

Steven Snowden

Take This Hammer

Tuba-Euphonium Quartet

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While contemplating the prospect of writing for tuba-euphonium quartet, I knew that I wanted to focus on two concepts. First, I wanted to explore the vast, but frequently overlooked, technical and musical capabilities of these instruments. Secondly, I wanted to address the working-class roles that these instruments often occupy and how this character trait could be brought to life in such an ensemble.

The “work song” has been a vital part of African culture for centuries. In many societies, these songs encouraged efficiency and quality of work, however, in the harsh conditions of American plantations these songs took on a different kind of importance. The steady unison rhythms kept any one person from being singled out and severely punished for working slower than the rest. This practice continued on into the middle of the 20th Century in the slave labor conditions of southern U.S. prisons. While many of these songs were used all throughout the workday, the traditional work song *Take This Hammer* was most often reserved for driving iron spikes during railroad construction.

The lyrics below come from a version of the song by Huddie “Leadbelly” Ledbetter, a prisoner at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in the 1930’s.

*Take this hammer and carry it to the captain
Take this hammer and carry it to the captain
Take this hammer and carry it to the captain
Tell him I’m gone.
Tell him I’m gone.*

*If he asks you “was I running”
If he asks you “was I running”
If he asks you “was I running”
Tell him I was flying.
Tell him I was flying.*

*If he asks you “was I laughing”
If he asks you “was I laughing”
If he asks you “was I laughing”
Tell him I was crying.
Tell him I was crying.*

Approximate Duration: 6:30

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Take This Hammer

for Tuba-Euphonium Quartet

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Steady and Mechanical $\text{♩} = 90$

Euphonium 1

Euphonium 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

mp

slap horn's body

sempre staccato

mp

5

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

sempre staccato

Take This Hammer

10

9

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 9 through 11. It features four staves: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. All staves are in bass clef. Measure 9 starts with a dynamic marking of *g* (pizzicato) and a circled measure number '10' above the staff. The Euphonium parts play eighth-note patterns, while the Tuba parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature has two flats.

12

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

mf

mf

mf

mf

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 12 through 14. It features the same four staves as the previous block. Measure 12 starts with a circled measure number '12'. The Euphonium parts play eighth-note patterns, and the Tuba parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) is present in the right margin of each staff. The key signature has two flats.

15

Musical score for measures 15-16, featuring four staves: Euph. 1, Euph. 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into two measures. Euph. 1 and Euph. 2 play a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, starting with a *p* dynamic and ending with a *f* dynamic. Tuba 1 plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, also starting with *p* and ending with *f*. Tuba 2 plays a bass line with eighth notes, starting with *p* and ending with *f*. The score includes dynamic markings *p* and *f* at the beginning and end of each staff.

with anticipation

17

(sempre staccato)

Musical score for measures 17-18, featuring four staves: Euph. 1, Euph. 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into two measures. Euph. 1 and Euph. 2 play a melodic line with eighth notes, starting with a *mf* dynamic and marked *(sempre staccato)*. Tuba 1 is silent in both measures. Tuba 2 plays a bass line with eighth notes, starting with a *mf* dynamic. The score includes dynamic markings *mf* and the instruction *(sempre staccato)* for the euphonium parts.

Take This Hammer

19

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

(sempre staccato)

mf

21

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

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23

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 23 and 24. It features four staves: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 23 shows Euph. 1 and 2 with eighth-note patterns, Tuba 1 with quarter notes, and Tuba 2 with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 24 continues these patterns with some dynamics like accents and slurs.

25

aggressive

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

ff

ff

ff

sempre staccato

ff

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 25 and 26, starting with the instruction 'aggressive'. The key signature has one flat, and the time signature is 3/4. Measure 25 features Euph. 1 and 2 with eighth-note patterns, Tuba 1 with eighth-note patterns, and Tuba 2 with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 26 continues these patterns with dynamics like *ff* and accents. Tuba 2 is marked *sempre staccato*.

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27

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

articulate as indicated

fff

29

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

cantabile

mf

cantabile

mf

articulate as indicated

mf

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32

Euph. 1

mf

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

35

Euph. 1

ff

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

mp

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38 *sempre staccato*

Euph. 1 *mp* *sempre staccato*

Euph. 2 *mp* *sempre staccato*

Tuba 1 *mp* *sempre staccato*

Tuba 2 *mp* *sempre staccato*

40 *articulate as indicated*

Euph. 1 *articulate as indicated* *f*

Euph. 2 *articulate as indicated* *f*

Tuba 1 *mp* *sempre staccato*

Tuba 2 *mp* *sempre staccato*

42 sinister

Musical score for measures 42-44. The score is written for four parts: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is in a minor mode, indicated by the word "sinister".

- Euph. 1:** Plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. Dynamic: *mf*.
- Euph. 2:** Rests in measures 42 and 43, then enters in measure 44 with a rhythmic pattern. Dynamic: *mf*.
- Tuba 1:** Rests in measures 42 and 43, then enters in measure 44 with a rhythmic pattern. Dynamic: *mf*. Includes the instruction "articulate as indicated".
- Tuba 2:** Rests throughout measures 42-44.

Musical score for measures 45-47. The score is written for four parts: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is in a minor mode, indicated by the word "sinister".

- Euph. 1:** Continues the rhythmic pattern from measure 42. Dynamic: *mf*.
- Euph. 2:** Continues the rhythmic pattern from measure 44. Dynamic: *mf*.
- Tuba 1:** Continues the rhythmic pattern from measure 44. Dynamic: *mf*.
- Tuba 2:** Plays a triplet pattern of eighth notes. Dynamic: *mf*. Includes the instruction "articulate as indicated".

Take This Hammer

48

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

ff

ff

ff

ff

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 48 and 49. It features four staves: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. All parts are in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The Euphonium parts play eighth-note patterns with accents. The Tuba parts play quarter notes, with the Tuba 2 part including triplet markings. The dynamic marking *ff* (fortissimo) is present at the end of each staff.

50

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

p

p

p

mf

pesante

ff

ff

ff

ff

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 50 and 51. It features the same four staves as the previous block. In measure 50, the Euphonium and Tuba parts play eighth-note patterns with accents, marked with a dynamic of *p* (piano). The Tuba 2 part starts with a rest. In measure 51, the music changes to a *pesante* (heavy) feel. The Euphonium and Tuba parts play quarter notes with triplet markings, marked with a dynamic of *ff* (fortissimo). The Tuba 2 part also plays quarter notes with triplet markings, marked with a dynamic of *ff*. A *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic is indicated below the Tuba 2 staff in measure 51.

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52 violent

Score for measures 52-53. The score is for four instruments: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 2/4. Measures 52 and 53 are marked with a box containing the number 52 and the word "violent".
Euph. 1 and Euph. 2: Play a melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes (B-flat, A, G) and a sextuplet of eighth notes (F, E, D, C, B-flat, A). The dynamic is *f*. The line continues with quarter notes and eighth notes, ending with a half note. The dynamic increases to *fff* in the final measure.
Tuba 1 and Tuba 2: Play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The dynamic is *fffz* in measure 52, *mf* in measure 53, and *ff* in the final measure.

54

Score for measures 54-55. The score is for four instruments: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 2/4. Measure 54 is marked with a box containing the number 54.
Euph. 1 and Euph. 2: Continue the melodic line from the previous page. The dynamic is *f*. The line continues with quarter notes and eighth notes, ending with a half note. The dynamic increases to *fff* in the final measure.
Tuba 1 and Tuba 2: Continue the rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The dynamic is *fffz* in measure 54, *mf* in measure 55, and *ff* in the final measure. In the final measure of measure 55, Tuba 1 has a "half valve" marking and Tuba 2 has a "slap horn's body" marking.

Take This Hammer

a steady groove

57

slap horn's body > pop m.p. with palm

mp

slap horn's body > pop m.p. with palm

mp

Tuba 1

p *p* *mf* *p* *mf*

Tuba 2

pop m.p. with palm

mp

61

Euph. 1

f *mf*

Euph. 2

f *mf*

natural

Tuba 1

pp *mp* *p* *mp*

Tuba 2

f *mf*

Take This Hammer

65

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

p *mp* *f*

growl

69

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

f *mp* *natural very short*

f *mp* *natural very short*

mf

mp

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72

Musical score for measures 72-74. The score is for four instruments: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 2/4. Measure 72 starts with a dynamic of *mf*. Measure 73 has a dynamic of *f* for Tuba 1 and *mf* for the other instruments. Measure 74 has a dynamic of *mf* for all instruments. Performance markings include accents (>), slurs, and articulation marks. Tuba 1 has a *growl* marking in measure 72 and a *natural* marking in measure 73.

Euph. 1 *mf*

Euph. 2 *mf*

Tuba 1 *f* *mf*

Tuba 2 *mf*

75

Musical score for measures 75-77. The score is for four instruments: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes to 5/4 starting in measure 75. Measure 75 has a dynamic of *ff*. Measure 76 has a dynamic of *ff*. Measure 77 has a dynamic of *ff* and includes a *growl pitch bend* marking for Tuba 1. Performance markings include accents (>), slurs, and articulation marks.

Euph. 1 *ff*

Euph. 2 *ff*

Tuba 1 *ff* *growl pitch bend*

Tuba 2 *ff*

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77 *cantabile*

Euph. 1 *f* *mf*

Euph. 2 *f* *mf*

Tuba 1 *natural*

Tuba 2 *f* *mf*

80

Euph. 1 *f*

Euph. 2 *f*

Tuba 1 *f*

Tuba 2 *f*

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83

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

p

86

sempre staccato

Euph. 1

fff *pp*

sempre staccato

Euph. 2

fff *pp*

sempre staccato

Tuba 1

fff *pp*

sempre staccato

Tuba 2

fff *pp*

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88

articulate as indicated

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

90

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

mf

f

mf

mp

mf

mp

mf

articulate as indicated

Take This Hammer

92 with anticipation

Musical score for measures 92-93. The score is for four instruments: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). Measures 92 and 93 are marked with a box containing the number 92 and the instruction "with anticipation". Euphonium 1 and 2 play a melodic line with slurs and accents, starting with a dynamic marking of *p*. Tuba 1 plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, starting in measure 93 with a dynamic marking of *p*. Tuba 2 plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *p*.

94

Musical score for measures 94-95. The score is for four instruments: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature changes from common time to 3/4 time at the start of measure 94. Euphonium 1 and 2 continue their melodic line with slurs and accents. Tuba 1 continues its rhythmic pattern with accents. Tuba 2 continues its eighth-note accompaniment. The dynamic marking *p* is maintained throughout.

96

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 96 and 97. It features four staves: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. Measures 96 and 97 are marked with a '96' in a box at the beginning of the first staff. The Euphonium parts play a melodic line with accents and slurs. The Tuba parts play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The score ends with a double bar line and a common time signature 'C'.

98 violent

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

f *fff*

fff *mf* *ff*

fff *mf* *ff*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 98, 99, and 100. It features four staves: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. Measure 98 is marked with a '98' in a box and the word 'violent'. The Euphonium parts play a melodic line with accents and slurs, starting with a dynamic marking of *f* and ending with *fff*. The Tuba parts play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, with dynamic markings of *fff*, *mf*, and *ff*. The score ends with a double bar line and a common time signature 'C'.

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100

Euph. 1
f ³ ₆ *fff* *ff*

Euph. 2
f ³ ₆ *fff* *ff*

Tuba 1
fff *mf* *ff*

Tuba 2
fff *mf* *ff*

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 100 and 101. It features four staves: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. Euphonium parts 1 and 2 play a melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes (marked *f*) and a sixteenth-note triplet (marked *f*), followed by a series of eighth notes with accents, and ending with a half note (marked *fff*) and a quarter note (marked *ff*). Tuba parts 1 and 2 play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, starting with a *fff* dynamic, moving to *mf* in the middle, and returning to *ff* at the end. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 3/4.

102

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 102 and 103. It features the same four staves as the previous block. Euphonium parts 1 and 2 play a melodic line of eighth notes with accents, starting with a *fff* dynamic and ending with a half note (marked *fff*). Tuba parts 1 and 2 play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes with accents, starting with a *fff* dynamic and ending with a half note (marked *fff*). The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 3/4.

104

Euph. 1
f *fff*

Euph. 2
f *fff*

Tuba 1
f *fff*

Tuba 2
f *fff*

106

menacing and grotesque

Euph. 1
fff *pp* *fff*

Euph. 2
fff *pp* *fff*

Tuba 1
fff *pp* *fff*

Tuba 2
fff *pp* *fff*

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108

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

mf *pp* *pp* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

110

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

pp *pp* *pp* *f* *f* *f*

Take This Hammer

113

Euph. 1 *ff*

Euph. 2 *ff*

Tuba 1 *ff*

Tuba 2 *ff*

sinister

115

Euph. 1 *mf*

Euph. 2

Tuba 1 *mf*

Tuba 2

Take This Hammer

118

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

mf

121

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

ff

123

p *ff* *pesante*

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

mf *ff*

125 violent

f *fff* *fff* *fff* *fff*

Euph. 1

Euph. 2

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

fff *mf* *ff* *fff* *fff*

Take This Hammer

127

Euph. 1
f ³ ₆ *fff*

Euph. 2
f ³ ₆ *fff*

Tuba 1
sfz *mf* *ff*

Tuba 2
sfz *mf* *ff*

129

Euph. 1
f ³ ₆ *fff*

Euph. 2
f ³ ₆ *fff*

Tuba 1
sfz *f* ₆ *fff*

Tuba 2
sfz *f* ³ *fff*

131

Musical score for measures 131-132. The score is for four parts: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. All parts are in bass clef. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents and slurs. The dynamic marking *ff* (fortissimo) is present in all parts.

Musical score for measures 133-134. The score is for four parts: Euphonium 1, Euphonium 2, Tuba 1, and Tuba 2. All parts are in bass clef. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes with accents and slurs. The dynamic markings *p* (piano) and *fff* (fortississimo) are used to indicate changes in volume. The number 133 is written above the first measure of this system.