

Composer's Note

Five Pieces for Piccolo and Tuba grew out of a whim: the perverse idea of the two extremes of the woodwind/brass sections of the orchestra duetting with a kind of no man's land between them, and perhaps also something comical about these two quirky members of the orchestra.

I notated it as a graphic score because of my interest in Dada, and in Johannesburg in the 1970s Dada was one way of responding to the stiflingly conservative politics of the time. The score came about largely by accident: having chosen the instrumentation I sought out piccolo and tuba excerpts from various standard orchestral works, including the famous piccolo and tuba solos from Sousa's "Stars and Stripes" and then photocopied and cut them up, and made A4 collages. When photocopying them – on an early Rank Xerox machine – I accidentally removed a page too soon and discovered something like a photocopying equivalent to the canvasses of Jackson Pollock. This became my first chance composition.

I composed *Five Pieces for Piccolo and Tuba* in 1971 in the same year most white South African composers were responding to commissions in praise of the Second Republic – that of the apartheid regime – for performance at various 10th anniversary festivals for the white elite. My work most definitely did not commemorate this occasion.

I never found piccolo and tuba players to interpret it, it ended up in the bottom drawer for four decades, travelled around the world with me, at some point the original Xeroxes getting lost (but fortunately I had copies), and having found willing players in the 21st century, it was performed for the first time on 30 April 2015 at the Young Blood Gallery in Cape Town. The performers were Marietjie Pauw (piccolo) and Le-Nique Brand (tuba).

In 2015 Willem Boshoff suggested I arrange the score into a limited edition artist book of 5 copies, which I did in collaboration with Heléne van Aswegen.

MB, February 2015

Notes for performance

For pieces 1, 2, 3 (page 6), 3 (page 11), and 5 (page 17) both instruments read from the same page.

For pieces 2 & 4 the piccolo reads from the left hand page (No. 2: page 8; No. 4: page 14) and the tuba from the right hand (No. 2: page 9; No. 4: page 15).

Realisation of the graphic score is free, but players could try to explore an individual "character" for each piece regarding choice of pitches, rhythms, dynamics, texture or extended techniques. For example in Piece No. 1, where there is no suggestion of pitch or rhythm in the graphic score, the players might choose to explore textures purely with breathing or blowing through the instruments. Where there are more obvious pitches and rhythms as in Nos. 2 and 3, these could serve as points of departure, but there is no obligation to play any phrase in its entirety.

MB, November 2024

1

Piccolo / Tub

SAMPLE COPY

SAMPLE COPY

2

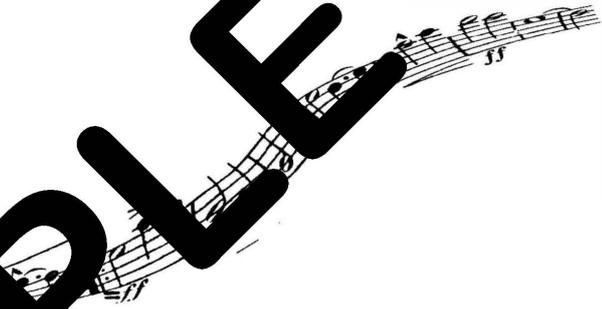
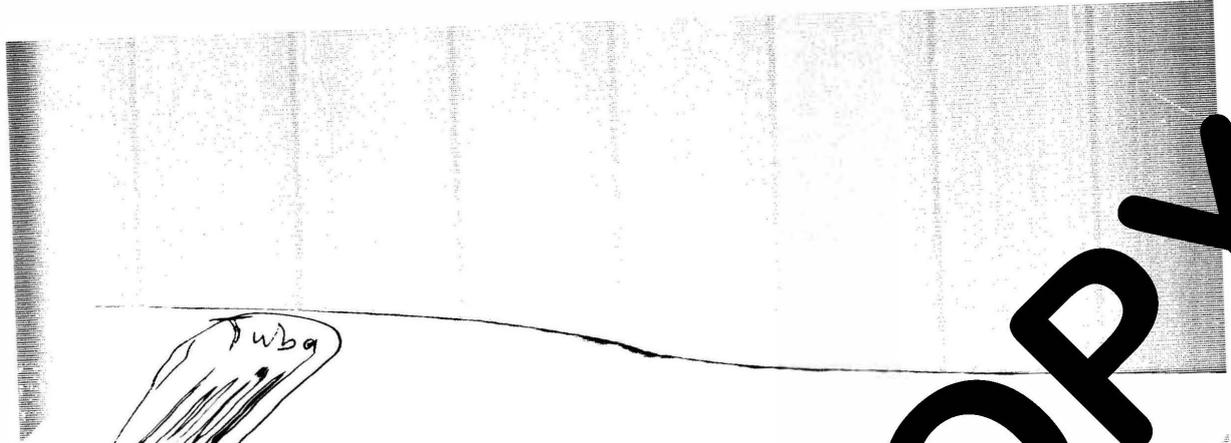
← Piccolo / Tub →

SAMPLE COPY

SAMPLE COPY



SAMPLE COPY



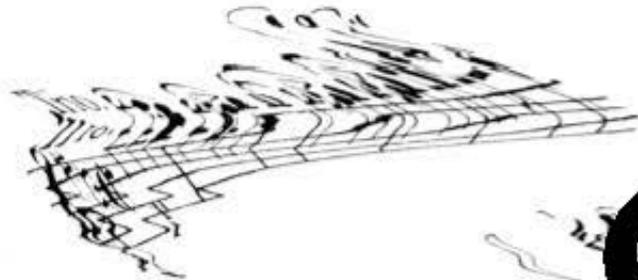
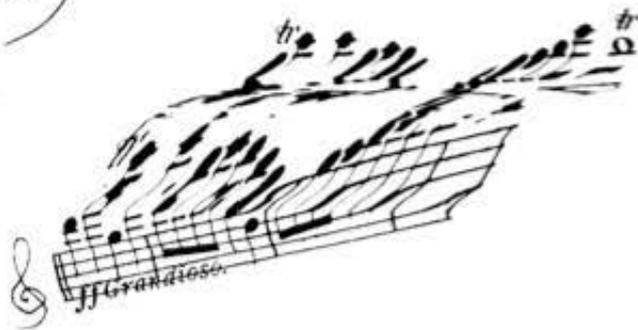
3

Piccolo / Tub

SAMPLE COPY

SAMPLE COPY

Picc.



Picc.

Picc.

Picc.

Blank page to facilitate left right spread for
pages 14 and 15

SAMPLE COPY

4

← Piccolo / Tub →

SAMPLE COPY

SAMPLE COPY



SAMPLE COPY

5

Piccolo / Tub

SAMPLE COPY

SAMPLE COPY

