**Tuba Concerto**

# Original version for brass band

This work was commissioned by the Besses o’ th’ Barn Band with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain. It was written for, and is dedicated to, John Fletcher, who gave the first performance in Middleton Civic Hall, near Manchester, on 24 April, 1976, with Besses o’ th’ Barn Band conducted by the composer. Another interesting feature about the première was that it was recorded by BBC Television for an Omnibus programme with André Previn as presenter. The concerto exists in three versions: with brass band (1976), orchestra (1978) and wind band (1984).

The concerto is in three movements, following the usual, quick-slow-quick pattern: *Allegro deciso*, *Lento e mesto*, *Allegro giocoso*. The first movement has a sonata form shell with two contrasting themes, the first one being rhythmic in character, the second lyrical. There is a reference made in passing to the Vaughan Williams Tuba Concerto, but this merges into the other material in the development section.

The second movement begins with a chorale, but after the entry of the tuba it leads to a cantabile theme, softly unfolded by the soloist. The opening chorale passage returns, this time briefly on muted brass, and leads to a middle section which is more chromatic in style and soon builds to a powerful climax, where the opening cantabile theme triumphantly returns. The music subsides, returning to the opening chorale and ending peacefully.

The finale is light and breezy in style, and is cast in rondo form. After a brief introduction the tuba announces the main rondo theme, which is dance-like and a little jaunty. There are two episodes: the first a broad sweeping tune, the second a slowish waltz and a little jazz-like. After a virtuoso cadenza reference is made to the very opening of the concerto before the work ends with a triumphal flourish.

The Tuba Concerto has established itself as one of the main works in the solo tuba repertoire. It has been performed and broadcast in over 40 countries all over the world. There are currently six commercial recordings of the concerto in its various versions.resolution in C major, pointed by a simple but expansive melody towards which the piece has been heading, and ending in a blaze of joyful colour.

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