

**Meditations on the Writings of Vasily Kandinsky**  
for solo tuba, winds and percussion

Daniel Bukvich

**Red**

“...the sonority of fanfares with contributions from the tuba -- a persistent, intrusive, powerful tone.”

**Violet**

“...the buzz and hum of double reeds -- oboes, shawms, english horns.”

**Vermilion**

“...sounds like the tuba with interjections of powerful drum beats.”

**Blue**

“...light blue -- flutes...deep blue -- bass tones of the organ with french horns, trombones, and all kinds of tubas.”

**Purple**

“pure tones of little bells...called ‘raspberry-colored sounds’ in Russian.”

*Meditations on the Writings of Vasily Kandinsky* for solo tuba, winds and percussion was composed in January 1996 for tuba soloist Jeffrey Funderburk. The writings used in *Meditations* are quotes that refer to Kandinsky's aural perception of visual color; for example: "Vermillion sounds like the tuba with interjections of powerful drum beats." Each of the five colors (or movements, in musical terms) in *Meditations* attempts to capture the spirit of Kandinsky's writing and painting, not only musically but visually as well, for the score and notation are as important as the sound they represent.

All players in the ensemble (including the tuba soloist) read copies of the same score and in many instances the same line or staff of music. Harmonies result because of the different keys that the instruments are built to play in. The American jazz composer Duke Ellington experimented with this concept briefly in the early 1950s. The score also employs color notation, canon, table music (reading music "upside-down"), reading music backwards, and the concepts of random downbeats and ad libitum repeats first used by Terry Riley in the famous minimalistic piece *In C* (1963).

# Meditations on the Writings of Vasily Kandinsky

for solo tuba, winds and percussion

Daniel Bukvich

## Red

"...the sonority of fanfares with contributions from the tuba -- a persistent, intrusive, powerful tone."

The musical score is written in common time (C) with a tempo marking of quarter note = 88. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into several systems:

- System 1:** Includes a red triangle pointing up. A box contains the time signature and tempo:  $C [♩ = 88]$ . A box for the trumpets lists: "FOUR TRUMPETS: B $\flat$ , D, E $\flat$ , A PICCOLLO HORNS IN F". The drums and timpani part is marked "DRUMS AND TIMPANI" with a dynamic of *sf*.
- System 2:** Continues the trumpet and drum parts.
- System 3:** Continues the trumpet and drum parts.
- System 4:** Introduces the "TUBA SOLO" part with a dynamic of *sf* and the "TIMPANI" part with a dynamic of *mp*. The tuba solo features a melodic line with a *tr* (trill) and a *ph* (pizzicato) marking.
- System 5:** Continues the trumpet, tuba solo, and tuba parts.
- System 6:** Continues the trumpet, tuba solo, and tuba parts, ending with a large bracketed structure on the right side.

**4/4** [♩ = 66]

C PICCOLO, EP CLARINET,  
C FLUTES, OBOE & ALTO  
FLUTE, EP ALTO CLAR. OR SAX

HORNS IN F, ALTO TROMBONE (ALTO CLEF),  
TENOR TROMBONE (TENOR CLEF),  
SOLO TUBA (ALWAY BASS CLEF)

SHARE  
DRUM

C FLUTES, OBOE,  
A CLARINET,  
ENGLISH HORN

SOLO TUBA

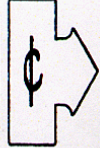
mp

ADD EP ALTO

TUBA

EP ALTO OUT

TUBA

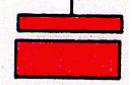


**♩ = 88**

FOUR TRUMPETS:  
B♭, D, E♭, A PIZZOLLO;  
F HORNS

TUBA

DRUMS AND TIMPANI



# Violet

"...the buzz and hum of double reeds -- oboes, shawms, english horns."

The score is divided into four numbered sections:

- Section 1:** Includes **HARMONIC SINGING** (mp), **FINGER CYMBALS** (p), **WOODEN WIND CHIMES** (pp), and a large **BOWED CYMBALS** graphic.
- Section 2:** Features **BOWED CYMBALS** (p) and **WOODEN WIND CHIMES** (pp).
- Section 3:** Includes **OBUE, ENGLISH HORN, BASSOON - TENOR CLEF, BASSOON - BASS CLEF** and **RUBATO (CONDUCTED)**. A box notes: **REFLECTION REPEAT PLAY LINE LEFT-TO-RIGHT, THEN ... RIGHT-TO-LEFT**.
- Section 4:** Labeled **TUBA** and **AD LIB**, featuring six staves of music with red markings.

Arrows and lines connect the percussion and woodwind parts to the tuba section, indicating rhythmic or dynamic influences.

1/4 [J=100] 5.

FINGER CYMBALS  
TAMBOURINE

mp

OBOE, ENGLISH HORN  
BASSOON-TENOR CLAR.  
BASSOON-BASS CLAR. ALWAYS TOGETHER

SAXOPHONES: B♭ SOP.,  
E♭ ALTO, B♭ TENOR,  
E♭ BARI., TUBA S&D

mp

BANDSMA JOHN BEARS

m5

6.

DOUBLE REEDS

HALF-STEP CLUSTER

OBIE! "P" SPACE "P"  
ENGLISH HORN SOUNDING "E"  
BASSOON "P"  
BASSOON: "P"

TUBA

pp

FINGER CYMBALS ENDS THE COLOR

HARMONIC SINGING ON TUBA CUT-OFF

pp

TAMBOURINE

v m10

ss p

# Vermilion

"...sounds like the tuba with interjections of powerful drum beats."



♩ [♩=100]

THREE-VOICE CANON  
(READ TUBA LINE)  
TUBA 1

MELDIC TOM-TOMS 2

TUBA 1 *mf* (mp)

TIMPANI 3

ALL OTHER DRUMS *sf*

(mp) *sf*

*f*

*mf*

*mf*

*mp*

*mp*

*p*

D.C.

CODA

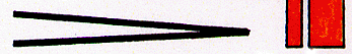
TOM-TOMS + TIMPANI  
IN UNISON WITH  
OTHER DRUMS

TUBA

TIMPANI *sf*

*sf* STRIKE "A" ONLY

REPEAT AD LIB AND  
FADE TO NOTHING



# Blue

"...light blue -- flutes...deep blue -- bass tones of the organ with french horns, trombones, and all kinds of tubas."

$\frac{6}{8}$   $\text{♩} = 44$

FLUTE SOLO

A single musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The music is in 6/8 time and starts with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with some slurs. A diamond-shaped measure marker with the number 9 is at the end of the staff.

THREE-VOICE CANON:  
THREE FLUTES

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps. It features a three-voice canon. The first voice starts at measure 1, the second at measure 2, and the third at measure 3. The dynamic is mezzo-piano (mp). A diamond-shaped measure marker with the number 15 is at the end of the staff.

EACH NINE-MEASURE LINE  
LABELED "THREE-VOICE CANON"  
IS ACTUALLY FIFTEEN (15)  
MEASURES LONG. VOICES 1  
AND 2 SUSTAIN THE TONE  
AT THE END OF EACH LINE  
UNTIL VOICE 3 ARRIVES

THREE-VOICE CANON:  
THREE FLUTES

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps, featuring a three-voice canon. The dynamic is mezzo-forte (mf). A diamond-shaped measure marker with the number 15 is at the end of the staff.

FOUR HORNS IN F

THREE VOICE CANON:  
THREE B $\flat$  CLARINETS

A musical staff in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps, featuring a three-voice canon. The dynamic is mezzo-piano (mp). A diamond-shaped measure marker with the number 15 is at the end of the staff.

ALL BASS CLEF BRASS  
INSTRUMENTS, INCLUDING  
SOLO TUBA

THREE-VOICE CANON:  
 E<sup>b</sup> INSTRUMENTS -  $\text{#}$  VOICE 1: E<sup>b</sup> CLARINET E<sup>b</sup> BARTONE SAXOPHONE; VOICE 2: 1<sup>ST</sup> E<sup>b</sup> ALTO SAX; VOICE 3: 2<sup>ND</sup> E<sup>b</sup> ALTO SAX  
 BASS CLEF INSTRUMENTS -  $\text{b}$  VOICE 1: SOLO TUBA, EUPHONIUM, TRBN. 1; VOICE 2: BASSOONS, TRBN. 2; VOICE 3: ENSEMBLE TUBAS, TROMBONE 3

1 2 3 15

*mf*

15  
*f* TIMPANI

THREE-VOICE CANON:  
 VOICE 1: FLUTE 1 <sup>8va</sup>, C TRUMPET, OBOE 1; VOICE 2: FLUTE 2 <sup>8va</sup>, C TRUMPET; VOICE 3: FLUTE 3 <sup>8va</sup>, C TRUMPET, OBOE 2

1 2 3 15

*f*

FOUR HORNS IN F

ALL BASS CLEF INSTRUMENTS INCLUDING SOLO TUBA

FOUR HORNS IN F

*mf*

ALL BASS CLEF INST. + SOLO

9

# Purple

"pure tones of little bells...called 'raspberry-colored sounds' in Russian."

**1.** PIANO (BOTH HANDS 8<sup>va</sup>)

ALL KINDS OF BELLS AND TRIANGLES

**2.** RUBATO... AFTER 10 TO 15 SECONDS OF PIANO AND BELLS...

TUBA

BELLS OUT

PIANO

LARGE TOM-TOM

GONG

BASS DRUM

8 BASSO

CONTINUE UNTIL 4/2

**3.** SOLD TUBA + MEN'S VOICES -  $\text{♩}$  - GRADUALLY CRESC. AND ADD ALL BASS CLEF INSTRUMENTS ... EVENTUALLY READ AS IF  $\text{♩}$

ADD E<sup>b</sup> INSTRUMENTS WITH BASS CLEF INSTRUMENTS -  $\text{♩}$  - EVENTUALLY READ AS IF  $\text{♩}$

REFLECTION REPEAT

REFLECTION REPEAT

PLAY THESE 2 LINES LEFT-TO-RIGHT, THEN RIGHT-TO LEFT

THIS ENTRANCE (4) OCCURS 32 MEASURES AFTER TUBA + MEN'S VOICES (3)

... ENTER AFTER TUBA + MEN'S VOICES - broad. cresc. ... AND WOMEN'S VOICES: (same as 1 step)

INSTRUMENTS AND WOMEN'S VOICES



C FLUTES, OBOES, C TRUMPETS  
 HORNS IN F  
 BASS CLEF INSTRUMENTS NOT PLAYING 3.

5.

PIANO/PERCUSSION DESTINATO AND 3, 4. CONTINUE UNTIL 4

GONG ROLL CLIES END OF THIS SECTION:

4/2 [♩=72]

STEMS-UP: FLUTES (8va), OBOES, E♭ CLAR., E♭ ALTO SAXOPHONES, B♭ BASS CLAR., ORCHESTRA BELLS/VIBES/PIANO  
 STEMS-DOWN: B♭ CLARINETTS (SOME 8va), B♭ SOPRANO SAXOPHONE  
 SLEIGHBELLS ON HANDLE:

SUS. CIM. ROLL (WITH ALL WHOLE NOTES AND DOUBLE-WHOLE NOTES)

E♭ TRUMPET, B♭ TRUMPETS,  
 HORNS IN F, B♭ TENOR SAX,  
 BARITONE SAXOPHONE,  
 E♭ CONTRA CLARINET,  
 TROMBONE (TENOR CLEF),  
 TROMBONE (BASS CLEF),  
 EUPHONIUM, TUBAS

TUBA

BONB. / BASS DRUM

TRUMPETS IN B♭, D, E♭, A PICC.  
HORNS IN F

TUBA

