

*Journal of the
American Musical
Instrument Society*

VOLUME V-VI • 1979-80



Copyright by the [American Musical Instrument Society](#).
Content may be used in accordance with the principles of fair
use under [Section 107 of the United States Copyright Act](#).
Content may not be reproduced for commercial purposes.

thetic translator as Cecilia Baumann. As explained on the flyleaf, she is not only an eminent linguist but also a horn player of surprising attainments.

In spite of its minor deficiencies, the book is magnificent in its portrayal of horns and horn playing. Demonstrating that the horn has been intertwined in a large number of society's cultural, recreational, and institutional activities, it views it as an instrument that has added a spice all its own to the flavor of European culture. I regret only that another one hundred pages were not added to complete the picture—only a few more horns such as the zink, serpent, bugle, and cornet remain to fulfill the promise of the title.

ROBERT E. ELIASON

Clifford Bevan. *The Tuba Family*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978. 303 pp. plus 26 black-and-white plates. \$27.50.

Clifford Bevan, who runs MGP, a small British publishing company that specializes in music for wind instruments, is a former orchestra manager and tuba player for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. His book, *The Tuba Family*, published by Charles Scribner's Sons as one of a number of books devoted to musical instruments and questions of performance practice (Anthony Baines, Elizabeth Cowling, Robert Donington, and Harvey Turnbull are among the authors), contains a great deal of valuable information which is not otherwise readily available in English to the average low brass player.

Essentially, the book is a vast potpourri of information, ranging from the usual speculation about the supposed sixteenth-century origins of the serpent to the use of the tuba in contemporary American and British jazz circles, from a select listing of music for tubas with the current publishers' addresses to the problems of making a tuba mute, and so on.

All of this is good. It is obvious that Mr. Bevan has combined the practical knowledge which he has gained as a tuba player with a substantive knowledge of the historical development of the instru-

mental family about which he writes, and one cannot quarrel with either the breadth or the depth of that knowledge.

One can quarrel, however, with what seems to be a lack of editorial direction and supervision—and that in a book which retails for \$27.50, a less than modest sum for a book of its size (and one limited to sixteen pages of black-and-white photographs!), even in these highly inflationary times. As a result, the book, which contains so much of potential interest to low brass players unfamiliar with the history of their instrument, unfortunately remains only the “vast potpourri” which was noted earlier. The editorial direction which could have welded the information into a tightly knit, well-structured work is somehow missing, and there is no real sense of direction. For instance, after only a few introductory paragraphs, the reader is suddenly faced with a table of names of valved bugle horns which extends for eleven pages; and, instead of having a feeling of continuity as one reads, one is left with the impression of having received information in a somewhat arbitrary, disjointed manner. Unless the book was to be considered only as a reference work, the services of a skilled editor should have been employed to tie things together in a more readable fashion.

Likewise, editorial assistance should also have been available to check on details both of style and of content. The book is full, for example, of one-sentence paragraphs, a journalistic style of writing usually reserved for newspaper use. The line drawings on page 39 and pages 56–57 are little less than caricatures. There is no apparent reason for the particular selection of collections of musical instruments which are included in Appendix E. Anyone interested enough in the book to take even a cursory glance at its contents does not need to be told that there “is a *mouthpiece* forming the junction between the player and the instrument” and that “at the wide end the tube expands into a flare or *bell*.” Headings within a chapter, such as “The Players” and “The Music,” promise much, but deliver little beyond mention of circumstances in England. No date for the invention of the ophicleide is given (only the patent year, 1821), nor is the reader told where “the ophicleide’s first appearance . . . in Spontini’s *Olympie*” took place (presumably at the Paris Opera, where the work premiered on 22 December 1819). And it is difficult to know why anyone

unfamiliar with ophicleides would be helped by being told that the instrument is "bassoon shape in form."

Reading this book, as well as most of the current English-language books about musical instruments, one is reminded of a point of view recently articulated by Nicholas Tawa in *The Sonneck Society Newsletter* (Summer 1979) that musicologists are perhaps a hundred years behind the times in relation to the work of their colleagues in the humanities, have unadventurous imaginations, leave human factors unconsidered, make social context secondary, and, most unforgivably, are boring. Indeed, *The Tuba Family* contains a wealth of information. It deals with an area of interest which has long needed attention, and it certainly is recommended by this reviewer for purchase by individuals and libraries interested in the history and use of brass instruments. But even as that is said, this reviewer doubts that reading the book will excite very many brass players to take an active interest in the history and development of their instrument. This is a criticism directed not at this work alone, but at almost all of the English books about instruments (excluding those better characterized as photo essays), all of which parade their rather dreary lists of well-worn information in pedantic fashion.

One would hope that those doing research in the history of musical instruments might follow, instead, the example provided in Robert Eliason's splendid monograph, *Graves & Company: Musical Instrument Makers* (Dearborn, Mich.: Henry Ford Museum, 1975), eventually providing the kind of background information which will allow music historians of the future to add flesh to the skeletal histories of musical instruments which currently grace our shelves.

ANDRÉ P. LARSON

Monique Brandily. *Instruments de musique et musiciens instrumentistes chez les Teda du Tibesti*. Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, Tervuren, Belgium. Annales, Série in-8°: Sciences humaines, no. 82. Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1974. xii, 260 pp.

Mme Brandily has produced an excellent study of the musical instruments, performance practices, and the integration of music in