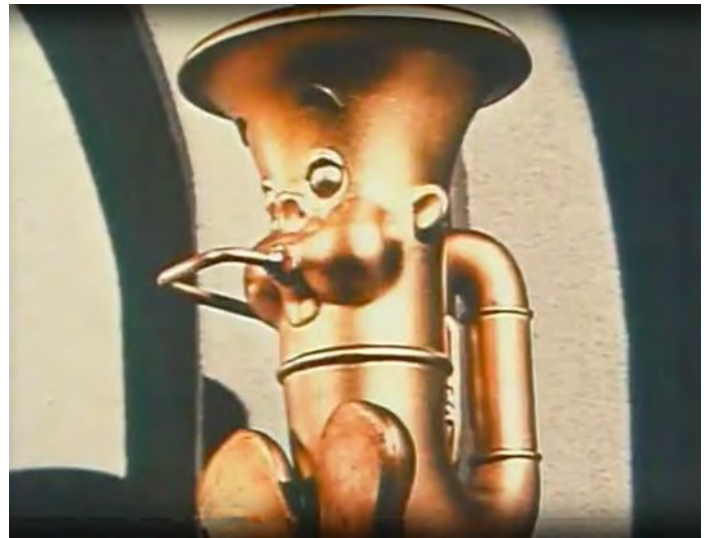


Figure 3. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba*; film by George Pal (© Paramount, 1947).

Tubaen Toby. The production was broadcast in black and white and the animation was by Anna Aronsen and Arne Kr. Nyberg. NRK's Kringkastningsorkesteret was conducted by Øivind Bergh and the story was narrated and sung by Lasse Kolstad. The tuba soloist was uncredited, but it may have been Per Galborgsen, who played the tuba solo part on a 1970 Norwegian release of *Tubaen Tobby and Tubaen Tobby På Sirkus* (*Tubby the Tuba at the Circus*) on Lunde Forlag (LP 1001) that featured the same orchestra, conductor, and narrator as the film. The film received a single showing on Norwegian television and was available on the NRK-TV website for many years, but it has since been removed.³

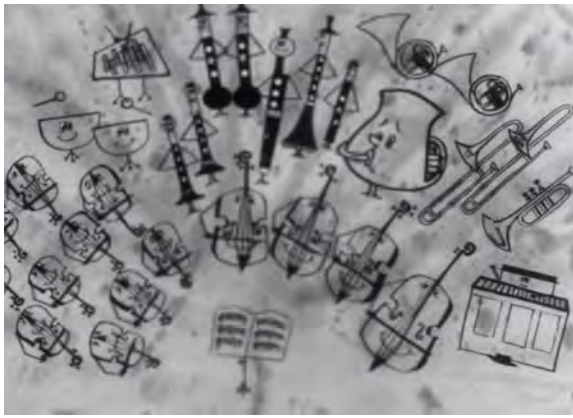
The idea of a full-length, animated motion picture version of *Tubby the Tuba* would seem to be a stretch, given the tale's relatively compact story line. But in 1975, Alexander Schure did just that: he produced an 81-minute-long film of *Tubby the Tuba* that was released in theaters on April 1, 1975. In

order to fill out the story, Paul Tripp—who wrote the film's screenplay—conflated *Tubby the Tuba* with *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* and Kleinsinger and Tripp's *The Story of Celeste* to create a new plot line. Readers who are familiar with those works in their original form would quickly notice the differences. The original *Tubby the Tuba* story begins and ends the movie. Seven minutes into the film, Tubby leaves his orchestra rehearsal, humiliated by the other instruments. Fast forward to the film's final eleven minutes, when Tubby finally comes to the river and encounters the bullfrog and finds a melody to play with his orchestra. In between those seventeen minutes of the original *Tubby the Tuba* story, Tubby goes on a quest for personal significance. Tubby's alter ego (the character identifies itself as "Tubby's idea"—taken from *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus*) leads Tubby into a series of adventures. Tubby first joins the circus where his oompahs are embraced by a group of dancing elephants (led by Mrs. Elephant) in tu-tus. The circus

ringmaster makes Tubby and the elephants the star of his show, but here, the plot diverges from the original *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* story line. In the film, Tubby's success goes to his head and he is fired. This is quite different than the redemption of Tubby's oompahs that occurs in the original version of *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus*. Dejected by his firing and humbled by his by then deflated ego, Tubby's friend, Peepo the Piccolo (who is renamed Peewee in the film), takes him to The Singing City (which looks very much like The Emerald City, Oz, in the 1939 film, *The Wizard of Oz*), he is introduced with Siegfried's famous horn call from Richard Wagner's *Siegfried*, and he befriends Celeste. Since Tubby did not appear in the original version of *The Story of Celeste*, the plot diverges once again. When Celeste is locked in a closet by Miss Squeak, the nasty head of a home for "orphan tunes," Tubby (rather than the helpful mouse in the original *Celeste* story) rescues her. Tubby then takes her to Prince Cello's royal ball where the Prince is

looking for a tune of his own. In *The Story of Celeste*, the Prince chooses Celeste's tune, but in the film, Tubby declares that he has chosen Celeste's melody for himself. However, while Tubby and Celeste dance to her melody—slowly played by Tubby in the low register—Tubby and Celeste trip and fall in front of the Prince. Embarrassed, Tubby tells the Prince that Celeste should be his, and he sadly leaves the ball. From there he meets the bullfrog and the film concludes with Tubby happily playing his new tune with his orchestra, cheered on by the bullfrog, his "idea," and Mrs. Elephant.

This mashup of three Kleinsinger and Tripp stories was supported by an all-star cast of voices, including Dick van Dyke as Tubby, Pearl Bailey as Mrs. Elephant, famed English character actress Hermione Gingold as Miss Squeak, Jane Powell as Celeste, and Australian actor Cyril Ritchard (who had starred as Captain Hook opposite Mary Martin in the original 1954 Broadway production of *Peter Pan*) as



Top: Figure 4. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubaen Toby; film by Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (© NRK, 1965).

Middle: Figure 5. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba; film by Alexander Schure. Theatre promotional poster (© New York Institute of Technology, 1975).

Bottom: Figure 6. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp; illustrations by George Maas, The Tale of Tubby the Tuba (© Vanguard, 1948).



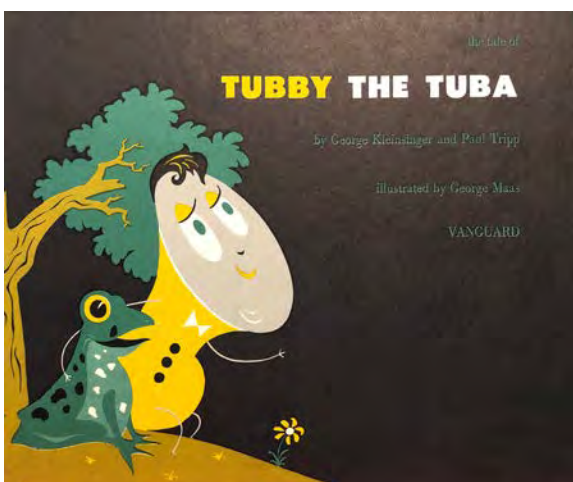
the Frog. Ray Middleton—who in 1948 narrated the first recording of *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* (more on that in the next installment of this article)—was the voice of the circus ringmaster, the Great Pepperino. Paul Tripp's wife, Ruth Enders, took the voice of the Haughty Violin and Tripp was the film's narrator. The tuba soloist, once again, is not credited. George Kleinsinger was not involved in the movie; additional music was composed by Lehman Engel and several new songs were composed by Ray Carter. Yet, despite this impressive lineup of talent, the film was not a commercial success. It was one of the the lowest grossing theatrical release of 1975 (out of 156 films, it grossed only \$300,000; compare this to the top release of 1975, *Jaws*, that grossed \$252,500,000), and it received mixed reviews.⁴

To be fair, the movie seemed doomed at the start, apart from the curious choice to release the film on April 1, April Fools' Day. Producer Alexander Schure was a successful millionaire and founder of New York Institute of Technology, but he didn't know anything about film animation.⁵ As the movie's costs ballooned due to the slow pace of traditional, hand-done animation (among those who did the animation work were students at New York Institute of Technology who were supervised by cartoonist Sam Singer; Singer also directed the film), Schure brought in Edward Catmull and Alvy Ray Smith—both later went on to found Pixar Animation Studios—to explore the possibility of using the then embryonic technique of computer animated graphics. In the end, the movie was completed using traditional animation techniques—Catmull and Smith pulled out of the

project and Singer asked that his name be taken off the credits—and the result was not up to the standard of animated features by Disney and other top animation studios. Catmull later said, "It was awful, it was terrible, half the audience fell asleep at the screening. We walked out of the screening room thinking, 'Thank God we didn't have anything to do with it, that computers were not used for anything in that movie!'"⁶ Well, it wasn't *that* bad. But the expanded story line was probably to blame as well, as it diverted attention from the impact of the important points of the original stories. Some things just work better as a fourteen-minute work for solo tuba, orchestra, and narrator.

Tubby the Tuba books

It did not take long for *Tubby the Tuba* to find its way to print. Paul Tripp's story, having been made into a wildly successful recording and an Academy Award-nominated cartoon, easily made the transition to book form. Vanguard Press issued the first *Tubby the Tuba* book in 1948 and it carried Tripp's early title for the story, *The Tale of Tubby the Tuba*.⁷ With a cover price of \$2.00—about \$21 in 2019 dollars—the book's price point was high. But Vanguard knew it had a best-seller on its hands. The illustrations by George Maas portray Tubby as droopy eyed, double chinned, and with a stylish mop of hair, and all of the instruments of the orchestra have anthropomorphic features. The book also includes the music to part of the song, "Alone am I," and all of "Bug-gup! Bug-gup!"⁸ With some music included, the book carried a dual authorship credit to both Tripp and Kleinsinger. The book's dust jacket reported that the recording of



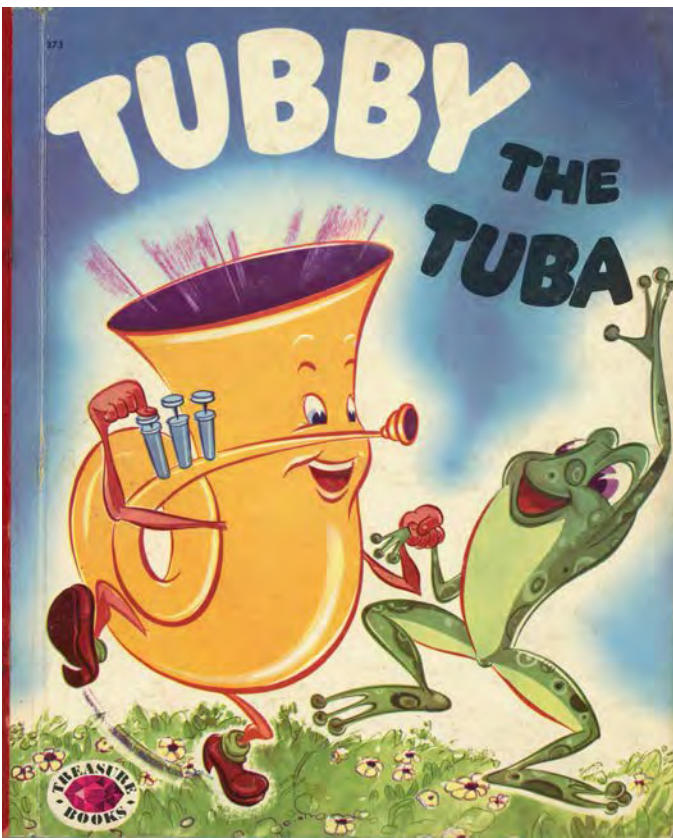


Figure 7. Paul Tripp; illustrations by Chad, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Treasure Books, 1954).

Tubby the Tuba had sold “well over” 300,000 copies.

In 1954, Treasure Books (then a division of Grosset & Dunlap and now part of Penguin Random House) published a less expensive, smaller format *Tubby the Tuba* book.⁹ Similar in size to the popular Golden Books series, the book featured sparkling illustrations by the pseudonymous “Chad.”¹⁰ Chad’s portrayal of Tubby is bright-eyed and fully anthropomorphic, with engaging facial expressions. But the other instruments of the orchestra, while they have arms and legs, do not have faces.

Fifty years later, Penguin published another *Tubby the*

Tuba book, this time with a companion compact disc recording.¹¹ In 2006, Dutton Children’s Books (a division of Penguin Young Readers Group) combined Tripp’s story with illustrations by Henry Cole (who, the book’s inside back cover explains, “does not play the tuba, but he loves Tubby”), and the CD recording of Tripp’s narration of *Tubby the Tuba* that had been issued in 1996 by Angel Records. That recording, first issued as *Tubby the Tuba and Friends*, featured the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (listed as The Radio Orchestra of Bratislava on the disc’s tray card and insert) conducted by Stephen Gunzenhauser.¹² Of

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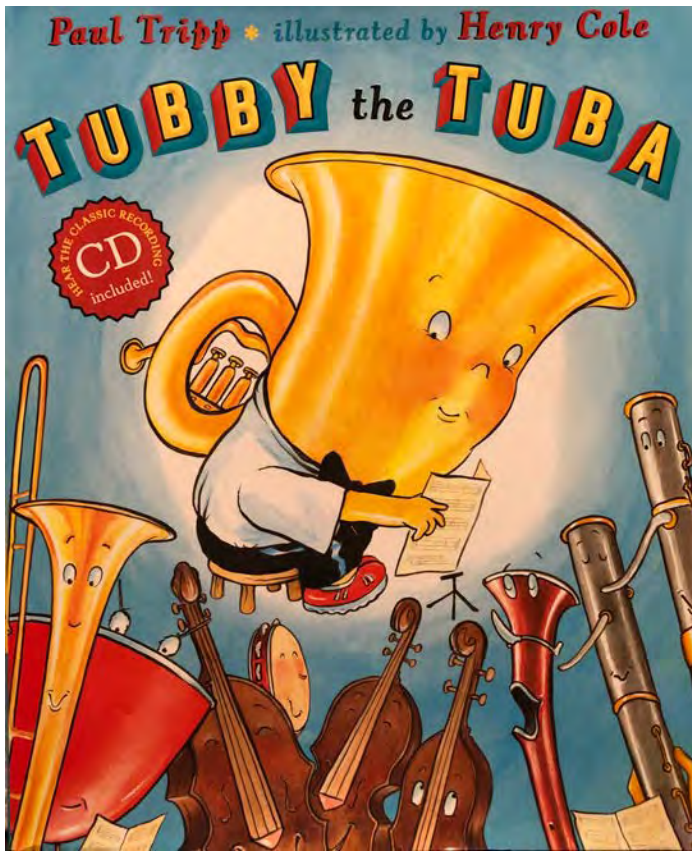


Figure 8. Paul Tripp; illustrations by Henry Cole, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Dutton, 2006).

It did not take long for *Tubby the Tuba* to find its way to print. Paul Tripp's story, having been made into a wildly successful recording and an Academy Award-nominated cartoon, easily made the transition to book form. Vanguard Press issued the first *Tubby the Tuba* book in 1948.

the three *Tubby the Tuba* book incarnations, Cole's illustrations are the most detailed, and his depiction of Tubby as a cherub-faced, red-sneakered little boy tuba is charming. His illustrations and Tripp's recording came in for high praise in the American Library Association's journal, *Booklist*, where Carolyn Phelan wrote:

Cole's colorful retro-style artwork endows the instrument-characters great emotional expressiveness. He uses the large format to good advantage, creating scenes that are varied in their effects and show up well from a distance. The accompanying CD, which slides into a pocket inside the back cover, features Tripp reading his story with orchestral accompaniment, as it was meant to be heard. Sometimes paired with Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf, this child-friendly

*introduction to the orchestra looks very appealing in Cole's picture-book version.*¹³

Published four years after Tripp's death in 2002, the book's dust jacket claimed that recordings of *Tubby the Tuba* had "met with instant success, and it went on to sell 13 million copies," and it carries a touching post-humous dedication from the author to the love of his life, his wife, Ruth Enders: "For Ruth—always—P.T."

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Editor's note: Part 7, The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba and The Tubby the Tuba Song, will appear in the Summer 2021 issue of the ITEA Journal.

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undergraduate alma mater, Wheaton College, Illinois. From 1985 to 2012, he was bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and he served as professor of trombone at Arizona State University from 2012-2016. In 2014, he was the recipient of the International Trombone Association's highest honor, the ITA Award. He is the author of several books including Mastering the Trombone (co-authored with Edward Kleinhammer, Ensemble Publications), The One Hundred: Essential Works for the Symphonic Bass Trombonist (Encore Music Publishers), and Serpents, Bass Horns, and Ophicleides in the Bate Collection (Oxford University Press), as well as dozens of articles for many music journals and magazines. His newest books, Homer Rodeheaver and the Rise of the

Gospel Music Industry (co-authored with Kevin Mungons, University of Illinois Press) and An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and Euphonium Player (Rowman & Littlefield) will be published later this year.

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Acknowledgements

My long obsession with Tubby the Tuba was made all the more enjoyable by interactions with many people who provided help and encouragement along the way. I am especially grateful to David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain, and Fred and Jane Kleinsinger, children of Paul Tripp and George Kleinsinger, for providing me with both personal insights as well as invaluable source materials and photos from their family collections. David Tripp also served as a liaison with the

Library of Congress which then provided a number of items that are part of the Paul Tripp Papers. I am also grateful to Louise Eastman Weed (RYTVOC) who generously gave permission to quote lines from the Tubby the Tuba story scripts and provided other helpful information. As a trombonist, I am quite aware that some might view me as an interloper in the world of tuba research, despite the fact that during my long career as an orchestral player, I sat next to and enjoyed unforgettable collaborations with some of the finest tuba players in the business, including David Fedderly, Chester Schmitz, and Mike Roylance. To this end, my good friend, Jerry Young, was particularly encouraging and helpful when I wanted to know who I might contact in the tuba universe to get a bit of information and if what I was writing was on the right track. Jerry is a fount of information and wisdom; I'm deeply grateful for his friendship and support. And Benjamin Pierce, editor of the ITEA Journal, didn't even blink when I proposed submitting one of the longest articles to ever appear in the Journal. I am also thankful for the help of many others who joined me along the way, including:

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Children's Library, Princeton University), Marco Katz, Susan Kleinsinger, Paul Krzywicki, Mike Mashon (Library of Congress), Rosa Mazon (Los Angeles Philharmonic Archives), R. Winston Morris, Kevin Mungons, Eli Newberger, Gary Ofenloch, Kay Peterson (Smithsonian Institution), Gene Pokorny, Mike Roylance, Chester Schmitz, Peter Shrake (Circus World), Jim Self, Stephen Shoop, Leonard Slatkin, Andrei Strizek (Music Theatre International), Gabryel Smith and Sarah Palermo (New York Philharmonic Archives), John Taylor, John Tomasicchino (The Metropolitan Opera Archives), Deanna Swoboda, Herbert and Barbara Wechselblatt, and the helpful staff at Buswell Library, Wheaton College (Illinois).

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Herbert Wechselblatt (1927-2019), Tubby's first tuba voice.

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End Notes

1. *Pal's Tubby the Tuba cartoon was nominated for Best Short Subject (Cartoon) of 1947. Other nominees included the winner, Tweetie Pie (Edward Selzer), Chip an' Dale (Walt Disney), Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Mouse (Frederick Quimby), and Pluto's Blue Note (Walt Disney). www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/1948. See also David Blocker Bowers, "5 Fascinating Examples of George Pal's stop-action puppetry." O Say Can You See?*

Stories from the Museum, National Museum of American History (November 2, 2015), www.americanhistory.si.edu/blog/5-fascinating-examples-george-pals-stop-action-puppetry.

2. *George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, Tubby the Tuba. Paramount Films; later U.M. & M. TV Corporation (George Pal "Puppetoon"), 1947. The film had been available on YouTube for many years but in late 2019, it was removed for copyright violation. See also The George Pal Puppetoon Site, www.awn.com/heaven_and_hell/PAL/GP1.htm.*

3. *George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, Norwegian translation by Sven Lange, Tubaen Toby. Norwegian Television Corporation, 1965. As of February 1, 2021, the NRK-TV website no longer makes the video available: tv.nrk.no/program/FBUA65004165.*

4. 1975 Movies. www.ultimatemovierankings.com/1975-movies.

5. *Olivia Winslow, "Alexander Schure, founder of NYIT, dies at 89," Newsday, October 31, 2009. www.newsday.com/long-island/obituaries/alexander-schure-founder-of-nyit-dies-at-89-1.1558593. This obituary, like many other sources, states that the Tubby the Tuba movie used computer animation but, in fact, it did not.*

6. *Jerry Beck, The Animated Movie Guide (Chicago: A Cappella Books, 2005), 295-296.*

7. *Paul Tripp, story, and George Kleinsinger, music; illustrations by George Maas, Tubby the Tuba (New York: Vanguard Press, 1947).*

8. *The musical examples are printed in the book courtesy of G. Schirmer and Co.*

9. *Paul Tripp; illustrations by "Chad," Tubby the Tuba (New York: Treasure Books, 1954).*

10. *Treasure Books was a publisher of children's books that was owned by Grosset & Dunlap, now a part of Penguin Random House. In 1949, Grosset & Dunlap acquired the children's book publisher, Wonder Books, and renamed it Wonder Treasure Books. Federal Trade Commission Decisions: Findings, Orders, and Stipulations, July 1, 1961 to December 31, 1961, Volume 59 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing office, 1963), 20-24. Also, www.bookthink.com/0170/170gad1.htm. "Chad" was a pseudonym and may have been Helen G. Schad (although this has not been confirmed) who wrote and illustrated numerous children's books under her own name.*

11. *Paul Tripp; illustrations by Henry Cole, Tubby the Tuba (New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2006).*

12. *George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, Tubby The Tuba, The Story of Celeste, Adventures of a Zoo, Peepo The Piccolo, Tubby The Tuba Meets a Jazz Band. The Radio Orchestra of Bratislava, Stephen Gunzenhauser, conductor, Paul Tripp, narrator. Angel CDCB-554330, compact disc (1996). The recording of Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band was produced by Marco Katz and recorded in New York City. That recording is discussed in Part 8 of this article.*

13. *Carolyn Phelan, "Tubby the Tuba." Booklist, Vol. 103, Issue 7 (December 1, 2006), 55.*

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SUMMER 2021

**TIPS ON
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NO. 2**

THE STORY OF
Cora Youngblood Corson

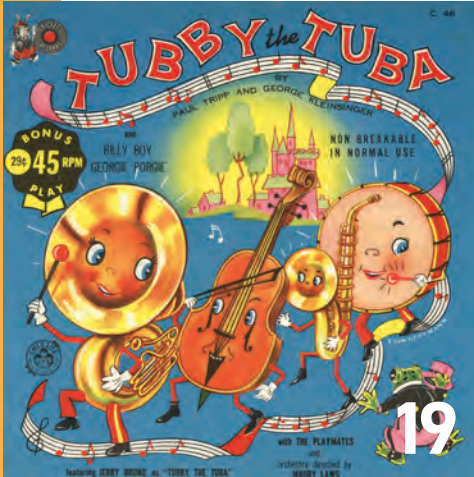
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The likeness of Gustav Mahler appearing in graffiti on a wall in Zagreb, Croatia; credit: Bokic Bojan / Shutterstock.com; story on p. 84

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— A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF —

Tubby the Tuba

More than a Melody—More than Oompah

by Douglas Yeo



Figure 1. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba (© Cosmo, 1945), The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba (© RCA Victor, 1947), The Tubby the Tuba Song (© General, 1950; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955), Tubby the Tuba at the Circus (© Decca, 1950), Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town (© Golden Crest, 1960).

Editor's note: Douglas Yeo's comprehensive article about Tubby the Tuba appears serialized in eight consecutive issues of the ITEA Journal throughout 2020 and 2021.

PART 7: THE FURTHER ADVENTURE OF TUBBY THE TUBA AND THE TUBBY THE TUBA SONG

Story synopsis:

Tubby the Tuba “sat way in the back of the orchestra,” “a fat little tuba, puffing away, but oh so slow.” Tiring of playing oompahs, Tubby decides to play the melody he had learned from the bullfrog. He plays it so often—morning, noon, and night—that the other instruments of the orchestra

complain, and the great conductor, Signor Pizzicato, asks Tubby to leave his melody at home so they can play other music. The other instruments snicker at Tubby. At the concert, all of the other instruments proudly play a pretty melody. Tubby, who had been playing his oompahs, gets excited and blows his tuba so hard that his melody, which he had kept in his pocket, gets loose. First his melody falls into the middle of the orchestra, and then on top of the oboe. When the instruments try to catch it, Tubby's melody chuckles “goodbye” and flies out a window. Signor Pizzicato scolds Tubby and asks him to leave the orchestra until he can learn to behave. Dejected, Tubby goes outside and sits down on the curb and sings, “I want to be seen, I want to be heard, my dream has always

been to sing like a bird. Why can't I be content to just be me, why can't I be just the best that I can be?”

Tubby looks up and sees Captain Bugle in front of him. The Captain tells Tubby that while he can't promise that Tubby would ever be a bird, he certainly would be seen and heard and would be happy if he joined the Captain's band. The band arrives and the instruments tell Tubby how wonderful it would be if he joined them. The band polishes Tubby and everyone notices him, “Look at Tubby, isn't he wonderful, and just listen to him,” little boys exclaim as the band marches by. The band marches for days and days, huffing and puffing over dusty roads, through howling wind and in chilly rain. Shivering and chattering, and unable to catch his breath, Tubby wishes

he was back home with his orchestra. Just then, Tubby hears a familiar voice. It is his friend from the orchestra, Peewee the Piccolo, who has been searching for Tubby. Peewee asks Tubby to come home; the other instruments in the orchestra miss him. Overjoyed, Tubby and Peewee prepare to leave the band, but Captain Bugle insists that they stay. When Tubby begins to run away, the band follows him in pursuit. When the band catches up and surrounds Tubby and Peewee, Tubby takes a deep breath, puffs his cheeks and blows—and the band flies away “like feathers in the wind.”

Tubby and Peewee come back to the orchestra and the orchestra cheers, “Welcome Home!” Signor Pizzicato asks Tubby to please play his “magnificent oompah” but



Figure 2. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* (© RCA Victor, 1948).



Figure 3 and 4. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*; inside record jacket (© RCA Victor, 1948).



Tubby plays only a sour note; he seems to have forgotten how to play his oompah. Tubby sings, "Oh the duty of the tuba when the others sing 'trala,' is to sound just like a tuba and say oompah." Tubby thinks that with all of the marching and huffing and puffing he did with the band, he lost his oompah. The other instruments encourage Tubby. The oboe says, "You haven't lost it, you've just forgotten how." Tubby sits down in a chair, catches his breath, and he plays an oompah. "Hooray!" exclaims the orchestra. As the instruments get ready to play a new composition, Signor Pizzicato asks Tubby to play the low notes that "were written especially for you." As the orchestra begins to play a new melody, Tubby plays his oompahs and thinks, "This is where I belong, and that makes me very happy."

While tubist Herbert Jenkel was disappointed that his name did not appear on Cosmo's 1945 recording of *Tubby the Tuba*, there was a silver lining. When Jenkel told George Kleinsinger that his name was not on the album, Kleinsinger vowed to do him right. "So," he said, "Paul [Tripp] and I had to write a

sequel, *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*, and I told RCA Victor the only way I'd give them this piece of music is if they put the tuba player's name on the album cover in large letters."¹ Kleinsinger and Tripp had no difficulty pitching their new *Tubby* piece to RCA Victor, one of the recording industry's largest companies. And, true to Kleinsinger's word, the release featured Herbert Jenkel's name prominently placed in the center of the album's cover and on its record labels as well.² Well, sort of. When RCA re-released the recording in 1955 as a 45-rpm disc on its RCA Camden label (CAE 290), Jenkel's name was missing from the cover—but it did appear on the disc label.

With this new piece, not only did Tubby branch out with a new adventure, but George Kleinsinger added new instruments to the orchestration of *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*. A second trombone was added to the brass section, and the woodwinds were expanded to include fife, alto and tenor saxophones, and English horn.

An optional part for harp was also included.

The recording was released in early 1948 and by April of that same year, advertisements for the album were featuring the title with a misprint, *The Further Adventures of Tubby the Tuba*.³ *Adventures*, not *Adventure*. While most performances and recordings since have run with *Adventures*, the score and parts as rented by Music Theatre International clearly show the title as *Adventure*. It would be a few more years before Tubby would have additional adventures.

Readers may have noticed that between the composition of *Tubby the Tuba* in 1945 and the release of *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* in 1948, the name of Tubby's friend, Peepo the piccolo, changed to Peewee (or Pee-wee). The change came in 1946, when Kleinsinger and Tripp wrote their first sequel to *Tubby the Tuba*. *Pee-Wee the Piccolo* was written shortly after the release of *Tubby the Tuba* on Cosmo Records.⁴ It is not known why the character's name changed, and it seems that Tubby's friend's name and its spelling was never a settled matter.⁵ The first recording of

Pee-Wee the Piccolo, released on RCA Victor's Youth Series in 1946, was a two 78-rpm record set, with illustrations drawn from the story.⁶ But while the cover of the bifold album gives the title as "Pee-wee," the name is spelled "Peewee" in two other locations. *Pee-Wee* wasn't the only one whose name missed scrutiny by the album's proofreader. The name of the conductor of *Pee-Wee's* orchestra is printed as "Senor Bravissimo," but the Italian conductor's name is given in the score as "Signor." *Pee-Wee the Piccolo* was recorded by Russ Case and his orchestra with Paul Wing as narrator. The RCA Victor recording of *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* used Case's orchestra (the piece was narrated by Ray Middleton, who, as we saw earlier, narrated the first recording of Kleinsinger and Tripp's first musical collaboration, *Jack and Homer the Horse*), and Wing returned several years later to narrate their recording of *Pan the Piper* on Columbia (1953).

The release of *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* solidified Kleinsinger's and Tripp's status as the premier writers of music for children. Critics credited them "with



Left: Figure 5. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© General Music, 1950; © assigned to RYTVOG, 1955). Courtesy Cotsen Children's Library, Princeton University.

Right: Figure 6. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, arr. Johnny Warrington. *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© General Music, 1950, © assigned to RYTVOG, 1955). Courtesy Chatfield Music Lending Library.

The "Tubby, The Tuba" Song

Arranged by
JOHNNY WARRINGTON
Piano
Moderately

FOX-TROT

Lyric PAUL TRIPP
Music by GEORGE KLEINSINGER

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conceiving a tremendous new children's market through their fresh approach, which gives the disks a sugar-coated educational as well as delightful entertainment value."⁷ *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* received uniformly good reviews, although commentators were split on whether it was an improvement over its predecessor. Whether it had "more action and moved more naturally"⁸ than *Tubby the Tuba* or it was "not up to the first 'Tubby' but still a cut above most kids' records,"⁹ Tubby's new adventure was a hit. That said,

it never achieved the prominence of *Tubby the Tuba*, and it has received many fewer performances. For instance, the Philadelphia Orchestra, with its pioneering first performance of *Tubby the Tuba* by a professional orchestra (1946, with the orchestra's tuba player, Phillip Donatelli), waited until 1975 to play *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* (with Paul Krzywicki, tuba soloist, and Captain Noah [Carter Merbreier], narrator).¹⁰ It would take until 1996 for the piece to have a second recording, with the Naples Philharmonic, the

Manhattan Transfer, and John Thomas "Tommy" Johnson as tuba soloist.¹¹

With *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*, Tubby's tale seemed to have come around full circle. In *Tubby the Tuba*, Tubby tired of playing oompahs, but he finally got to play a melody in the orchestra, the tune that was given to him by the bullfrog at the side of the river. But in his new adventure, Tubby couldn't seem to control his joy over finally playing his melody, but when he played it so much that he became annoying, he was asked to leave the

orchestra. However, when he joined the marching band, Tubby discovered that the grass was not greener in the band world. All that marching around and huffing and puffing was not what he signed up for; he wanted to play music. When he left the band and returned to the orchestra, his oompahs were appreciated by his friends, and he was happy once again. In *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*, Tubby realized that while playing a melody was nice, "the duty of a tuba" is to play oompahs, something no other instrument can do. It



Top left. Figure 7. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© Mercury, 1950).

Bottom left. Figure 8. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© Capitol, 1950).



would take more adventures for Tubby to get back to his melody.

The Tubby the Tuba Song (1950)

Song synopsis:

Tubby the Tuba plays in a marching band, but while “everybody says ‘O my, they’re grand” when the band passes by, they laugh at Tubby and his

oompah-pahs. Tubby dreams of playing a melody, saying that “I’d be better off, I know, if I didn’t have to blow this oompah.” A friendly frog comes by and tells Tubby to stop crying; he offers his bullfrog serenade to Tubby, promising that he would become “the star of the big parade.” When he plays the bullfrog’s song,

Tubby becomes the leader of the band and “as famous as can be.”

It was perhaps inevitable that the success of the *Tubby the Tuba* franchise would lead Paul Tripp and George Kleinsinger to enter their favorite tuba player in the recording “single” marketplace. At about 14 minutes long, *Tubby the Tuba* was a story that required four 78-rpm sides. While Tubby’s famous theme is memorable, none of the songs in *Tubby the Tuba* or *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* made the transition to a single. Clearly the collaborators felt there was room for a short song that told the essential story with a catchy melody that could be packaged on a single side of a 78 (and, later, a 45). And a short song had another benefit: it could be published as sheet music, ensuring that it could be sung around the family piano.

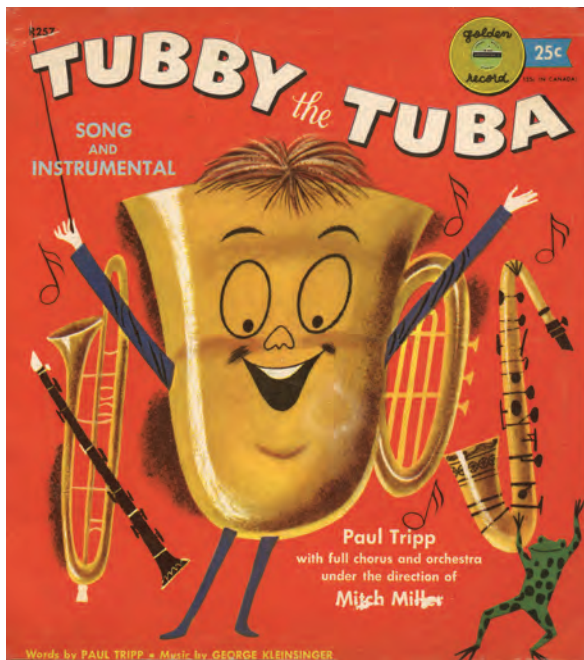
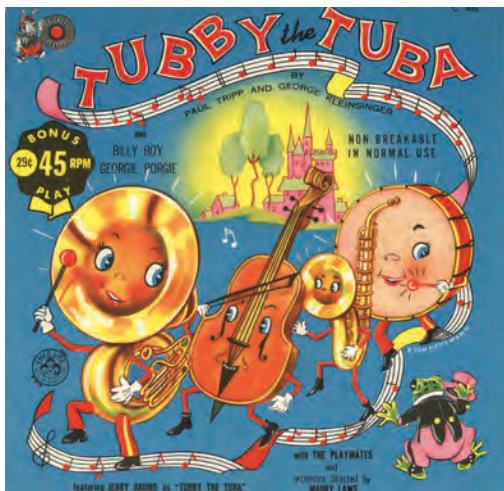
In 1950, Kleinsinger and Tripp wrote a jaunty novelty song, *The Tubby the Tuba Song*. Like the 1975 motion picture version of *Tubby the Tuba* that conflated *Tubby the Tuba*, *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus*, and *The Story of Celeste*, the story line of *The Tubby the Tuba Song* was a new narrative derived from *Tubby the Tuba* and *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*. The song was published by General Music Publishing in New York City, a company that was founded by Moe Jaffe and Paul Kapp in the mid-1940s that had its first big hit in 1947

with “I’m My Own Grandpaw” by Jaffe and Dwight Latham.

The song’s melodic material is completely original. Despite the song’s lyric that says that Tubby gets a “serenade” from the bullfrog, it contains no music from *Tubby the Tuba* (one recording is an exception, discussed below). But anticipation was high. *Radio Daily* reported,

*Paul Tripp and George Kleinsinger have expressed their fascination with the Tubby the Tuba saga in a new form, The Tubby the Tuba Song, which General Music is bringing out. There will be record coverage ranging from Kiddie through Western, and, to satisfy the Tubby fans abroad, versions in German, Polish and Italian.*¹²

No copies of the song in languages other than English seemed to have materialized but, no matter. *The Tubby the Tuba Song* took off like gangbusters. In 1950 and 1951, it was recorded by a host of artists, both vocal and instrumental. Everybody, it seemed, wanted in on the act, and each artist added a unique touch to the song. George Cates and His Orchestra joined with the Mellomen, a male quartet that featured Bob Hamlin, Max Smith, Bill Lee, and Thurl Ravenscroft, to sing the lyrics, and tubist Phil Stevens was credited on the disc.¹³ Stevens also took a full chorus of the song as a tuba solo. A Mercury release with Richard “Two-Ton” Baker and Jerry Murad’s harmonica ensemble, The Harmonicats, inexplicably used a bassoon—not a tuba—to play the role of Tubby.¹⁴ With Tubby



Above left. Figure 9. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© Cricket, 1950).

Above center. Figure 10. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© Columbia, 1950).

Above left. Figure 11. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© Decca, 1950).

Right. Figure 12. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *The Tubby the Tuba Song* (© Goldentone, 1956).

pictured as an anthropomorphic Sousaphone on the disc's jacket, no one was fooled. Tubist Phil Cadway is credited on the cover of the Columbia release of the song with the Archie Bleyer Orchestra.¹⁵ The singer on that recording was Arthur Godfrey, and Cadway is featured throughout in both solo and accompanying roles. Hammond organ specialist Ethel Smith released her own take on the song along with an unnamed tuba player who makes an appearance only in the song's opening and closing seconds.¹⁶ Bass player Jerry Bruno played tuba on a 1962 Cricket Records release—the cover includes the line “featuring JERRY BRUNO as ‘TUBBY THE TUBA’”—with the vocal group The Playmates (no, not *those* Playmates) that saw many incarnations as both 45 and 33 1/3-rpm discs.¹⁷ General Music also published band leader Johnny Warrington's

arrangement of *The Tubby the Tuba Song*, a “fox-trot” that saw play in dance halls around the country.¹⁸

Two recordings of *The Tubby the Tuba Song* stand out for their additional narrative. Danny Kaye's smooth singing puts his recording for Decca at the top of the pile, but near the end, the unnamed tubist engages in a duet cadenza with Kaye.¹⁹ As the unidentified tuba player arrives at the highest note, the note is (intentionally) missed and Kaye exclaims, “He didn't make it!” Jerry Marlow's recording on Capitol played Tubby's words through a Sonovox²⁰ (an electronic pickup that was attached to a person's neck that was patented in 1939 by Gilbert Wright; the Sonovox allowed for electronic processing of talking and singing), and the unnamed tubist once again makes a mistake

near the end, after which Tubby exclaims, “Oh, I made a wrong note!”²¹ For all of the positive messages of the *Tubby the Tuba* pieces, it seems a bit cheap to make fun of a tuba player missing a high note. That's an old trope that could have done without additional reinforcement.

Perhaps the most notable recording of *The Tubby the Tuba Song* is one released on Golden and Goldentone Records in 1956. By this time, tubist William “Bill” Bell had made history by—among his many accomplishments—playing *Tubby the Tuba* at Carnegie Hall with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski (1949) and giving the first performance of George F. Roach's concert band arrangement of *Tubby the Tuba* (1952). Now it was Bell's turn to record *The Tubby the Tuba Song*, with an orchestra led by Mitch Miller with Paul Tripp singing the song and The Sandpipers providing additional vocals.²² Tripp's singing is especially engaging; he is at the top of his game, especially when delivering the lines of the bullfrog. Bill Bell's tuba is heard for only a few seconds at the beginning and the end of the song's 1:45 long track, but the bonus is the disc's “B” side, where Bell and Miller's Orchestra recorded an all-instrumental version. However, the side is labeled *Tubby The Tuba: Tuba Solo—William Bell*. The music is actually a



Figure 13. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, The Tubby the Tuba Song (© Golden, 1956).

creative arrangement not of *The Tubby the Tuba Song*, but of Tubby's melody he got from the bullfrog in *Tubby the Tuba*. Bell plays two choruses of the melody (an octave lower than originally notated) while adding a moving bass line accompaniment to two other choruses. The result is a rollicking, charming recording that foreshadowed Bell's memorable tuba hijinks on his landmark 1957 LP recording, *Bill Bell and His Tuba*.²³

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Editor's note: Part 8, Tubby the Tuba at the Circus and Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town/Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band, and conclusion and assessment, will appear in the Fall 2021 issue of the ITEA Journal.

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From 1985 to 2012, he was bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and he served as professor of trombone at Arizona State University from 2012-2016. In 2014, he was the recipient of the International Trombone Association's highest honor, the ITA Award. He is the author of several books including *Mastering the Trombone* (co-authored with Edward Kleinhammer, Ensemble Publications), *The One Hundred: Essential Works for the Symphonic Bass Trombonist* (Encore Music Publishers), and *Serpents, Bass Horns, and Ophicleides* in the Bate Collection (Oxford University Press), as well as dozens of articles for many music journals and magazines. His newest books, *Homer Rodeheaver and the Rise of the Gospel Music Industry* (co-authored with Kevin Mungons, University of Illinois Press) and *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and*

Euphonium Player (Rowman & Littlefield) will be published later this year.

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Acknowledgements

My long obsession with Tubby the Tuba was made all the more enjoyable by interactions with many people who provided help and encouragement along the way. I am especially grateful to David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain, and Fred and Jane Kleinsinger, children of Paul Tripp and George Kleinsinger, for providing me with both personal insights as well as invaluable source materials and photos from their family collections. David Tripp also served as a liaison with the Library of Congress which then provided a number of items that are part of the Paul Tripp Papers. I am also grateful to Louise Eastman Weed (RYTVOC) who generously gave permission to quote lines from the Tubby the Tuba story scripts and provided other helpful information. As a trombonist, I am quite aware that some might view me as an interloper in the world of tuba research, despite the fact that during my long career as an orchestral player, I sat next to and enjoyed unforgettable collaborations with some of the finest tuba players in the business, including David Fedderly, Chester Schmitz, and Mike Roylance. To this end, my good friend, Jerry Young, was particularly encouraging and helpful when I wanted to know who I might contact in the tuba universe to get a bit of information and if what I was writing was on the right track. Jerry is a fount of information and wisdom; I'm deeply grateful for his friendship and support. And Benjamin Pierce, editor of the

ITEA Journal, *didn't even blink when I proposed submitting one of the longest articles to ever appear in the Journal*. I am also thankful for the help of many others who joined me along the way, including:

Eli Aharoni, Lori Azim, David Bonner, Darren Britting (Philadelphia Orchestra Personnel Department), Bridget Carr (Boston Symphony Orchestra Archives), Chatfield Music Lending Library, Brianna Cregle (Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library), Ron Davis, Andrew Duncan, Scott Friedman, Scott Hansen, Don Harry, John Van Houten, Jr., Andrea Immel (Cotsen Children's Library, Princeton University), Marco Kratz, Susan Kleinsinger, Paul Krzywicki, Mike Mashon (Library of Congress), Rosa Mazon (Los Angeles Philharmonic Archives), R. Winston Morris, Kevin Mungons, Eli Newberger, Gary Ofenloch, Kay Peterson (Smithsonian Institution), Gene Pokorny, Mike Roylance, Chester Schmitz, Peter Shrake (Circus World), Jim Self, Stephen Shoop, Leonard Slatkin, Andrei Strizek (Music Theatre International), Gabryel Smith and Sarah Palermo (New York Philharmonic Archives), John Taylor, John Tomasicchino (The Metropolitan Opera Archives), Deanna Swoboda, Herbert and Barbara Wekselblatt, and the helpful staff at Buswell Library, Wheaton College (Illinois).

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Herbert

Wechselblatt (1927-2019), Tubby's first tuba voice.

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End Notes

1 Joe Saltzman, "How Tubby Was Born." T.U.B.A. Journal, Vol. IX, No. 4 (Spring 1982), 2-3. Reprinted from the Los Angeles Times, October 26, 1980, 70.

2 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba, RCA Victor Y-365, 78-rpm (1947), also, RCA Camden CAE 290, 45-rpm (1950).

3 "New Records at Kings." Bristol (TN) News Bulletin, April 29, 1948, 2.

4 While the exact compositional timeline for Pee-Wee the Piccolo is not known, the piece was copyrighted (as Pee Wee, the Piccolo) on June 5, 1946. See Catalog of Copyright Entries, Part III, Group 1, Unpublished Musical Compositions (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, Copyright Office, 1946), 1406.

5 As mentioned earlier, the name of Tubby's friend, Peepo the Piccolo, was changed to Peewee when Kleinsinger and Tripp wrote their piece, Peewee the Piccolo. However, Peewee's name—which was variously spelled as Pee-Wee, PEEWEE, Pee wee, and Peewee—was changed back to Peepo for a 1996 recording of what was retitled Peepo the Piccolo. This is further discussed in part eight of this article.

6 If it's any consolation to Herbert Jenkel, the name of

the piccolo soloist in Pee-Wee the Piccolo is absent from the album.

7 "In the Groove: 'Tubby the Tuba' and 'Aladdin' in New Albums." Amarillo (TX) Daily News, May 28, 1948, 27.

8 Robert Allen, "Tubby the Tuba's Adventures with a Band," Cincinnati Enquirer, June 6, 1948, 74.

9 "New Children's Sets," Daily News (New York), June 20, 1948, 77.

10 The performance was on April 10, 1975. Philadelphia Orchestra performance cards, courtesy the Philadelphia Orchestra Personnel Office.

11 Tubby the Tuba. Naples Philharmonic, Timothy Russell, conductor. The Manhattan Transfer; [John Thomas] Tommy Johnson, tuba soloist. Summit Records DCD152, compact disc (1994).

12 Ted Persons, "Words and Music," Radio Daily, June 16, 1950, 8.

13 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyric, The Tubby the Tuba Song. George Cates and His Orchestra, The Mellomen (vocals), Phil Stephens, tuba solo. Coral (Decca) Records 60302, 78-rpm (1950.)

14 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyric, The Tubby the Tuba Song. Jerry Murad's Harmonicats, Richard "Two-Ton" Baker, vocal, unnamed tuba soloist. Mercury MMP 76, 78-rpm (1950).

15 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyric, The

Tubby the Tuba Song. The Archie Bleyer Orchestra, Arthur Godfrey (vocal), Phil Cadway, tuba. Columbia MJV-89, 78-rpm (1950). Cadway played tuba in Leopold Stokowski's All-American Youth Orchestra in 1940 alongside bass trombonist Edward Kleinhammer. At that time, his name was Philip Silverman; he later changed his last name to Cadway.

16 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyric, The Tubby the Tuba Song. Ethel Smith, organ, unnamed tuba soloist. Decca 27183, 78-rpm (1950).

17 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyric, The Tubby the Tuba Song. Conducted by Maury Laws, The Playmates (vocals), Jerry Bruno, tuba. Cricket Records C46, 45-rpm (1962); Mr. Pickwick Records MP-11, n.d., 45-rpm; Playhour Records B-103 5, n.d., 45-rpm; Happy Time Records (Pickwick International) MT-1020, n.d., 33 1/3-rpm.

18 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyric, arr. Johnny Warrington. The "Tubby the Tuba" Song (New York: General Music Publishing, 1950; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955).

19 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyric, The Tubby the Tuba Song. Danny Kaye, vocal, unnamed tuba soloist. Decca L 5711, 78-rpm (1950).

20 Gilbert M. Wright, "Means and Method for Producing Sound Effects." United States Patent 2,273,078. Filed

March 27, 1939 and issued February 17, 1942.

21 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyric, The Tubby the Tuba Song. Jerry Marlow, vocal (with Sonovox), unnamed tuba soloist. Capitol CAS-3019/CASF-3079, 78-rpm/45-rpm (1950/1951).

22 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, lyric, The Tubby the Tuba Song. Conducted by Mitch Miller, Paul Tripp, vocal, The Sandpipers, vocals, William "Bill" Bell, tuba solo. Golden R257 (US issue)/Goldentone GG-4 (British issue), 78-rpm (1950). The Sandpipers were a vocal group that recorded many Golden children's records between 1948 and 1962. Members included Mike Stewart, Ralph Nyland, Dick Byron, Bob Miller, Anne Lloyd, Sally Sweetland, Mary Jane Sutherland, and Peter Hanley. The group should not be confused with the popular 1960s folk group (founded by Jim Brady, Mike Piano, and Richard Shoff) of the same name. Also, the Golden/Goldentone Records recording of The Tubby the Tuba Song was Bill Bell's only recording of any of the Tubby the Tuba pieces. See R. Winston Morris and Daniel Perantoni, ed., Guide to the Tuba Repertoire: The New Tuba Source Book (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 483, where Bell is erroneously named as tuba soloist on the recording of Tubby the Tuba with Danny Kaye and the Victor Young Orchestra. The soloist in that recording was George Boujje.

23 William Bell, Bill Bell and His Tuba. Golden Crest CR 3015, 33 1/3-rpm (1959).

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FALL 2021

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HOW TO:
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HISTORY OF
Tubby the Tuba
PART 8





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ON OUR COVER

The cover of this issue is based on the cover of the 78 rpm release of *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* (© 1948, RCA Victor), adapted by *ITEA Journal*; story on p. 35.

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— A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF —

Tubby the Tuba

More than a Melody—More than Oompah

by Douglas Yeo



Figure 1. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba (© Cosmo, 1945), The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba (© RCA Victor, 1947), The Tubby the Tuba Song (© General, 1950; © assigned to RYTVOC, 1955), Tubby the Tuba at the Circus (© Decca, 1950), Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town (© Golden Crest, 1960).

Editor's note: This is the final installment of Douglas Yeo's comprehensive article about Tubby the Tuba that has appeared serialized in eight consecutive issues of the ITEA Journal throughout 2020 and 2021.

PART 8: TUBBY THE TUBA AT THE CIRCUS AND TUBBY THE TUBA GOES TO TOWN/TUBBY THE TUBA MEETS A JAZZ BAND, CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT

Tubby the Tuba at the Circus (1950)

Story synopsis:

It is springtime, and Tubby, "a fat little tuba," oompahed when he walks and talks. Tubby sighs "the saddest oompah you ever heard." A bird tries to cheer him up, "Spring is here!"

Tubby doesn't think so and he sings that the buds popping open and birds singing don't mean spring has arrived. To Tubby, "I can always tell it's spring when the circus comes to town." Suddenly, Tubby hears a circus band and exclaims, "Now I know it's spring!" A little idea begins to buzz around in Tubby's head. It says, "Why don't you join the circus?" But then Tubby wonders what he would do in the circus. His idea suggests he could be a bareback rider, or a lion tamer, a clown, a juggler, or an acrobat. "You can do anything your heart desires."

Tubby goes to meet Signor Pepperino, the circus ringmaster, and Tubby is hired to carry water for the elephants. A kindly old elephant suggests that Tubby take a look inside the circus tent since the elephants all have enough water. Tubby is enthralled by

what he sees, and when he looks up, he finds his little idea swinging away on a trapeze, singing, "Alley oop, oompah, an acrobat you ought to be!" Tubby climbs to the top of the circus tent and, encouraged by his little idea, walks along the tightrope, balanced by his water pails. But Tubby slips and falls, and lands on top of Signor Pepperino. Tubby is sent back to the elephants.

Dejected and crying, Tubby is consoled by the kindly old elephant who tells him that he is not so bad; it's just that he tried to be the wrong thing. The elephant says that he once wanted to be a toe dancer. "Be yourself," the elephant sings, "and do the things that you do best, be yourself, I think that you'd be happiest by being no one else but you." Tubby tells the elephant that the only thing he does best is oompah. The elephant asks

to hear Tubby's oompah and as he plays, the elephants all come and encircle Tubby, their trunks swaying to the music. One by one, the elephants get up on their hind legs and begin dancing. Signor Pepperino comes by and exclaims, "What is this? I have never seen the elephants dance so beautifully." The kindly elephant points to Tubby, who is oompahing away with a smile on his face. Signor Pepperino declares that Tubby's magnificent oompah and the dancing elephants will be the main attraction of the circus. He exhorts Tubby, "Play, Tubby, play as you have never done before!" and the whole circus dances. Tubby decides that he "wouldn't change places with anyone in the whole wide world."

1950 was a big year for *Tubby the Tuba*. Not only did George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp write the runaway single, *The*

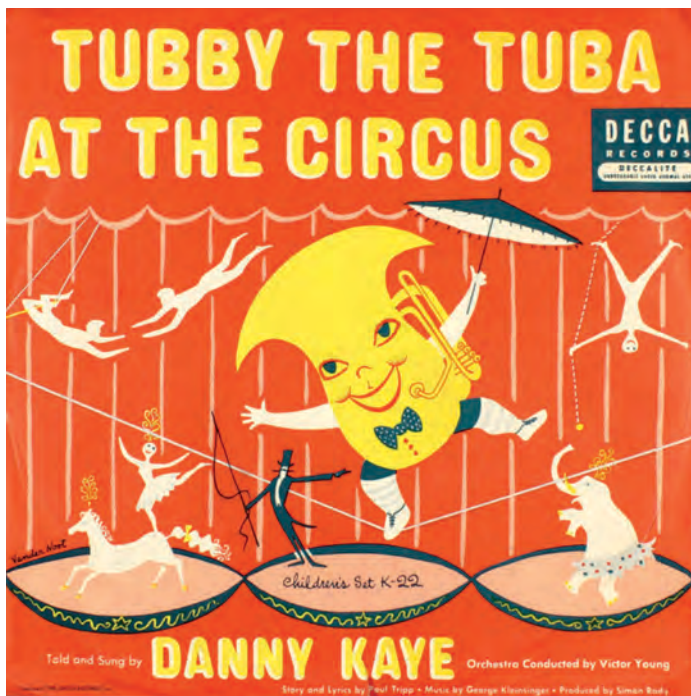


Figure 2. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* (© Decca, 1950).

Tubby the Tuba Song, but they wrote their third Tubby story, *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus*. While RCA Victor had released the first Tubby sequel, *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba* in 1948, Kleinsinger and Tripp returned to Decca to record their new piece, and they reunited with old friends Danny Kaye (narrator), Victor Young (conductor), and Simon Rady (producer) who, together, had made the second recording of *Tubby the Tuba* (1947).¹

Once again, Walter Winchell, as he had done for Cosmo's premiere recording of *Tubby the Tuba*, plugged *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* in his newspaper column, writing, "Danny Kaye's hot-diggity recording for youngsters, 'Tubby the Tuba at the Circus.' It rates 3 cheers and 4 lollipops."² Cheers and lollipops, indeed. While *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* is the shortest of the four Tubby stories (Danny Kaye's recording clocks in at 9:13), the story captured the imagination of the

marketplace. It isn't difficult to understand why.

The 1942 edition of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's Circus debuted in New York City's Madison Square Garden on April 9. This was a wartime production, the first of the Ringling circuses since the United States entered World War II, and the first night's gate receipts were donated to the Army and Navy relief fund and the infantile paralysis (polio) fund. Among the acts advertised to appear in "The Greatest Show on Earth" was something wildly extravagant even by circus standards, a Ballet of the Elephants with "50 Elephants and 50 Beautiful Girls in an Original Choreographic Tour de Force." And that was not all. The choreography and direction were to be by none other than George Balanchine, and the accompanying music by Igor Stravinsky.³

Elephants in the circus were nothing new. In fact, elephants

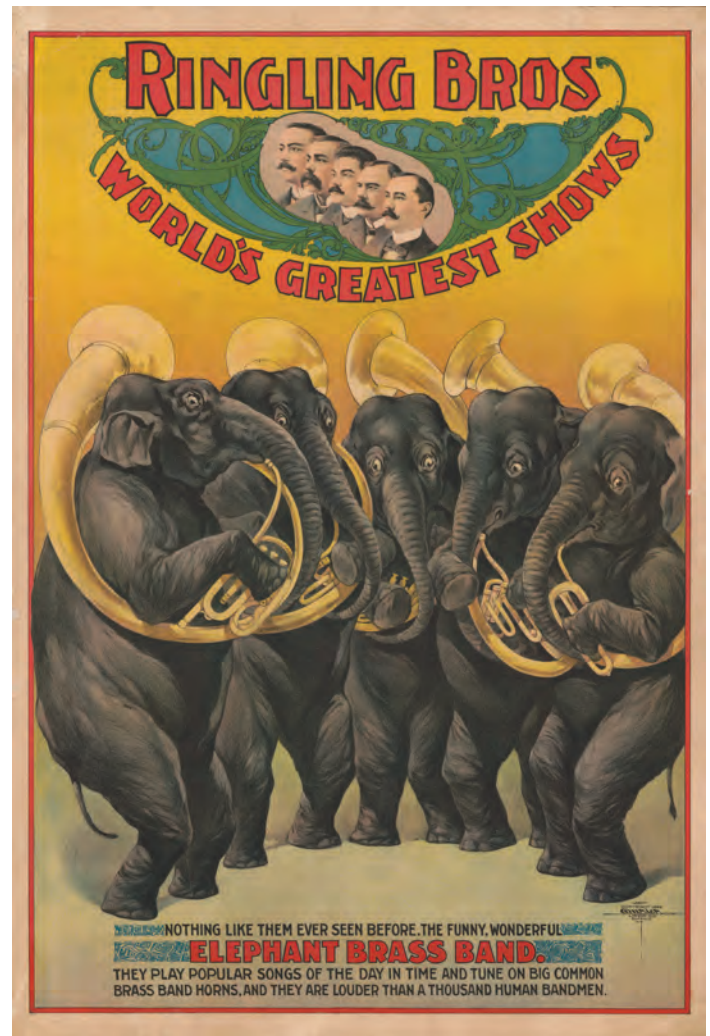


Figure 3. Ringling Brothers Circus, Elephant Brass Band. Promotional poster, c. 1899. Courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

and tubas were nothing new. In one of the most spectacular examples of circus advertising hyperbole, the 1899 Ringling Brothers Circus advertised something exceptional on one of its promotional posters. With five elephants standing on their hind legs while playing helicons, the Ringlings assured their audience that, "Nothing like them ever seen before. The funny, wonderful Elephant Brass Band. They play popular songs of the day in time and tune on big common brass band horns, and they are louder than a thousand human bandmen."⁴ Step right up. Tuba playing elephants, and they play in tune and in time. Of course!

And pigs fly, too. There's no doubt we would have loved to see those pachydermic embouchures but, alas, no photographs or instruments have survived to support the outrageous advertising claim. If they had actually existed, they would have made "The Harvard Tuba" look like a euphonium by comparison.⁵

But fifty elephants dancing? This WAS something new, and it wasn't just circus advertising hype. John Ringling North, always looking for something bigger and better for his circus, engaged star choreographer George Balanchine (who, on January 12, 1942, then approached

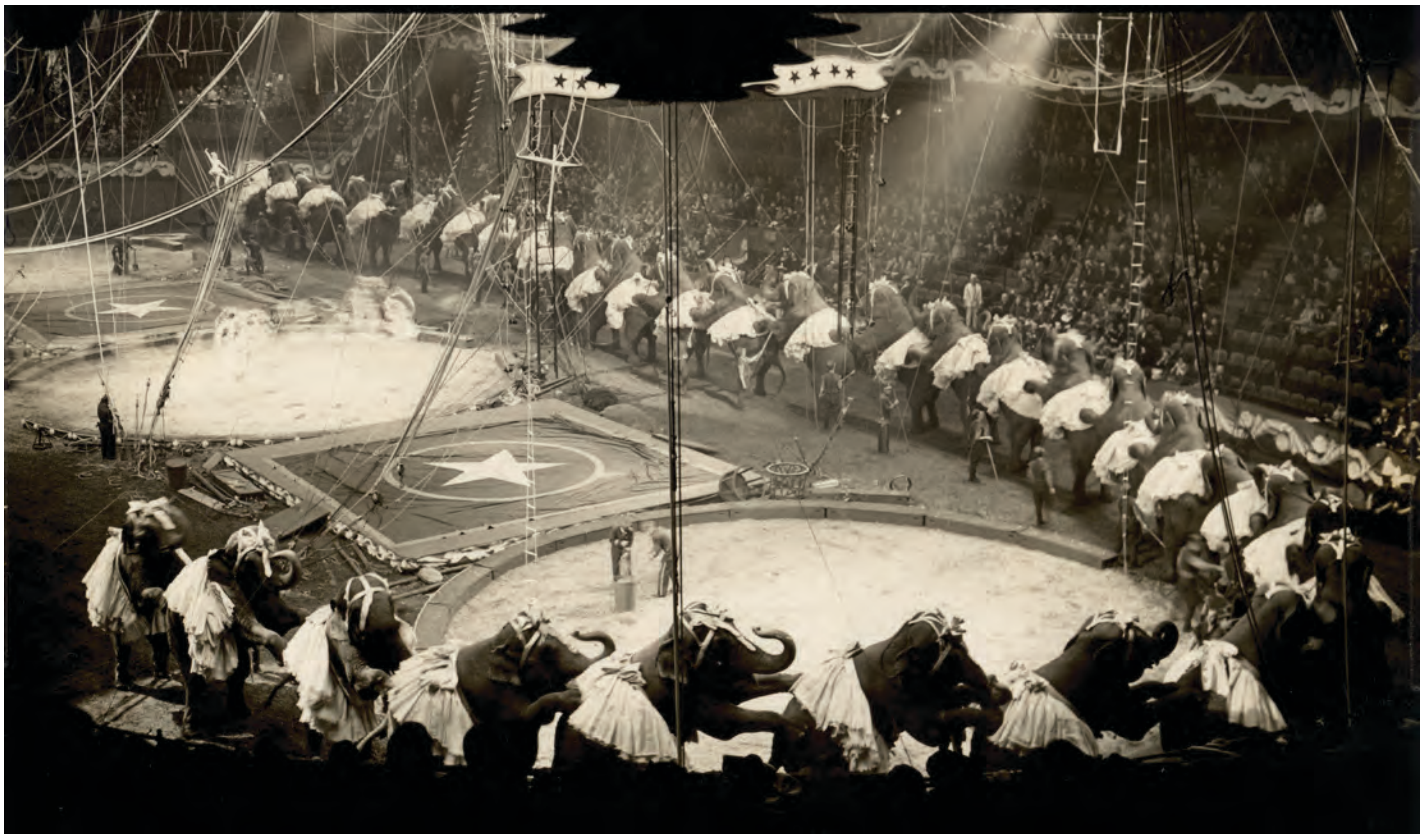


Figure 4. "The Ballet of the Elephants," Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Madison Square Garden, New York, 1942. Courtesy Circus World/Wisconsin Historical Society.

composer Igor Stravinsky) to add even more star power to his production. Stravinsky's composition was his *Circus Polka*, later orchestrated for full orchestra, but originally for the band of winds, brass, and percussion at Ringling's circus. Balanchine's wife, Vera Zorina (born Eva Brigitta Hartwig), was the lead ballerina in the "choreographic tour de force," and during the whole elephant ballet, she was cradled in the trunk of Modoc, the largest Indian elephant in the circus.⁶ The fifty elephants (actually, most performances used 30 elephants, still an impressive number) wore tutus, and the combination of Balanchine, Stravinsky, ballerinas, and, of course fifty elephants, was a sensation:

Young John Ringling North, the man who brought air-conditioning and glamor to the big top, has pulled another fancy

rabbit out of the hat. This year, for America's diversion and enlightenment, he has plumped the distinguished figures of famed composer Igor Stravinsky and ballet master George Balanchine right into the red-white-and-blue sawdust of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, of which he is president.

To the average peanut-munching circus fan, Stravinsky and Balanchine may be just names. They might be a couple of Notre Dame linemen or an acrobat act. However, they're not.

Stravinsky is a dapper little Russian composer whose music, during the past 30 years, has caused quite a commotion in the top drawer of the artistic world. He has been called a genius, as well as several other things, and he

has been an important figure among the long-haired gentry.

Balanchine comes a little closer to the sphere of ordinary mankind, since he owns the enviable distinction of being married to the lovely dancer Zorina. He is famous as a dancer, and as a designer of ballets for stage and screen audiences.

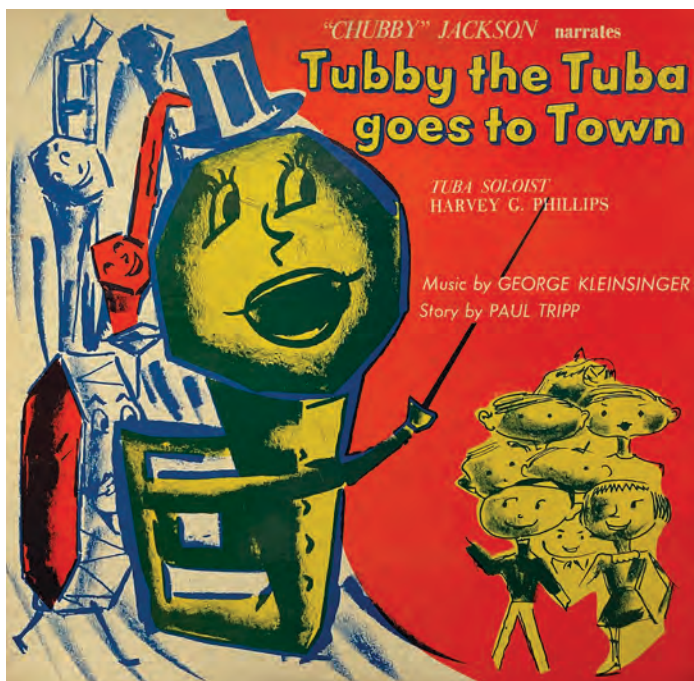
Somehow, North persuaded them to collaborate on an Elephant Ballet, the first in circus history, for this season's shows. How he did it will probably remain North's secret, and a tribute to his genius. To engage Stravinsky to write music for a herd of elephants is like signing Kirsten Flagstad to sing at the Stork Club, only harder.

And for the average impresario, it would be about as easy to hire Heifetz to teach a trained seal to play "Yankee

Doodle" on the bells as to get Balanchine to act as dancing master for 50 lumbering pachyderms.

It might be added for those who aren't impressed by elephants no matter what they do, that North has thoughtfully supplemented them with a corps de ballet of 50 girls.⁷

The Elephant Ballet ran for 425 performances. While tutus are not mentioned as part of the elephant's wardrobe in *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus*—Paul Tripp's script refers to the "kindly elephant" as "he"—the cover of the first recording of the piece (Decca, 1950) shows a dancing elephant in a tutu. And in the 1975 animated feature film of *Tubby the Tuba* (discussed in Part 6 of this article), the elephants (led by Mrs. Elephant—rather than the "kindly elephant"—with the voice of Pearl Bailey) wear tutus. It is not a stretch to



Top. Figure 5. Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Circus Magazine (© Circus Publishing Co., 1942).

Above, second row. Figure 6. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town (© Golden Crest, 1960). Courtesy Stephen Shoop.

imagine that the story of *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* was informed, in part, by Ringling's Elephant Ballet, which took place just a month before Tripp joined the U. S. Army.

Danny Kaye's narration of *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* is nothing short of spectacular. He used different voices for each character and infused both his narration and singing with character and imagination. Perhaps this is the reason that the piece was not recorded again until 1996; while Kaye's recording was originally issued on 78-rpm discs, it was re-released on LP (1959) and remains available as a digital download as well as on YouTube. It was not until the Manhattan Transfer recorded their multi-voice version of *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* that Kaye's recording finally had some competition.

Unlike its predecessors, *Tubby the Tuba* and *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*, *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* doesn't mention Tubby's bullfrog melody. Its story is about the redemption of Tubby's signature act: playing oompahs. Once again, Tubby realized that it wasn't all about the melody.

***Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town/ Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band* (1960/1962)**

Story synopsis:

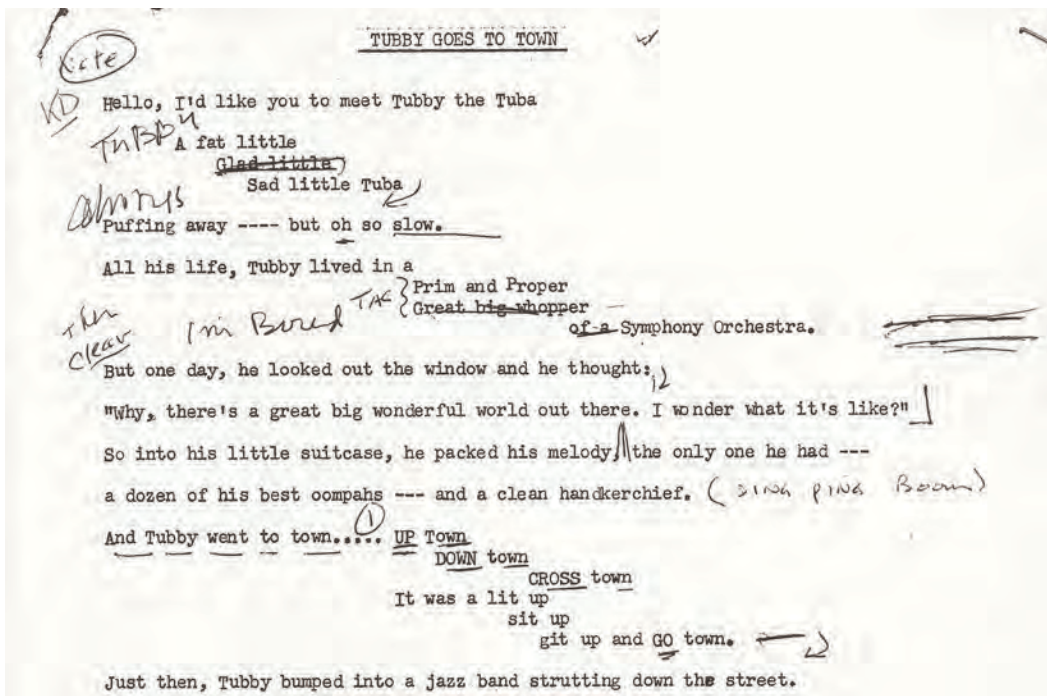
Tubby the Tuba is "a fat little, glad little, sad little tuba, puffing away but oh so slow." He had spent his life in a prim and proper symphony orchestra but one day, he looked out the window and wondered what the big, wonderful world was like. So Tubby packed up his suitcase with his melody—"the only one he ever had—a few of his best oompahs, and a clean handkerchief." "And

Tubby goes to town." He goes uptown, downtown, and across town. Tubby then bumps into a jazz band that was strutting down the street. Tubby greets them but they pass him by, singing, "Can't stop, gotta hop, can't wait, gotta date, ho hum, sorry chum; Hey cats, let's go!" Tubby had never heard music like this, and he runs to catch up to the jazz band.

The band goes into a house and tunes up for a jam session. Tubby asks to join them, and the drum says, "Strike me dumb, if it isn't our roly, poly chum. You a slick chick with the music?" Tubby explains that he's familiar with Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, and the band says, "Well dig that long hair, is he real or is he square?" Tubby opens his suitcase and takes out his melody. As he plays it for the band, they tell him, "You don't sing it; you swing it!" and they jazz up Tubby's melody around the room. Tubby can't keep up with the band's playing and, concluding that he's "a square," packs his melody back into his suitcase, and prepares to leave.

The trumpet asks Tubby to stay, and when Tubby protests that he doesn't understand the music, the trumpet tells him, "That's jazz for you, man. That's jazz." The trombone then sings a lengthy song ("Listen to your heart") that answers Tubby's question, "Jazz? What's that?" After a few up-tempo verses that end, "You feel like bustin' out of your skin, it's jazz that's got you in a spin, you feel you've got the world in your hand, jazz can make you really understand," the trombone sings a slow, sultry, bluesy ballad.

Tubby loves what he hears but wishes he had rhythm like the others have. The trumpet



Top left. Figure 7. Paul Tripp, early script (with Tripp's annotations) for *Tubby Goes to Town* (incipit, 1960). Courtesy David Tripp and Suzanne Tripp Jurmain.

Bottom left. Figure 8. Alec Wilder, *Effie the Elephant: Suite* (© Golden Crest, 1960).

Bottom right. Figure 9. Bernie Landes, *The Elephants Tango* (incipit, © Emerson Music, 1954); George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town*, incipit (© RYTVOC, 1960).



Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp took a hiatus from their collaborations. Kleinsinger got involved with his *archy and mehitabel* projects (Part 2 of this article) and other compositions, and Tripp was in the midst of his all-consuming work as producer, director, writer, and actor for his "Mr. I. Magination" children's television show and recordings (Part 3 of this article). They certainly had their hands full, and perhaps thought they had done what they could with Tubby and his friends. Certainly, royalties from *Tubby the Tuba*, *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*, *The Tubby the Tuba Song*, and *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus* gave the men financial freedom to explore other projects.

But in 1960—ten years after they wrote *Tubby the Tuba*

at the Circus—Kleinsinger and Tripp came together for one final Tubby story. Harvey Phillips, in his posthumous autobiography, *Mr. Tuba*, wrote that he commissioned George Kleinsinger to compose *Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band*, and in Phillips' "Biography/Resume" (written around 1978), he noted that he commissioned a piece from Kleinsinger in 1959.⁸ Kleinsinger, in his only published comments about the piece, made no mention of Phillips, and only said that the piece had been "written for T.V."⁹ Tripp said, "Then I came up with another idea... while listening to some jazz, I noticed the double bass zoom-zooming the bass background. I wondered if Tubby could play in that low

wonders if Tubby already has it and asks what is in his suitcase. Tubby begins to play his oompah and the piano asks to try it. The drum joins the piano on Tubby's oompah—"Cool man, cool"—and when Tubby asks if they like it, the trumpet replies, "Like it! It's crazy, man, sends me, man, real gone." Tubby then

says, "Follow me!" and Tubby and the jazz band go to town. A rollicking jam session follows, and the piece ends with Tubby exclaiming, "Call me cat, there's nothing like an oompah! And that is that!"

After they wrote *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus*, George

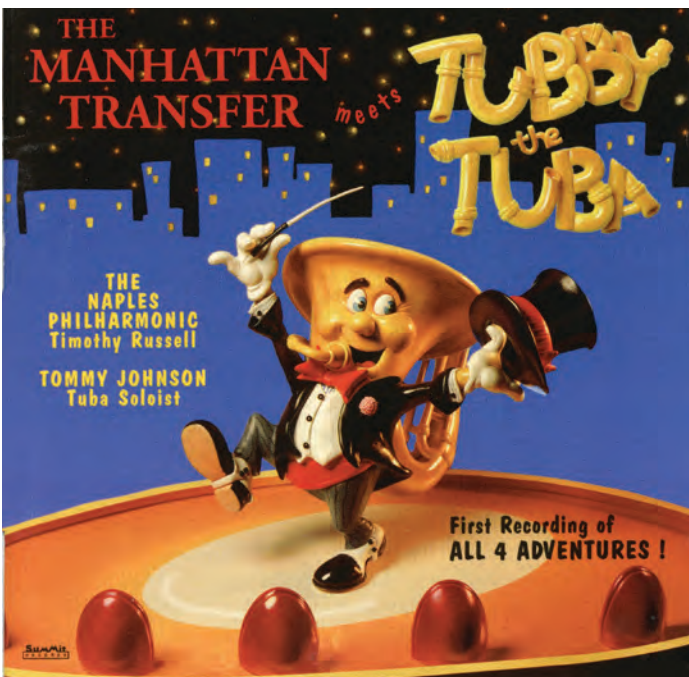


Figure 10. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Summit, 1994).

range.”¹⁰ How to resolve these conflicting creation stories?

Actually, Phillips got a key part of the story wrong. The piece that Kleinsinger and Tripp wrote, and which Harvey Phillips recorded in for Golden Crest in 1960, was not *Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band*.¹¹ It was *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town*. One piece with two titles. After its first public performance in October 1962—with narrator Sonny Fox and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Northern New Jersey conducted by Walter Schoeder (although the only review of the performance doesn’t mention the tuba soloist’s name)¹²—the title changed. A second performance was planned to be done live on ABC television in January 1963. “I use a Dixieland band,” Kleinsinger said, “so I’m hoping that for TV we can change the title to ‘Tubby the Tuba Meets the Jazz Band.’”¹³ As to Tripp’s reminiscence, he may very well have spontaneously come up with the idea for the piece while listening to some jazz,

and then pitched the concept to Kleinsinger. But as we shall see, it is difficult to discount Phillips’ involvement in the composition’s early history.

The change of title certainly better reflected the essence of the piece, and the hipster lingo that is found throughout unmistakably ties it to its time.¹⁴ Unlike the previous three *Tubby* pieces that were scored for orchestral accompaniment, *Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band* (note the final title had another change, from “the Jazz Band” to “a Jazz Band”) utilizes a five-piece traditional jazz band along with narrator and tuba solo. Harvey Phillips’ premiere recording, an LP made in a limited pressing by Golden Crest, quickly disappeared from the marketplace; surviving copies are exceptionally rare. The record is remarkable in several several ways. The recording has two pieces: *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town* and *Effie the Elephant: Suite* by Alec Wilder. Wilder’s piece would later be retitled *Suite No. 1 (Effie Suite)* after

Wilder composed several other *Suites* for tuba and piano.¹⁵ Apart from Phillips’ name as tuba soloist and the name of *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town* narrator Greig Stewart “Chubby” Jackson, the album covers do not mention the names of the other musicians who play on the disc (although the record label names the collaborating musicians for *Effie the Elephant*: Arthur Harris, piano, and Bradley Spinney, percussion). Phillips’ autobiography lists the musicians for the recording of *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town*: Pee Wee Erwin (cornet), Kenny Davern (clarinet), Lou McGarity (trombone), Moe Wechsler (piano), Cliff Leeman (drums), all members of the Charleston City All Stars.¹⁶

Phillips’ recording of *Effie the Elephant* also has some different titles than the published versions of the piece. Players today know the movements as, 1. *Effie Chases a Monkey*, 2. *Effie Falls in Love*, 3. *Effie Takes a Dancing Lesson*, 4. *Effie Joins the Carnival*, 5. *Effie Goes Folk Dancing*, 6. *Effie Sings a Lullaby*. But Phillips’ recording features different titles for three movements: 2. *Effie Daydreams*, 4. *Effie Joins a Carnival*, and 5. *Effie Goes to a Barn-Dance*. It’s unfortunate that this recording remains out of print since it is an important recorded document of a significant piece of the tuba’s solo repertoire. And Phillips sounds terrific.

Yet there is more to this record of *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town* and *Effie the Elephant*. The album—and the music itself—has a kind of Da Vinci code, some hidden messages that tie together a number of things.

While no independent documentation has survived

to confirm Harvey Phillips’ claim that he commissioned *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town*, an important clue to support this narrative is found in the piece itself. When Tubby and the band join together for their final jam session, they improvise on a new theme. Careful listeners will note the similarity between this theme and the melody to Bernie Landes’ 1954 hit, *The Elephants Tango*.¹⁷ And why would tuba players know *The Elephants Tango*? Because William “Bill” Bell recorded it on his 1957 solo recording, *Bill Bell and His Tuba*. And why might Harvey Phillips suggest that George Kleinsinger include a nod to *The Elephants Tango* in *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town*? Because Phillips studied with Bell at the Juilliard School of Music from 1950-1953. And why would Phillips know elephants? Because he played in the Kings Brothers Circus in 1947 and with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey from 1948-1950. And it was while he was with Ringling Brothers that Phillips met Bill Bell. With the pairing of Alec Wilder’s *Effie the Elephant* with *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town*, the connections of elephants, the circus, and Bill Bell, it all adds up to a delightful, coded tribute to important influences in Phillips’ life. Thus, the final piece in the *Tubby the Tuba* saga ends not with the famous melody Tubby received from the bullfrog, or Tubby’s oompahs, but with a song associated with one of the most influential tuba players of all time, Bill Bell. Nice.

Because Harvey Phillips’ recording of *Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town* was on the niche Golden Crest Label and it went out of print quickly, the piece drifted into obscurity. As a composition for narrator

with jazz combo, performance opportunities were few. But in the 1990s, two more recordings—or three, depending on how one counts—of *Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band* brought the piece back to life. But its rebirth was not without controversy.

In 1994, Summit Records released a compact disc of all four *Tubby the Tuba* stories; the pieces were recorded in October 1993.¹⁸ The recording was a vehicle for tubist John Thomas “Tommy” Johnson and the jazz vocal group, The Manhattan Transfer. As mentioned earlier, the Manhattan Transfer transformed the role of the narrator into something much more. The members of the group—Tim Hauser, Alan Paul, Cheryl Bentyne, and Janis Siegel—took on the personalities of the characters in the stories, and they added their signature tight harmonies to the pieces’ songs. Johnson’s tuba playing is superb and Herbert Jenkel would smile: Johnson’s name is featured prominently on the album’s cover in the same size print as the accompanying ensemble, The Naples (Florida) Philharmonic, and larger than the name of conductor Timothy Russell. For *Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band*, the combo features three of the Naples Philharmonic’s principal players—Paul Votapek (clarinet), Matthew Sonneborn (trumpet), and Michael Zion (trombone)—who are joined by Cynthia Dallas (piano) and James Dallas (drums) along with Johnson. All of the performers are named in the disc’s liner note booklet, and the accompanying illustrations of Tubby by Jack Graham greatly enhance the whole package. The recording was nominated for a Grammy Award as Best Musical Album

for Children of 1993, but it lost to the soundtrack for the movie, *The Lion King*.¹⁹

Also in 1994, trombonist Marco Katz, who had worked for Music Theatre International (the agency that licenses performances of the *Tubby the Tuba* pieces for their copyright holder, RYTVOC) for several years, became involved in a new recording of several of George Kleinsinger’s and Paul Tripp’s compositions for children that were to be narrated by Tripp.²⁰ These included *Tubby the Tuba*, *The Story of Celeste*, *Adventures of a Zoo*, and *Peepo the Piccolo*.²¹ Along with conductor Stephen Gunzenhauser, Katz flew to Bratislava to oversee recording the works with the Radio Orchestra of Bratislava. Following those sessions, John Eastman of RYTVOC asked Katz to produce a new recording of *Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band* for inclusion on the album.²² The piece was recorded in New York City using a combo of leading jazz and studio players: Jimmy Owens (trumpet), Paquito D’Rivera (clarinet), Marco Katz (trombone), Chuck Folds (piano), John Thomas (percussion), Oliver Jackson (drums), and Bob Stewart (tuba). Lee Ulfik conducted the sessions and Tripp’s narration was subsequently dubbed into all of the tracks on the album.

The recording was released in 1996 on Angel but, unfortunately, none of the members of the jazz band are named in the album’s liner notes; neither is the tuba soloist for the Tubby orchestral tracks named.²³ The playing of the jazz combo is excellent, although the recording adds a new introduction (a lengthy cadenza for trumpet), and the end of the piece was rewritten to provide Tubby with an additional solo

based on the song, “Listen to your heart,” and a cadenza for Stewart.

In 2006, KOCH Records released three of the tracks from the Angel recording—*Tubby the Tuba*, *Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band*, and *The Story of Celeste*—on a CD titled *Tubby the Tuba Presents Play it Happy!*, but with television personality Meredith Vieira narrating instead of Paul Tripp. While her narration has great personality, Vieira’s voice is simply not up to singing the songs in each of the works. For most of them, she engages in a kind of *Sprechstimme*, and when she does sing, the result is, well, not entirely favorable. And in a remarkable slap to the players who actually made the recording possible, the album does not include names

of any performers apart from Vieira. To add insult to injury, the Koch recording was released without making new use payments to the musicians. Marco Katz contacted David Sheldon of American Federation of Musicians Local 802 who worked to get the required payments to the players.²⁴

As discussed in Part 6 of this article, the 1996 Angel recording of *Tubby the Tuba* with Paul Tripp narrating was released as a single as part of the *Tubby the Tuba* book published by Dutton Children’s Books in 2006. But in an odd, even awkward bit of cross marketing, the KOCH compact disc, *Tubby the Tuba Presents Play it Happy!*, uses some of the same illustrations by Henry Cole that appear in

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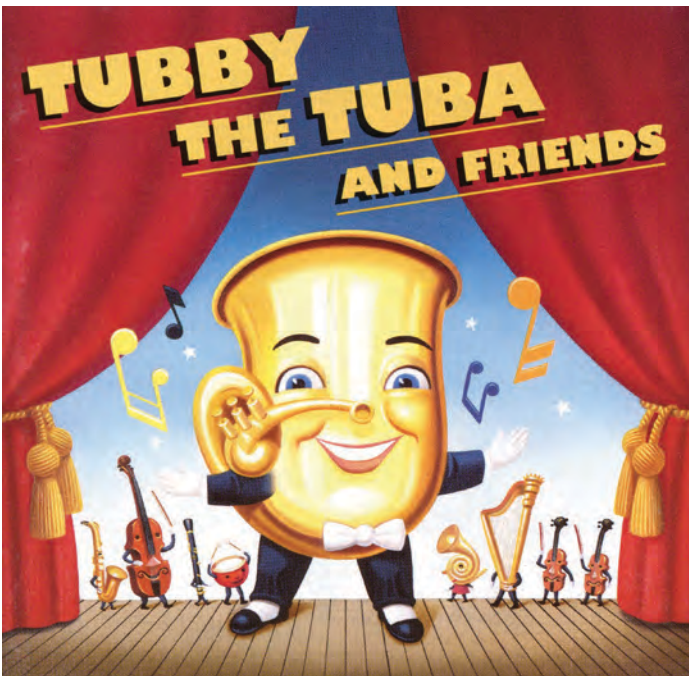


Figure 11. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba and Friends* (© Angel, 1996).

the Dutton book and it even advertises the book within its CD booklet. But the book has a companion CD with Tripp narrating (the Angel recording) and the Koch CD that advertises the book has Meredith Vieira narrating. Confused? You probably aren't alone.

Conclusion and assessment

Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town/Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band was George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp's final collaboration. Three musical stories for orchestra, narrator, and tuba solo, a story for jazz combo, narrator, and tuba solo, *The Tubby the Tuba Song*, three books and several film releases were enough, and they both went on to other things even as they remained lifelong friends.²⁵ There is no way to calculate the number of Tubby recordings, books, and sheet music sold, or the number of people who have heard, read, or seen any of the pieces since the Cosmo recording of *Tubby the Tuba* was released

in 1945. Certainly, it ranges in the millions. Many, many millions. And as if that isn't enough to show his ubiquity, Tubby even reached the elite world of *The New York Times* crossword puzzle. The clue for 5 down: "Tubby, in a Paul Tripp book." Answer: "the tuba."²⁶

Tubby also routinely appears on lists of Desert Island Discs on social media, in articles, and radio. Renowned British author and illustrator of children's books, Helen Oxenbury, included Danny Kaye's recording of *Tubby the Tuba* on her November 2020 DID list of eight musical works that was broadcast on BBC radio and a BBC podcast.²⁷ Tubby is everywhere.

Crossword puzzles, Desert Island Disc lists, and sales alone do not verify the importance of *Tubby the Tuba*. But here's something that does. In 2005, the first recording of *Tubby the Tuba* (Cosmo Records, 1945) was entered into the United States National Recording Registry as a work

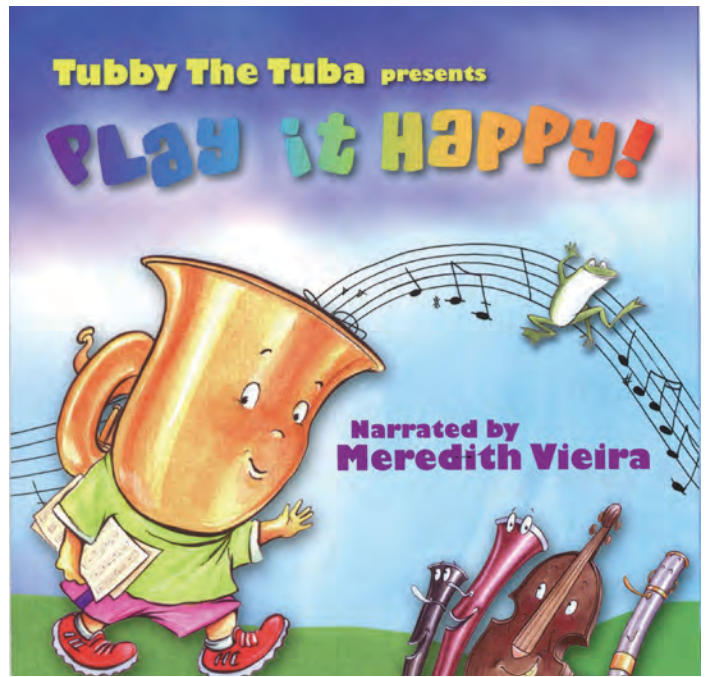


Figure 12. George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp, *Tubby the Tuba presents Play it Happy!* (© Koch, 2006).

deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" by the Library of Congress. It was the third work for children to be so honored, following the induction of *The Bubble Book* (Ralph Mayhew and Burgess Johnson, 1917; inducted 2003) and *Peter and the Wolf* (Serge Prokofiev, recorded by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1939; inducted 2004).²⁸ High praise, indeed, especially when one considers that as of 2021, 575 recordings have been entered into the Registry and of them, only ten are in the children's recordings category.

History has seen many successful artistic endeavors. Now and then, success leads artists to plan a sequel, hoping to catch the original lightning in a bottle once more. Most sequels are failures. Too often they are made simply to cash in on an idea that was good once but could not find legs on which to successfully stand in a later incarnation. But with *Tubby the Tuba*, the four

stories have stood the test of time, and it would be difficult to argue that the sequels to *Tubby the Tuba* are of a lesser quality than the original. Of course, the original was the most successful. But each of the sequels has its own, fresh take on the important life lessons of the Tubby franchise. The four stories do not tell a single narrative in a straight line, and each stands well on its own. And each has particular themes that provide listeners and readers with food for thought.

The story of Tubby—"a fat little tuba who puffed away but oh, so slow"—has become a cultural touchstone. Okay, we could have done without the ongoing references to his corpulence, found in each of the four Tubby stories. While Tripp claimed that, "the tuba isn't a fat instrument, but the tuba had a chubby sound, so I called him Tubby,"²⁹ it's hard to escape the stereotypical, offensive, and untrue trope that tuba players tend to

be overweight. But Tubby provides encouragement for the downtrodden, the misunderstood, and those who desire to do great and big things. Tubby stood up to teasing and bullying, he found comfort with friends both new (the bullfrog, the kindly elephant, the jazz band) and old (Peepo), and he summoned the strength to face—with confidence—those who taunted him. When he finally played his melody for his orchestra, he responded with grace and kindness—not vindictiveness—when those who had teased him eventually asked to play his melody, too.

Tubby has even entered the rarified realm of musicology. In *The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos*, author Michael Marissen discusses Bach's innovative compositional technique and ground-breaking orchestrations, and begins his book—with its introduction, titled "Bach's Musical Contexts"—with a scene from *Tubby the Tuba*:

Tubby the Tuba, at a rehearsal, sitting forlornly in the back row of the orchestra: "Oh, what lovely music." (Sighs)

Peepo the Piccolo, rushing to Tubby's side: "Here, what's the matter?"

Tubby: "Oh, every time we do a new piece, you all get such pretty melodies to play. And I? Never, never a pretty melody."

Peepo, arms stretched out: "But people don't write pretty melodies for tubas. It just isn't done."

Marissen continues:

Tubby the Tuba captures powerfully the enculturated notion of the orchestral hierarchy. As Tubby's story goes on to show, there is, of course, no

inherent technical reason why tubas should not be highlighted with pretty melodies in orchestral music; it just "isn't done." Further explanation is hardly needed.³⁰

Marissen is right. *Tubby the Tuba* was a cannon shot to those who say, "You can't do that," and, "It just isn't done." Long before the U.S. Army adopted the slogan, "Be all you can be" (1980) and Nike coined "Just do it" (1988), Tubby was showing children that it was not only permissible to push against cultural expectations, but one could succeed at doing something unexpected. And you should "be yourself." As a morality tale, *Tubby the Tuba* checks all the boxes. Perseverance, hard work, imagination, a willingness to take chances, and contentment. Aesop would be proud.

As Tubby's stories unfolded, he played both melodies and oompahs. Melodies are nice and Tubby loved to play them, once he was given a chance. And we all should have a chance. But the oompah in *Tubby the Tuba* that Tubby derided as his lot in life was redeemed in the next three stories. Tubby learned that playing oompahs was something for which he was uniquely gifted, and that by being himself and doing what he could do best, he could make an important impact. "This," Tubby reminds us when he returned to play his oompahs with his orchestra in *The Further Adventure of Tubby the Tuba*, "is where I belong, and that makes me very happy." That sense of belonging is at the heart of the *Tubby* stories.

Tubby the Tuba also had an impact on tubists themselves. While tuba players usually sit in the back row of an orchestra



Figure 13. George Boujje and Danny Kaye at the 1947 Decca recording session of *Tubby the Tuba* (see Part 4 of this article). Courtesy Jim Self with thanks to Ronald Davis.

or band, Tubby brought the tuba to the forefront. Hope Stoddard related a story about Joseph Novotny, tubist with the Kansas City Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, NBC Symphony, and New York Philharmonic. When Novotny played *Tubby the Tuba* in Houston, "he forthwith became a celebrity, at least within all public-school precincts of the city. Shrill voices pursued him everywhere. 'There goes Tubby! Good Old Tubby.'" Stoddard went on to say that after school concerts where *Tubby the Tuba* was performed, "teachers remarked that in the free drawing period, tubas took precedence over bunnies, witches, and supermen."³¹ Tubby made tuba players into rock stars.

Before *Tubby the Tuba*, orchestral composers had certainly recognized the tuba's

capabilities as a solo instrument. Among many others, Richard Wagner demonstrated this in his *Eine Faust Overture* (second version, 1850; the first version, premiered in 1844, scored the part for serpent but it was actually played on a bombardon)³² as did Gustav Mahler in his *Symphony 1* (1887), Igor Stravinsky in *Petroushka* (1910), and Silvestre Revueltas in *Sensemaya* (1937). Melodies had been written for the tuba, but not a melody such as Tubby received from the bullfrog at the side of the river. Would Ralph Vaughan Williams have written his *Tuba Concerto* (1954) if *Tubby the Tuba* had not appeared a decade earlier? Probably, but it's impossible to say. Eventually, someone would have written a solo for tuba and orchestra. But tuba players didn't have to wait for "eventually."



Figure 14. Paul Tripp; illustration by Chad, *Tubby the Tuba* (© Treasure Books, 1954).

George Kleinsinger and Paul Tripp heard Herbert Jenkel's plea—"You know, tubas can sing, too. Why don't you write me a solo, please!"³³—they wrote a piece, and the rest is history. How happy we are.

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in the Bate Collection (Oxford University Press), *Homer Rodeheaver and the Rise of the Gospel Music Industry* (co-authored with Kevin Mungons, University of Illinois Press) as well as dozens of articles for many music journals and magazines. His newest book, *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and Euphonium Player* (Rowman & Littlefield) has just been published.

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Kleinsinger, Paul Krzywicki, Mike Mashon (Library of Congress), Rosa Mazon (Los Angeles Philharmonic Archives), R. Winston Morris, Kevin Mungons, Eli Newberger, Gary Ofenloch, Kay Peterson (Smithsonian Institution), Gene Pokorny, Mike Roylance, Chester Schmitz, Peter Shrake (Circus World), Jim Self, Stephen Shoop, Leonard Slatkin, Andrei Strizek (Music Theatre International), Gabryel Smith and Sarah Palermo (New York Philharmonic Archives), John Taylor, John Tomasicchino (The Metropolitan Opera Archives), Deanna Swoboda, Herbert and Barbara Wekselblatt, and the helpful staff at Buswell Library, Wheaton College (Illinois).

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This article is dedicated to the memory of Herbert Wekselblatt (1927-2019), Tubby's first tuba voice.

End Notes

- 1 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, *Tubby the Tuba at the Circus*. Danny Kaye, narrator, Victor Young, conductor, unknown tuba soloist. Decca 88059, 78-rpm (1950).
- 2 Walter Winchell, "Winchell On Broadway," *Bristol (Tennessee) Herald Courier*, February 26, 1951, 7.
- 3 [Advertisement] Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. *Daily News* (New York), April 5, 1942, 70.
- 4 [Advertising poster] Ringling Bros. *World's Greatest Shows*. c.1899.
- 5 Dave Detwiler, "The Harvard Tuba: Part 1: Clarifying Its

- Colorful History*," International Tuba Euphonium Association Journal, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Fall 2019), 36-45.
- 6 Ringling Bros-Barnum & Bailey Circus Magazine 1942, 66.
- 7 James Thrasher, "Elephant Ballet Latest Offering to Circus Fans of United States," Cumberland (MD) Evening Times, April 14, 1942, 10.
- 8 Harvey Phillips (Mary Campbell, amanuensis). Mr. Tuba. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 215. I am grateful to Jerry Young for providing me with a copy of Phillips' "Biography/Resume." The document is undated but does not include any events later than 1978. In the section titled "Composers Commissioned (1971-1978)," he included an entry that reads, "George Kleinsinger (1959)."
- 9 Harold Stern, "Composer Has Yule T.V. Gift," The Record (Hackensack, NJ), December 21, 1962, 59.
- 10 Email communication from David Tripp to Douglas Yeo, November 25, 2019.
- 11 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, Tubby the Tuba Goes to Town, Chubby Jackson, narrator, Charleston City All Stars, Harvey Phillips, tuba solo; Alec Wilder, Suite: Effie the Elephant, Harvey Phillips, tuba solo. Golden Crest CR 6000, 33 1/3-rpm (1960). The recording is so obscure that is not included in Nancy Zeltsman, Alec Wilder: An Introduction to the Man and His Music Featuring a Complete List of Works and Discography (Newton Centre, Massachusetts: Margun Music, 1991).
- 12 "Tubby Premiere at Plaza Concert," The Record (Hackensack, NJ), October 29, 1962, 48.
- 13 Harold Stern, "Composer Has Yule T.V. Gift," The Record (Hackensack, NJ), December 21, 1962, 59.
- 14 In 1938, Cabell "Cab" Calloway self-published his Cab Calloway's Hepsters Dictionary: Language of Jive, that appeared in several editions through 1944. It became the standard reference book "of words, expressions and the general patois employed by musicians and entertainers in New York's teeming Harlem." See Cab Calloway, The New Cab Calloway's Hepsters Dictionary: Language of Jive, 1944 Edition (New York: Cab Calloway Inc.), 2.
- 15 Alec Wilder's five suites for tuba and piano are Suite No. 1: Effie Suite (1960), Suite No. 2: Jesse (1964), Suite No. 3: Suite for Little Harvey (1966), Suite No. 4: Thomas Suite (1968), Suite No. 5: Ethan Ayer (1963). See, Nancy Zeltsman, Alec Wilder: An Introduction to the Man and His Music Featuring a Complete List of Works and Discography (Newton Centre, Massachusetts: Margun Music, 1991), 19.
- 16 Harvey Phillips (Mary Campbell, amanuensis). Mr. Tuba. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 215.
- 17 Bernie Landes, The Elephants Tango (New York: Emerson Music, 1954). I am grateful to Stephen Shoop for pointing out the similarity between the two tunes.
- 18 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, Tubby the Tuba, Tubby at the Circus, Tubby Meets a Jazz Band, The Further Adventures of Tubby the Tuba. Naples (FL) Philharmonic, Timothy Russell, conductor, the Manhattan Transfer, vocals, John Thomas "Tommy" Johnson, tuba. Summit DCD 152, compact disc (1994).
- 19 1994 Grammy Winners, 37th Annual Grammy Awards. www.grammy.com/grammys/awards/37th-annual-grammy-awards-1994
- 20 "Take a Chorus, Tubby," International Musician, 1994 (ND).
- 21 George Kleinsinger, music, and Paul Tripp, story, Tubby the Tuba and Friends (Tubby the Tuba, The Story of Celeste, Adventures of a Zoo, Peepo the Piccolo, Tubby the Tuba Meets a Jazz Band). Radio Orchestra of Bratislava, Stephen Gunzenhauser, conductor, Paul Tripp, narrator, unknown tuba soloist. Angel CDCB-554330, compact disc (1996). As mentioned earlier, the title of Peewee the Piccolo was changed to Peepo the Piccolo for this recording.
- 22 Email message from Marco Katz to Douglas Yeo, October 10, 2019.
- 23 Tubby the Tuba and Friends. Angel CDCB-554330, compact disc (1996).
- 24 Marco Katz, "Thanks, 802!" Allegro, Volume CVIII, No. 9 (September 2008).
- 25 Emails from Fred Kleinsinger and Jane Kleinsinger to Douglas Yeo, November 8, 2019. Also Email from David Tripp to Douglas Yeo, November 10, 2019.
- 26 ed. Will Shortz, "Crossword," New York Times. April 13, 1996, 18.
- 27 Lauren Laverne, Desert Island Discs with Helen Oxenbury. BBC Sounds, November 29, 2020, www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000pvcx.
- 28 Cary O'Dell, "Tubby the Tuba (1945)," National Recording Preservation Board Essay (Library of Congress, 2006), www.loc.gov/static/programs/national-recording-preservation-board/documents/TubbyTheTuba.pdf. See also Complete National Recording Registry Listing (Library of Congress, 2021), www.loc.gov/programs/national-recording-preservation-board/recording-registry/complete-national-recording-registry-listing/
- 29 Barton Cummings, "Tubby's Great Complaint." International Tuba Euphonium Association Journal, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Fall 2006), 113.
- 30 Michael Marissen, The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3.
- 31 Hope Stoddard, From These Comes Music, Instruments of the Band and Orchestra (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1952), 86.
- 32 Herbert Heyde, "The Bass Horn and Upright Serpent in Germany. Part 3: Bombardon and Ophicleide: Sound and Musical Use of the Bass Horn, Serpent, and Ophicleide." Historic Brass Society Journal, Vol. 17 (2017): 33-36.
- 33 Barton Cummings, "Tubby's Great Complaint." International Tuba Euphonium Association Journal, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Fall 2006), 113.