**CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

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**Central United Methodist Church Presents:**

**MERRY TUBACHRISTMAS®, Detroit**

**3 p.m. Sunday December 15, 2013**

**General Public: free admission**

When you think of tubas if you just think of the “oompah pah pah” background sound, think again as tubas fill the chancel in Central’s sanctuary and play a full concert of Christmas carols and other holiday tunes arranged so that tubas play every part, including the melody!!! Celebrate the Christmas season and tuba virtuosity. Merry TubaChristma**ses®** ,which are held all over the world. The first one was held in New York City at Rockfeller Center’s ice rink in 1974. This the 40th anniversary of TubaChristmas**®**worldwide (1974-2013), and this season will mark the fourth annual Merry TubaChristmas**®** in Detroit. It has now become an annual Detroit tradition!

Created by the late Harvey Phillips, MERRY TUBACHRISTMAS 2013 concerts will be presented in over 250 cities throughout the United States and in several foreign countries. Phillips was inspired to create TUBACHRISTMAS as an annual event honoring his teacher, the late great tubist William J. Bell (born Christmas Day, 1902). Every Christmas season, tuba and euphonium players of all ages, from specific geographic areas, gather to pay respect - through William J. Bell - to all the great artists/teachers who represent their heritage. Every TUBACHRISTMAS performance features traditional Christmas carols especially arranged (for the *first* TUBACHRISTMAS, December 22, 1974 on “The Rink at Rockefeller

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Center”) by American composer Alec Wilder (died Christmas Eve, 1980). Through Wilder,

TUBACHRISTMAS concerts pay grateful tribute to composers who have embraced these noble instruments with solo and ensemble compositions. Depending on the population of any given geographic area, TUBACHRISTMAS ensembles may attract multiples of 100 participants aged 8 toover 90 years! The warm, rich organ-like sound of the tuba-euphonium choir has won the ears and hearts of every audience. It is no wonder that TUBACHRISTMAShas become an established Christmas tradition in cities throughout the world. TUBACHRISTMAS is a property and trademark of the HARVEY PHILLIPS FOUNDATION in Bloomington, IN. Central United Methodist Church is presenting this concert under an agreement with the Phillips Foundation to be the local official sponsor of this annual event.

Our guest conductor for Tuba Christmas**®**, Detroit will again be G. R. Davis, professor of tuba at Tennessee State University, instructor of tuba for the pre-college program at Vanderbilt University, and Director of Nashville, Tennessee’s MERRY TUBACHRISTMAS.**®**Davis studied tuba under Harvey Phillips and has his graduate assistant did much of the legwork to establish the first several Merry TubaChristmas**®** programs. He is the person responsible for the design and the idea for the colorful TubaChristmas**®** hats and scarves worn by many participating tuba players.

The Detroit Merry TubaChristmas concert, like all such concerts around the world, is offered free of charge. Parking is free as well—patrons should tell the parking lot attendant they are coming for Merry TubaChristmas**®**. Audience seating is first come, first serve.

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An offering will be taken to support the many ministries of Central, including the NOAH project which serves Detroit’s homeless population, feeding them, helping them find jobs and housing, providing medical care, counseling, haircuts, and opportunities to get involved in the visual and performing arts.

We encourage tuba players of all ages and abilities to perform in this concert. If you know a tuba player or band director, who, of course, will have tuba players, please let them know and spread the word. Tuba players pay $10 each to participate which goes to the Phillips foundation and includes a “Tuba Christmas 2012” button. They also must purchase the book of specially arranged Tuba Christmas music for $20 (it can be used every year). It’s available on-line and will be on sale that day. Tuba Christmas stocking caps, scarves, headbands, and recordings. will also be available for purchase. Registration for tuba players is at 1 p.m with rehearsal is commencing at 1:30 p.m. For more information, photos, and video clips visit our website at <http://tubachristmasdetroit.weebly.com> or our facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/tubachristmasdetroit>. You may also want to visit the Harev Philllips Foundation webpage to learn about the international scope of the program at [www.tubachristmas.com](http://www.tubachristmas.com).

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Attachement: Excerpts from an New York Times article on the passing of Harvey Phillips in 2010.

A book about Phillips has also been published which offers more information:

Phillips, Harvey. 2012. ***Mr. Tuba*** (an autobiography). Bloomington, IN: Indian University Press. (published posthumously).

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**Harvey Phillips and Tuba Christmas**

The tradition began in 1974, the brainchild of Harvey Phillips, a musician called the Heifetz of the tuba. In his time he was the instrument’s chief evangelist, the inspirer of a vast solo repertory, a mentor to generations of players and, more simply, Mr. Tuba.

Most tuba players agree that if their unwieldy instrument has shed any of the bad associations that have clung to it —good for little more than the “oom” in the oom-pah-pah — it is largely thanks to Mr. Phillips’s efforts. He waged a lifelong campaign to improve the tuba’s image. Mr. Phillips died on October 20, 2010, at his home, Tubaranch, in Bloomington, Ind. He was 80 and had Parkinson’s disease.

Like many towering exponents of a musical instrument, Mr. Phillips left a legacy of 200 solo and chamber pieces, students and students of students. But even more, he bequeathed an entire culture of tuba-ism: an industry of TubaChristmases (252 cities last year) and tuba mini-festivals, mainly at universities, called Octubafests.

Harvey Phillips was born on Dec. 2, 1929 in an Aurora, Mo. After graduating, Mr. Phillips took a summer job playing tuba with the King Bros. Circus, attended the University of Missouri and then joined the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, the pinnacle of circus bands. On a circus trip to New York, he met William Bell, the tuba player of the New York Philharmonic. Mr. Bell soon arranged for him to study at the Juilliard School and become his pupil. Mr. Phillips spent two years in the United States Army Field Band but returned to New York playing regularly with the New York City Opera and New York City Ballet orchestras. In 1954 he helped found the New York Brass Quintet. The combination (two trumpets, French horn, trombone and tuba) was not common at that time and became a boon for tuba players. Mr. Phillips also played jazz, performing in clubs and recital halls. In 1975 he played five recitals at Carnegie Recital Hall in nine days.

Writing in The New York Times in 1980, the music critic Peter G. Davis said first-time listeners to Mr. Phillips “could scarcely fail to be impressed, and probably not a little astonished, by the instrument’s versatility and tonal variety, its ability to spin a soft and sweetly lyrical melodic line, to dance lightly and agilely over its entire bass range, and to bellow forth with dramatic power when the occasion demands.”

In 1971 Mr. Phillips joined the faculty of Indiana University. He retired in 1994.

In his tireless efforts to raise the tuba’s profile as well as to honor Mr. Bell, his teacher, Mr. Phillips — perhaps touched by the showmanship of his circus past — decided to gather tuba players for a special holiday concert in Rockefeller Center. (Mr. Bell was born on Christmas Day, 1902.)

He called an official there with the suggestion. “The phone went silent,” he later recounted. “So I gave the man some unlisted telephone numbers of friends of mine.” They included Stokowski, Leonard Bernstein, André Kostelanetz and Morton Gould. “He called me back in about an hour and said, ‘I’ve spoken with your friends, and you can have anything you want.’ ” The Tuba Christmas extravaganzas took off. Volunteers hold them around the country under the auspices of the Harvey Phillips Foundation. Sousaphones and euphoniums are also welcome. At TubaChristmas, the musicians play “Silent Night” in honor of their fellows who have died, Mrs. Phillips said. This year when tuba players gather again at the skating rink, and at Tuba Christmas concerts everywhere, the carol will be played in Mr. Phillips’s memory.

This is a partial reprint of ***New York Times*** article of October 24, 2010.

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