

Four Dances from Læsø

Recorded after Madvig Vilsen (## 1-3) and Hartvig Mortensen (#4)

Arranged by Klaus Bjerre 2001

for very flexible versions of the American musical entity called a polka band. Extendable to even the larger entity called the British brass band. Encompassing several hybrid permutations including such outlaw instruments as saxophones.

Aside from music this arranger is very interested in the topics circling around geography and sociology. A few years ago a Google.com search on the topic of the Danish island Læsø yielded an unexpected result: the treasure of characteristic Læsø folk dances transcribed from original solo violin performances. Some of which can be heard via

www.folkmusic.dk/laesoe/

This arranger has performed Danish folk music on as diverse instruments as recorders, French horn, baritone, tenor and bass trombones, plus bowed string bass. Which together with fairly intensive acquaintanceships with medieval, renaissance, baroque (please spell that J. S. Bach), Viennan classic, pre-serial Schönberg, Thad Jones, and even funk music genres of course mark these settings. Also some theories of mathematical rhythm distribution have been employed. So you are not encountering the real stuff, but an interpreted version. Which however has not been dismissed by a recent listening by a torchbearer of the original tradition.

One of the laws of real life musical performance is, that one never can muster the ensemble one originally planned for. So these settings are born flexible. There are 5 core parts:

Bb trumpet 1 (cornet, soprano saxophone, clarinet). Additional substitution part for Eb cornet.

Bb trumpet 2 (cornet, soprano saxophone, clarinet). Additional substitution part for Eb Alto sax or Eb Solo alto horn.

Trombone 1 in bass clef concert or Bb treble clef. Additional substitution parts for horns in F or Eb.

Euphonium 1 in bass clef concert or Bb treble clef. Allowing for substitution by tenor saxophone or bass clarinet.

Tuba in bass clef concert or BBb treble clef. Additional substitution part for stringed double bass.

There are 5 more parts in the score. Optional, but with a strong contribution to the fullness of the ensemble:

Piccolo flute (standard soprano flute or violin). Additional substitution part for Eb clarinet. This part should be the first choice of the woodwind additions.

Bb clarinet 1. Additional substitution part for standard soprano flute or violin.

Bb clarinet 2. Additional substitution part for standard soprano flute or violin.

Trombone 2 in bass clef concert or Bb treble clef. Additional substitution parts for horns in F or Eb.

Euphonium 2 in bass clef concert or Bb treble clef. Allowing for substitution by tenor saxophone or bass clarinet.

The original concept of this arranger is, that these dances should be performed as an *attaca* suite. But performers should feel free to do as many or few repeats as wanted and to split the dances as the actual situation calls for.

This arrangement is intended for use, wherever happy musicians come together. It might also be used in educational contexts.

You can perform this arrangement free of charge, but a postcard or an e-mail reporting on its use would be nice.

It should not be kept a secret, that two persons have contributed an invaluable inspiration to this arrangement:

My very good friend, tubaplaying Chuck Guzis, and his flutist (whatever size of flutes) wife, Mimi. Both of Eugene, Oregon. Both members of the Junction City Polka Band. Plus numerous other ensembles. Both volunteering as instrumental teachers in a band programme within the public school system of their hometown.

I am equally grateful to Mr. Esben Wolf, manager of the

<http://www.folkmusic.dk/frames.htm>

site. With an admirable absence of fuzz he promptly cleared the copyright issues, which have held me back from publicising these arrangements for well over a year. Because I didn't dare to ask until yesterday.

A version for the standard brass quintet is in the planning.

A few final disclaimers:

If you are expecting music for a 1.0.1 performance level, you are up for a major disappointment.

Publicising a modular arrangement comprising some 50 pages of music with text in a foreign tongue is a very daring project. Please mail me about proofreading goofs of whatever linguistic or musical nature.

The Danish folksy dance music tradition is extremely rich. However our equivalent of the Library of Congress has transferred the copyrights of the core repertory to an association, which has issued two collections of arrangements for two violins, clarinet in A, and string bass. Quite adequate, quite widespread, very limiting.

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