The Magic Flute No. 15

Sarastro's 2nd aria: In diesen heil'gen Hallen

Composed in 1791 by W. A. Mozart 1756-1791 KV620
Arranged by Klaus Bjerre 2004 for 10-piece brass ensemble (Bb piccolo trumpet, 3 Bb trumpets, F horn, 3 trombones, solo bass trombone, contrabass tuba) with substitute parts for brass instruments in Bb and Eb as found in the British brass band.

In the old days of bands playing concerts in the parks on Sunday afternoons much of the repertoire was taken from popular operas. This tradition to some degree has gone out of fashion, which is a great pity, as the vocal nature of opera music suits brass instruments well. One of the well-known arias from Mozart's last opera, The Magic Flute, is Sarastro's second aria "In diesen heil'gen Hallen". The range suits the bass trombone, but many brass players find the key of E major uncomfortable, so it has been transposed down a minor second to Eb major in this version for 10-piece brass ensemble.

Aside from the standard 10-piece set-up this arrangement might find interest among 10-piece brass ensembles made up of players coming out of the British brass band tradition. Hence the addition of substitution parts making the piccolo trumpet part playable by an Eb cornet, the F horn part by an Eb horn, plus the trombone and tuba parts by players only reading treble clef parts. As the brass band usually only employs 3 trombones, the substitute parts suggest, that a euphonium plays the solo. The bass trombone then should play the 3rd trombone part.

This touches a structural issue with this aria. During the baroque era bass arias often duplicated the bass line of the orchestra. In this aria Mozart does not let the soloist represent the bass function until bar #20 and then from there most of the way through the end of the solo. The true bass line mostly is represented by the celli and bassi, in this arrangement by the 3rd trombone and the tuba. To avoid lack of clarity of the voicing the 3rd trombone has been given dynamic markings one grade below the rest of the accompaniment.

The original octave of all thematic events has been kept except for the first phrase of the epilogue, which Mozart gives to the violin thereby creating contrast to the following flute phrase. A Bb trumpet could play the first phrase, but not in the dynamics desired, so it has been taken one octave down to the horn. The lower parts have been revised accordingly.

The distribution of musical functions between the 3 Bb trumpets parts is an offspring of the wish by this arranger, that the 3rd trumpet part is played on a flugelhorn whenever possible.

This edition can be used free of charge, but reports on readings and performances would be nice.

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