

FALL 2024

# ITEA Journal

INCORPORATING  
NEGRO SPIRITUALS IN  
BRASS PEDAGOGY

2024 FALCONE  
FESTIVAL IN  
REVIEW



# CONTENTS

FALL 2024, VOLUME 52, NO. 1



## COLUMNS

- 8 Profit and Loss Statement
- 10 Statement of Financial Position
- 11 President's Corner  
*by Øystein Baadsvik*
- 13 New Hires  
*by Ethan Millington*
- 18 New Materials  
*by Tom Curry*
- 24 Composer's Corner:  
**Alex Shapiro**  
*by Michael Waddell*

## FEATURES

- 22 **Agism, Aging, and the Joy of Making Music**  
*By David A. Paulson*
- 28 **A Guide to Incorporating Negro Spirituals in Brass Pedagogy**  
*By Jasmine Pigott*
- 38 **Finding My True Identity**  
*By Aaron Rhodes*
- 44 **2024 Leonard Falcone International Euphonium and Tuba Festival**  
*By William Sutton*

## ON OUR COVER

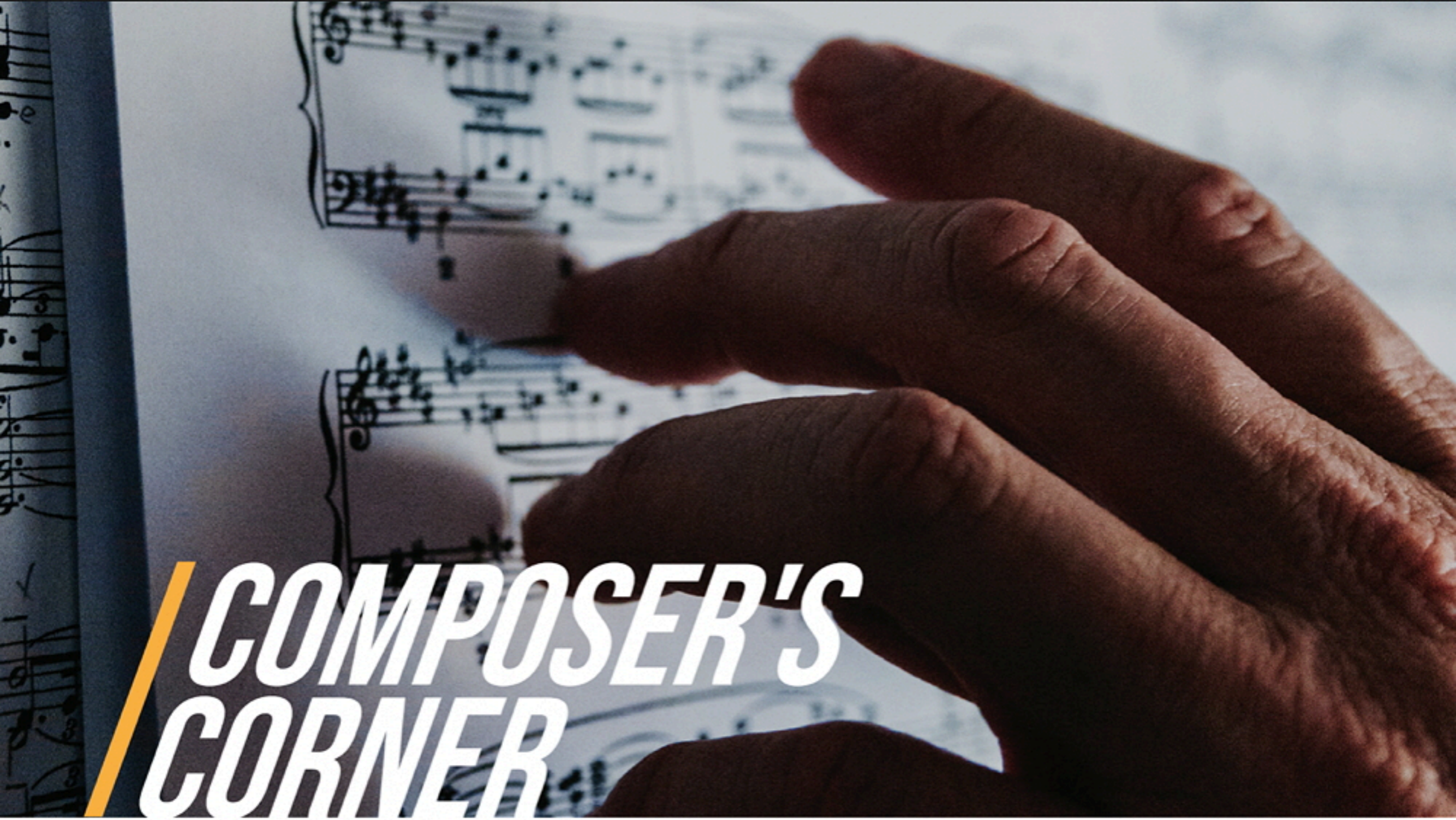
Beth Wiese, 2024 Leonard Falcone Festival and Competition Guest Artist.

## CONNECT WITH US

-  [ITEAonline.org](https://iteaonline.org)
-  [facebook.com/theITEA](https://facebook.com/theITEA)
-  [twitter.com/theITEA](https://twitter.com/theITEA)



ITEA JOURNAL ISSN 1549-5426. COPYRIGHT © 2024  
BY THE INTERNATIONAL TUBA EUPHONIUM ASSOCIATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.  
ITEA JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY  
THE INTERNATIONAL TUBA EUPHONIUM ASSOCIATION (ITEA), P.O. Box 242, New London, CT 06320, USA.  
MEMBERSHIPS@ITEAONLINE.ORG.



# COMPOSER'S CORNER

BY MICHAEL WADDELL

**ALEX SHAPIRO** (b. 1962) is a prolific composer of acoustic and electroacoustic concert music. Her electroacoustic music for wind band has helped transform the modern soundscape with works such as *Tight Squeeze* (2013), *Off the Edge* (2019), and *Suspended* (2021). In the tuba-euphonium realm, we know her for works such as *Music for Two Big Instruments* (2000) for tuba and piano, *Of Song and Touch* (2011) for euphonium and piano, and *Depth Sounding* (2023) for tuba-euphonium choir and audio track. One of her newest works, *Chronicle* (2024) for solo tuba and audio track, was recently premiered by Gretchen Renshaw at the 2024 International Women's Brass Conference in Mito City, Japan.

In learning about how music impacted her life as a child, Shapiro discussed the lack of band programs in her school:

I grew up in New York City, in Manhattan. This was in the 1960s and 70s, and there was no wind band in my school. Wind band, as far as I know, was not a thing at all in New York at the time... I had never even heard of the concept.

As a future composer of wind band music, growing up without that influence may seem foreign, but she was still exposed to a plethora of great music from an early age. She shared of her parents love and inspiration through music:

I was really lucky that I grew up in the middle of New York City as the only child of two parents who adored music.

My mother was an amateur flutist, but not a performing musician. They both loved music, and constantly played the record player... everything from Bach to Bartok. They didn't like contemporary music, although I give them credit for the Bartok string quartets... and they weren't into any kind of jazz or pop, or anything other than Classical music. But I loved everything.

I had a dumb little portable plastic record player in my room with small built-in speakers. It was the most tinny, crummy-sounding thing you can imagine. When my father and I would go out to bookstores and record stores, he'd buy me any album that I wanted. Simon and Garfunkel, Jim Croce, Bill Evans, the Jackson 5, even the Partridge Family! I would bring these albums back to my bedroom, shut the door, sit on the floor, and listen to everything.

Growing up in a house with Mahler and Bruckner symphonies constantly playing was amazing... and at the time I kind of took it for granted. I figured, well, everybody grows up like this, and then of course I later realized, no, not everybody grows up like this. Not only did my father really love music, but even though he was an attorney and social activist and not a musician, he was a walking music encyclopedia. He'd hear something and within a few measures, he would tell you not only which movement of which symphony it was, but who the conductor was, which orchestra it was, and which orchestra and conductor did it at a better tempo.



**Composer Alex Shapiro**

He had such a profound appreciation. He would buy the miniature scores (I have them all now), and having briefly studied the violin, he knew just enough about reading music to follow along in the score and sometimes make pencil marks... those scores are precious to me. Sometimes I sit down and go through a Mahler symphony, and see his little notations, and the dog ears where he bookmarked certain areas he especially loved. How wonderful.

This inspiration led Shapiro to begin composing at the early age of nine, and to ask her parents for formal piano lessons.

Early on, I think I was just lucky that I was born with an ear. I didn't get that from my father, but I got my love of music from him. He couldn't carry a tune in a paper sack... but he was passionate about music.

When I was nine, I started putting notes together, and then when I was ten, I asked my parents for piano lessons because it dawned on me that they'd probably be helpful for composing. We had a crappy baby grand in the corner of our apartment's living room. It was really bad — what I call A PSO: A piano-shaped object!

I asked about what the music she was writing at age nine was like, and Shapiro explained:

It was pretty much two to four staves, melodic, with a bass line and a little bit of counterpoint. I think the most sophisticated I got was also when I was nine. I was in recorder class. We didn't have a band, but we had this. Oh, my poor teacher: a bunch of fourth graders blowing away on soprano recorders! They were probably plastic — what a horrible sound! Of course, me being geeky me, I loved recorder and excelled at it. I think I actually upgraded myself to a wooden Hohner recorder for \$6!

Enamored with the experience of learning the recorder in school, she decided to arrange a piece for her class.

There was this TV show on PBS called Masterpiece Theater with Alistair Cooke. I don't even know what the show was about other than a very stodgy British guy sitting in a chair by a fireplace, introducing some classics... but the theme song was a piece by Mouret [*Fanfare-Rondeau from Suite of Symphonies for brass, strings, and timpani by Jean-Joseph Mouret*]. I was totally enchanted by that piece, and I decided I was going to make a recorder arrangement for my class... I think I was nine or ten. It was the fourth grade.

And I did it. I made a page worth... I just did the A section... and I took down some of the counterpoint, the melody, the bass line... I did a four-part arrangement. I brought it in to my music teacher, who was a really sweet lady. She took one look at the arrangement, and another look at me, and said, "Oh, I'm so sorry Alex. This is too hard. The kids can't do it." She handed it back to me, saying, "We're not going to play this." It was my first rejection, and I guess it prepared me very well for a life in music! But instead of feeling dejected, I just went home, and I kept writing.

Not halted by her first rejection, Shapiro would go on to begin studying composition formally at the Mannes College of Music's summer program at age fifteen. This would later lead to studies at Juilliard's Pre-College program, and ultimately, Manhattan School of Music. I asked about when she realized that she wanted to pursue a career in music:

When I was 15 in 1977, I was taking classes at the Mannes College of Music during the summer, feeling kind of "professional"! I had a Samsonite shoulder bag for my music, and I felt like a gigger in New York. I walked down the streets and looked like I was on a Broadway show working in the pit, or doing sessions or something... I loved that. New York just had a real vibe in the seventies, which was also marked by too many rhinestones and a plethora of fake leatherette.

I remember my teacher, Leo Edwards, my composition teacher. He was really kind, gentle, and supportive. He offered some casual comments to me that were so encouraging that they made an impression, and they made me feel like I should keep doing this. Even though what I was writing at the time wasn't the least bit brilliant, he was really positive. That's all it takes with a young person: to give them a sense of self and a sense of worth. I kept going forward, and the next two summers of '78 and '79 I studied at the Aspen Music Festival and School. I think I was their youngest composer at 16 and 17, and the experience was life-changing in so many ways.

Shapiro shared when she was first exposed to electronic music and how that influenced the trajectory of her composition.

I was always the kid who could look at a stereo system (back then we had all these components and cables) and understand how things worked. I handled anything for my parents that had to do with electricity, wiring, and hooking things up. I was just that geeky kid.

I saw in the course catalog for Mannes College that summer, that they had an introduction to electronic music class. I signed up for it, and it was me and four or five other students. This was 1977. If you go into the way-back machine of tech, you'll see that we had these fairly small modular units that you would build and connect together. You'd have an oscillator, and a filter, and a tone generator... I don't even think we were controlling anything from any kind of keyboard. We certainly didn't have MIDI yet. It was very limited, and we definitely weren't making albums with this stuff — I actually never liked the concert electronic music that I heard. I never thought it was particularly musically compelling, but I loved the fun of making sound with machines, so I continued. The next two summers at Aspen, my composition teacher Mike Czajkowski had borrowed Morton Subotnick's Buchla, and I got to work a little on that.

**Before Shapiro became a well-known composer of contemporary concert music, she had a substantial career in commercial music.**

I left [*studying at Manhattan School of Music*] before graduating because I got a gig scoring a low-budget documentary in Los Angeles, and I knew that my career was probably going to end up in commercial music. In New York, none of my composition teachers worked with electronics — John Corigliano, Ursula Mamlok... but I always managed to have somebody in my world who did, like MSM's Elias Tanenbaum with whom I studied electronic music. There was another man at Manhattan School of Music, Roy Eaton, who came in once a week to teach a commercial music class. He still lives in New York, and we've remained friends all these years. Roy was the head of a major advertising company's music department at the time: Benton & Bowles, and responsible for many of their most popular jingles. Think back to the days seen in [*the TV series*] *Mad Men*. What made it even more remarkable is Roy is a Black man, and how many Black men had those powerful ad agency positions back then? When I saw that Manhattan [*School of Music*] was offering this class, I had the good sense to take it.

Roy brought me to some of his sessions. That was beyond cool. There I am, 19 years old and wide-eyed, sitting in the big studios in New York City where they're recording jingles with the top players in town... and I would get to sit in the booth and watch the whole process. Sometimes Roy would even ask me my opinion about something. I remember one time they were doing a jingle, and it had to sound like the Go-Go's. He looked at me and he said, "Is that guitar sound tracking for you with what the Go-Go's would sound like?" I was so happy (and suggested a different amp setting). I was really lucky. Again, this shows the power of teachers to open up worlds to you.

Roy encouraged me to look into a commercial music career, and I agreed. At the time, I wasn't interested in pursuing concert music because I didn't see a place for me in that world. The way I sounded, I pulled from everything. In addition to a wide range of classical music genres, I also loved pop music, commercial music, film music, and all that. I figured, well, I think I'm enough of a chameleon that I could do this... and I did. I went out to L.A., and I did that for 15 years. No concert music at all, just

commercial music. I worked as an engineer on the side as well as composing, and it was mostly all low-budget stuff. I also had a corporate client, Price Waterhouse, the big accounting firm at the time. I scored all their corporate videos. That was a cush job, and it was really fun... but most of my other jobs that kept me going were "under the radar" stuff. Low-budget features, low-budget documentaries, network TV pilots that never got picked up into the series... but you still got paid. You write a great theme and it's like, oh, darn, I really liked that! I was hoping it would take off. But naw, nobody's going to hear it again after that one pilot episode.

**After 15 years in the commercial music scene, Shapiro decided to make a big shift back into writing concert music.**

Fast forward those 15 years, when I was in my late thirties. I had scored a feature film with all live musicians on a union contract. I had a chamber orchestra, and I was so happy because as you know, in commercial music, if you don't have a decent budget, it's all synths and samples. I was very adept at that, but I would much prefer to work with live players. Suddenly I got a gig where I didn't have to use any samples and synths at all! I had the best players in town, and it was just a light bulb moment because I realized, wow, this is actually what I want to be doing: writing for musicians.

In those 15 years, things in the concert music world had really changed and broadened stylistically. All of a sudden by the late 1990s, somebody no one would have paid attention to in 1980 now had a lot of opportunities. There was a low point around 1997 when three productions in a row I had been hired to score each lost their financing. There were a few months when I wasn't working, which was really scary. I thought, well, I'm going to use this time as an unexpected sabbatical to dig into my concert music and other stuff, just for fun. I started pulling old pieces up and playing through them, and I reconnected to why I became a composer in the first place. So I just decided, you know what? I'm going to change my career.

**Shortly after this career shift began came an opportunity to write a piece for solo tuba and piano. Recounting the experience of this project with Norman Pearson, she shared:**

First of all, I love the instrument [*tuba & euphonium*], so that makes it really easy. Maybe it's because I've got a low voice, but I prefer lower instruments in general. So that gives my muses a head start right there.

I composed "Music for Two Big Instruments" [*for tuba and piano*], back in 2000, long before band music was even a twinkle in my eye. It came about from an absolutely serendipitous connection with Norm Pearson's wife, pianist Cynthia Bauhof-Williams. She had performed a clarinet, violin, and piano trio of mine a number of times, and really liked it.

She suggested to Norm, "I think we should commission Alex to write us a duet for tuba and piano." The next thing I know, I'm at their house and Norm, his instrument in his lap, is sitting three feet in front of me as we discuss possibilities for the new piece. It was the first time I'd been up close and personal with a beautiful tuba —

with any tuba actually... much less with Norm Pearson... and like Cindy, he's such a lovely person!

I asked Norm, "Show me what you like to do; show me what's particularly idiomatic in your world." He played a number of examples, and then at one point, he looked at me and said, "Alex, all you need to know is that the tuba can play anything the trumpet can play." That set me free. It's the simplest thing, and it's a simple truth... yet many composers are sometimes still stuck with thinking that low brass instruments are... "slower."

I went home and I realized that I wanted to write something snappy that would also have a lyrical middle section. The key thing for me was "lyrical." I love the high end of the instrument, and I knew that in the hands of a great player I could really make it soar and get audiences to understand the instrument differently, because most people, when they think of a tuba, they think "Oom-Pah-Pah." I wanted to make it my mission, as my brilliant friend Bruce Broughton has, to showcase the full ability of the instrument.

After writing and delivering the piece, it was recorded by Alan Baer, which helped catapult Shapiro's music into relevance with the tuba-euphonium community.

Alan [Baer] and Norm happened to be talking very shortly after I delivered the piece to Norm and Cindy. Alan told Norm he was planning his debut album and was one piece short. And Norm said he should check out my "Music for Two Big Instruments." Boom. All of a sudden Alan got in touch with me and asked me to send him the music, and I immediately did so. The next thing you know, he's in L.A. recording some of the pieces, and I'm at the session with him, and it was magic. Then he put my piece first on his album. That really was such a gift... serendipity like that, that ends up putting you on the map with a group of instruments that just months before you didn't have any connection with at all. It was just magic.

I asked what she hopes people experience when they hear her music:

A sense of freedom and a sense of limitless boundaries. I think that if listening to music like mine — which, like my latest tuba work "Chronicle" more often than not pulls from different influences within a single piece — if that can open up some doors expressively for people and help them realize that we don't have to put up walls, or adhere to genres, or categorizations, that's wonderful. It's just music. Either it works or it doesn't. Either it speaks to our condition, or it doesn't. I just hope that people go on the journey and be open-minded... I think we need more of that in this world.

You can learn more about Alex Shapiro and her music at [alexshapiro.org](http://alexshapiro.org).



## Boyer College of Music and Dance

EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

 Temple University

Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts



[boyer.temple.edu](http://boyer.temple.edu)