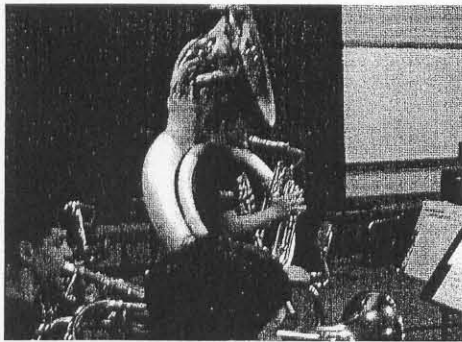


## Technology and the Tuba

Linda Bean

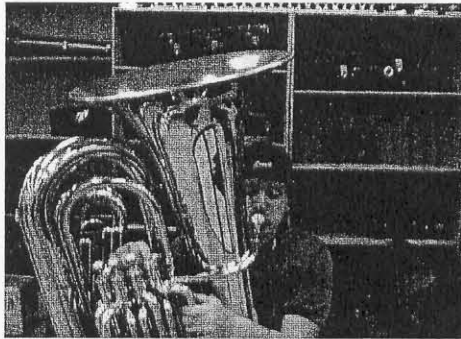
When first given the news that our middle school was initiating a 1 to 1 laptop initiative my excitement turned immediately to the question of "how will this help me teach band to 7th & 8th graders?" Even with all of the new technology of the 20th century learning to play a tuba or any other non-electronic instrument requires the human



aspect of physically holding the instrument and learning to produce sound by manipulating the physical responses of the body. This process has remained virtually unchanged for

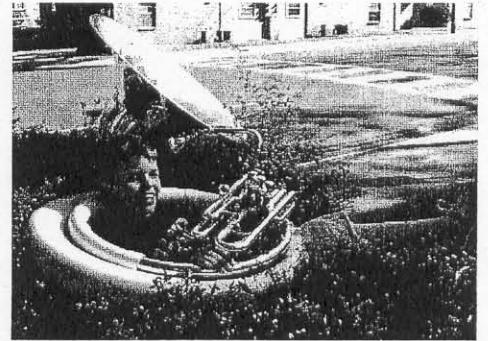
decades. However, the search for ways to utilize the technology yielded an incredible arsenal of tools just waiting to help train those physical responses needed to develop the necessary skills for training a tuba player or any other instrumentalist.

Our first successful venture into technology included the development of an electronic grade book in a program named D2L. Through this program we are able to provide parents and students with access to news, events, lesson plans, meetings, etc... It was in this area that I discovered the ability to post recordings of songs the band was practicing in class. With a few clicks I was able to provide the students with access to a professional recording of the music being covered in their lesson plans. The students are able to access this page on their laptop at school or home and listen to the posted recordings. In addition, the program allows for students to send assignments to their teachers via an electronic drop box that works much like email. Since band assignments are largely audio it first appeared this might not benefit our area except for written work needed to teach theory and terminology. However, some further investigating uncovered that students with physical handicaps were able to send audio recordings of their assignments. This discovery led to microphones being distributed to all band students and drop boxes were



set up. Our school technology specialist trained the students on how to record and submit audio drop box lessons. The students are given playing assignments on a weekly basis.

They have a pre-determined window in which they may submit a recording of their lesson into the drop box for grading. The program not only allows for grading but also provides the instructor with a comment area for giving the student feedback about the performance. While the recording does not replace live performance it is certainly adequate for assessing rhythmic and note accuracy to include articulations. In addition, this technology allows the students to send their best performance which streamlines the time factor involved.



Technology and the tuba as well as all of the other band instruments has proved for us to be successful in refining and improving the ability to assess the individual performances of band students that are often times in classes of 60 to 100 or more. Through this new technology we are better able to provide our band students with the individual instruction necessary to develop the intricate skills required to become a successful musician.

Technology and the tuba as well as all of the other band instruments has proved for us to be successful in refining and improving the ability to assess the individual performances of band students that are often times in classes of 60 to 100 or more. Through this new technology we are better able to provide our band students with the individual instruction necessary to develop the intricate skills required to become a successful musician.

---

*Linda Bean is in her 18th year as band director at Cullman Middle School in Cullman, Alabama. A graduate of Fairview High School, Linda attended Wallace State College, where she received her Associates of Arts degree. She received a Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Montevallo and a Master of Music Education degree from the University of North Alabama. Linda is married to Robert Bean and has two children, Robert and Marie. Her professional affiliations include MENC, AEA and Who's Who of American High School Teachers.*