

BBb TUBA LOW REGISTER FINGERINGS

by Donald C. Little

THE FOURTH VALVE

The fourth valve of the tuba is usually equivalent to the first and third combination, and it is usually tuned slightly lower than the first and third combination. The fourth valve is normally used to replace the somewhat sharp first and third valve combination; and the second and fourth valve combination is always used to replace the very sharp first, second and third valve combination.

A musical staff in bass clef with a common time signature. Below the staff are four valve combinations represented by circles with lines above them: 4, 4, 24, and 24.

LOW REGISTER FINGERINGS WITH THE FOURTH VALVE

The fourth valve will allow the production of the chromatic half tones between the low E and the fundamental Bb with the exception of the Cb (B) that is one-half step above the fundamental Bb. This tone is not playable on four-valve BBb tubas unless a “privileged” tone is used.

A musical staff in bass clef with a common time signature. Below the staff are fingerings for notes F, E, Eb(D#), D, Db(C#), C, Cb(B), and Bb. The fingerings are: F (4), E (24), Eb(D#) (124 or 14), D (234), Db(C#) (134), C (1234), Cb(B) (not playable), and Bb (0).

LOW REGISTER FINGERINGS WITHOUT THE FOURTH VALVE

Most tubas are characterized by an unusual acoustical phenomena that allows the psuedo-production of many of the lower tones that normally require the fourth valve or the fourth valve in combination with other valves. These tones are generally referred to as false tones or privileged tones. However, the tone quality is noticeably unclear and unfocused on tones that are produced in this manner.

A musical staff in bass clef with a common time signature. Below the staff are fingerings for notes F, E, Eb(D#), D, Db(C#), C, Cb(B), and Bb without the fourth valve. The fingerings are: F (13), E (123), Eb(D#) (0), D (2), Db(C#) (1), C (12), Cb(B) (23), and Bb (0).

BBb TUBA PEDAL TONES

These pedal tones are possible on most BBb tubas. Lower tones are possible depending on the instrument and the ability of the player.

A musical staff in bass clef with a common time signature (C). Below the staff are seven pedal tones, each represented by a whole note with a flat sign and a specific fingering indicated by numbers 0-23. The notes are: Bb (fingering 0), Bb (fingering 2), Bb (fingering 1), Bb (fingering 12), Bb (fingering 23), Bb (fingering 13(4)), and Bb (fingering 123(24)).

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