

TUBADS – THE MYTH



Ingres

Aix en Provence Muses

One of the most often asked questions is: Where did the Tubads come from? A short explanation was given in 'BAD NEWS, a publication celebrating the 5th anniversary of the Tubads in 1987, but a better explanation is due.

The god Zeus had been very disappointed with the way bass had been going in music. (Zeus was thought by many to be dead or just a myth, but that is entirely untrue.) Still, with bassoons and cellos and such, Zeus was not satisfied.

Zeus asked the Olympian forger Hepheastus to develop the ultimate bass instrument, to be known as the tuba. Zeus was pleased with Hepheastus's work, took a lightning bolt and sent the tuba down to Earth during the early 19th century. Zeus was appeased, and until the advent of marching bands, enjoyed the rich, harmonious sounds of the tuba. But with the advent of the marching bands came a new problem. How do you march a tuba?



Hepheastus with Aphrodite



Band director John Philip Sousa prayed and prayed to Zeus that something might be done. Zeus ordered Hepheastus to redesign the tuba and sent the new instrument down to the waiting Sousa. Apollo took it in his chariot because things get messy when man meets lightning.

Sousa was glad to receive the marching tuba and he used it for many marches and performances, popularizing the marching tuba. He dubbed this miraculous creation the "Sousaphone", and the gods thought this very audacious, so they toyed around with him for their own musical needs, and then they killed him. (No one said the gods were nice guys.)

In the mid 20th century, Zeus was once again displeased with how sousaphones and bass in general were going. Marching bands were popping up all over the world, and especially in America, but the average level of sousaphone players seemed to be substandard. Zeus knew some thing must be done.

Zeus created a 50 year plan the results of which are only now shining through. A plan to take sousaphone music to the edge. A plan to create the world's greatest sousaphone players.



Persephone, the goddess of sonic disruption, was chosen to help Zeus create these new gods. She brought to Zeus the souls of the greatest warriors of the past, and together they reincarnated these souls in bodies of rock, iron, and fire. Persephone is also the goddess of the underworld, death, and rebirth, wife of Hades, and that is why Tubads eat their dead. Anyone want to be dead?

The whole of Olympus was rejoicing. Artemis blessed their warrior spirit. Apollo and the Muses gave each one superior musical and artistic abilities. Heracles gave them superior strength. Dionysis bestowed upon them a great love of the sensual pleasures that life has to offer and great sexual stamina. Each god presented gifts to these modern-day warriors creating traits unique to each, much like the Muses.

By the 1960s, all one thousand were ready to be unleashed on an awaiting world, and namely to the University of Houston, where Zeus wished his power to be first felt. Though, as is often the case with the gods, Zeus's wife Hera wasn't too happy with his dalliances with Persephone, and set about to foil his grand plan.



The Muses Clio, Euterpe and Thalia (detail), François Le Sueur, 1612-1655



The Three Fates. Sodoma, 1477-1549

She conspired to cause each of the tuba warrior gods to be born human and live as a mortal, until he or she reaches college. So each of Zeus's one thousand were given parents and distributed across North America.

With this unforeseen difficulty, Zeus consulted with the Fates to make sure each one could be directed toward their destiny at the University of Houston.

Hera also decreed that each god be born at a different time, so Zeus would never have the full one thousand play at once, but Zeus was undaunted, and proceeded in moving the first borns into band programs across the United States. Eventually a small group completed their journey in the early 1980s and arrived at the University of Houston.



Here these new gods, not fully aware of their divine right, met and began performing with the Cougar Band. They replaced the tuba section that had disappeared the year before and they enhanced the band's sound with their power and a lot of "edge" just as Zeus likes it.

They donned their hats and glasses which were inspired by the ones the gods themselves wear (I kid you not!) and went out into the awaiting Third Ward.

The Third Ward residents came out to see what in the world was playing Dragnet so Loud, Low, and Edge-y, and upon seeing the gods among men, proceeded to shout,

"These guys are just TOO BAD!"

And thus a legend was born.

(This story is not meant to foster a belief in the Olympian Gods, just to tell a simple story, but some people get touchy about such things so we put in one of these dumb disclaimers. If you do believe in these these classic gods we welcome your intepretations and comments on our little tale.)

To give credit where credit is due, I did not paint the artwork shown. In order of appearance the artists are: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867) "Jupiter and Thetis" Boucher "The Forges of Vulcan" Photographer unknown - Picture of John Philip Sousa Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) "Proserpine" (1874) oil on canvas as seen on the set of Saturday Night Live Eustache Le Sueur (1617-1655) "The Muses Clio, Euterpe, and Thalia (detail)" Sodoma (1477-1549) "The Three Fates" Boris Vallejo - untitled

