

# Tuba Recital

## Naomi Dickers

Wednesday July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2025

Hanson Dyer Hall



Hello!

Thank you for joining me today!

This performance is the culmination of a research project I've been working on for the last few years for the fulfilment of a Masters degree in music research.

My research is about three extraordinary female tuba players. The tuba world has been heavily male-dominated ever since the tuba was invented, and while that's slowly changing for the better, the literature about women tuba players isn't keeping up. To start changing that, I've documented the lives of three people who have each made groundbreaking contributions to the music scene. These women are Constance Weldon (1932-2020), who played with orchestras in America and Europe and started a tuba ensemble at the University of Miami; Velvet Brown (circa-1970-), who teaches at the Pennsylvania state university and founds creative projects that highlight marginalised artists; and Carol Jantsch (1985-) who is principal tuba of the Philadelphia orchestra, and records albums as a soloist and with her tuba cover band.

One aspect of this research that has been particularly interesting for me has been exploring the connections between the careers of these people and the music they have contributed to. Today, you will hear music that these musicians have performed, recorded, arranged, or influenced in other meaningful ways.

I hope you enjoy hearing some music that hasn't always been given the spotlight, by musicians who are making the music scene a more diverse and exciting place to be part of.

-Naomi

**Program:**

Reflections on the Mississippi – Micheal Daugherty 21’

Advanced Tuba Etudes – Bower Murphy arr. Constance Weldon  
‘8

Quartet for Tubas – Frank Payne ‘3

INTERVAL

Vario Boulevard – Chanell Crichlow 8’

How Beautiful – Barbara York 5’

Concertino for Naomi and Tuba – Susan Cann 6’

Variations on the Welsh Theme ‘Jenny Jones’ – William Rimmer  
arr. Drake Rimmer ‘7

**Associate Artists:**

Sangmi Kim – piano

Finnlay Hansen – tuba

Jancia Schepsi – tuba

Seb Postregna – tuba

**Reflections On the Mississippi – Micheal Daugherty 21’**

- Mist

- Fury

- Prayer

- Steamboat

*Reflections on the Mississippi* was commissioned by Carol Jantsch. It was premiered in 2013 by the Temple University Symphony Orchestra with Carol Jantsch as soloist, and recorded by the same people the following year. It is inspired by camping trips alongside the river during the composer’ childhood, and dedicated to the memory of his father.

The first melody that appears in the concerto is comprised of just four notes:



These four notes establish a musical theme that reappears in different keys and contexts throughout the entire concerto, flowing through each of the movements like water down a river, sometimes fast, sometimes slow, connecting different characters, ideas, and places.

### Advanced Tuba Etudes – Bower Murphy arr. Constance Weldon '8

- #10
- #3
- #7

Bower Murphy was an American trumpet player and music teacher in the early-mid twentieth century. He wrote over one hundred etudes for his students. Each etude was written to tackle particular technical challenges in the student's playing. Some of these etudes were written for Constance Weldon, who was a student of Murphy's. Murphy never published his etudes, and after his death in 1967 Weldon collected the handwritten etudes from many of his former students and arranged them as an etude book for the tuba. While much is unknown about these etudes, such as the student or even instrument that each was originally composed for, this compilation is a valuable resource of studies that would otherwise have been lost to time.

### Quartet for Tubas – Frank Payne '3

*Quartet For Tubas* was composed in 1969 for the first International Tuba Composition Contest- an initiative founded by Constance Weldon to generate music for her newly-established tuba-euphonium ensemble. Up until this point, published repertoire for tuba ensembles was non-existent, and Weldon's ensemble, which she started in the early 1960s, played exclusively arrangements made by Weldon and her students. The 1969 Composition Contest was judged by two of the leading tuba players of the era: Arnold Jacobs and William Bell, who awarded Payne's *Quartet for Tubas* first place. Today, tuba ensembles are well established in institutions across the world. Repertoire for the group has also grown significantly; however, Payne's composition remains an exemplary demonstration of tuba ensemble repertoire.

### Vario Boulevard – Chanell Crichlow 8’

This piece was written and commissioned by students of Velvet Brown.

Chanell Crichlow is an instrumentalist and composer for solo brass, large ensembles, and film soundtracks who often uses her music to tell the stories of marginalised peoples.

Gretchen Renshaw-James premiered the work in 2023. Renshaw-James is a conductor, professor and tuba player who has commissioned and premiered a number of works for solo tuba.

The composer writes of this work:

“...The piece begins as a snapshot of Gretchen and I talking on our balcony as the sun sets and pays tribute to the stages of coming out and finding yourself. At first, the piece is introspective and self-searching, followed by pride and confidence in who you are; we then navigate through the excitement and complexity of queer relationships and finally gather at a place that feels self-assured and hopeful for the future. *Vairo Boulevard* explores sounds and genres created by or heavily influenced by queer Black folks. For many, this music (the club) is where they met their first love. This music saves lives, comforts folks in times of joy and pain, and serves as a gathering space for the community.”

### How Beautiful – Barbara York 5’

Barbara York (1949-2020) was one of the most prolific composers for the tuba, having penned over forty works for the instrument, including concerti, solos, and chamber works. She wrote *How Beautiful* in 2008 for her friends Matthew and Kristy Brown, in memory of their son Eli.

The tuba soloist Velvet Brown performed this work with dancer Maria Malizia as part of an interdisciplinary performance project called MOJATUBA

The piece is subtitled *Isaiah 52:7*; a passage from the Christian Bible which reads:

“How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of him who brings good news,  
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,  
who publishes salvation,  
who says to Zion, Your God reigns!”

## **Concertino for Naomi and Tuba – Susan Cann 6'**

### WORLD PREMIERE

*Concertino for Naomi and Tuba* was composed in 2021 by Tasmanian flautist and composer Susan Cann. The work was born out of a conversation between the composer and the soloist about compositional and performance techniques for the tuba. While structured as a single continuous movement, the piece can be separated into three distinct sections. The first is a march-like theme, the second a lyrical melody featuring multiphonic harmonies (singing and playing at the same time). The third section is a bouncy finale with lots of rhythmic interplay between the tuba and the piano.

An interesting aspect of including this work in my research project has been exploring the ways that my own experiences of commissioning a concerto have been similar those of Carol Jantsch. Some commonalities I've found include learning how to find common ground for communicating ideas between composition and performance, and workshopping the piece together in various stages of completion.

## **Variations on the Welsh Theme 'Jenny Jones' – William Rimmer arr. Drake Rimmer '7**

This piece is a dramatic theme and variation on a traditional melody originally arranged for cornet by William Rimmer (1862-1936) and later transcribed for soprano cornet and horn by William's nephew Drake Rimmer (1905-1978). Theme and Variation pieces based on traditional and well-known melodies have been popular for over a century as finales or encores, often with a cornet or euphonium soloist accompanied by a brass band.

Arranging, transposing, performing and recording works originally written for other instruments has played a big part in developing the tuba as a solo instrument and expanding the repertoire available to it. It's also something that all of the tuba players I have been researching have actively participated in. When Constance Weldon first arranged and performed a Bach Cello Suite for tuba she was told; 'Tuba players can't play Bach suites!' but she went on to prove that they can and do! Velvet Brown and Carol Jantsch have both arranged and performed works originally for flute, clarinet, violin, and other instruments.

As a relatively modern instrument, the tuba does not have the wealth of classical solo repertoire available to it that most other orchestral instruments do, so arrangements and transcriptions are a valuable way to stretch the instrument's solo repertoire

This performance takes place on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung and Bunurong peoples, who have taken care of the land and waterways for millennia. I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land with gratitude and respect.

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