

Sinfonia

from “Die sieben Worte Jesu Christi am Kreuz”

(Dresden 1645)

Composed by Heinrich Schütz (1585 - 1672)

Arranged by Klaus Bjerre (2004) for 10-piece brass ensemble with an optional solo duet of A piccolo trumpet and D trumpet *or* Bb flugelhorn and F horn *or* Bb flugelhorn and Eb horn.

This is the Sinfonia of a cantata. The original setting was for SATTB viols. Here these viol parts have been set for a 10-piece brass ensemble. A performance of just the *tutti* parts available for Bb trumpets/flugelhorns (cornets), F and Eb horn, bass clef concert and treble clef Bb tenor trombones, bass clef bass trombone, and tuba in bass clef concert or treble clef in Eb and BBb will be in full concordance with the original intentions of the composer.

However this arranger cannot avoid hearing improvisations and embellishments when working with music of this era. The solution has been to add a number of optional solo duets adding embellishments to the original 5-part composition.

These embellishments have been provided explicitly for these alternative pairs of soloists:

Piccolo trumpet in A with trumpet in D

Bb flugelhorn with horn in F

Bb flugelhorn with horn in Eb

From that the inventive reader immediately will extrapolate these additional permutations:

Piccolo trumpet in Bb with trumpet in high F

Piccolo trumpet in Bb with trumpet/cornet in Eb

Bb flugelhorn with a horn player preferring to read from a D part

The optional guitar continuo part can be played from the notes in the staff or from the chord symbols. This part clearly is intended for an electronically amplified classical guitar. This arranger is very fond of his Ovation Viper flat bowl sample of this instrument category, but other nylon-stringed makes and versions also are widely available. Other choices of continuo instruments like harp, piano, or keyboard will not lead to judicial steps taken by this editor. At least as long as the continuo function is done with taste. That is: the continuo player should fulfil a rhythmic and harmonic function. The approach of linear improvising, favoured by some continuo players, is already represented here by the soloing parts. The written out guitar part reflects the playing modus of this arranger.

2 brass soloists leave 8 players to cover the original 5 *tutti* parts. The bass trombone and the tuba playing the bass part in octaves is a fixed factor given by tradition. This leaves 6 players to cover the remaining 4 parts. Several considerations may govern the distribution of players on these parts, among these: individual weights of sound and wishes to spare the embouchures of certain players strained in other items of an actual concert programming. Hence this edition strives to provide flexibility by offering these playing score options:

The trumpeters may cover the 1st and 2nd *tutti* parts on trumpets or flugel horns (cornets)

The horn may cover the 2nd or 3rd *tutti* parts

The tenor trombones may cover the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th *tutti* parts

The soloists are given common playing scores to promote the coordination of their embellishments.

The bass trombone, the tuba, and the continuo guitar also are given a common playing score to support the sense of the basic harmonic structure

Balance is a major consideration in the performance of music originally intended for the very homogeneous, yet very colourful, ensemble of viols. In accordance with the notation practice of this renaissance era music no dynamics or articulations are given. The performers should not misjudge this as an opportunity to play dull run-of-the-mill notes. The contrapuntal texture calls for a great mutual respect. Especially up-beat notes, wherever they may be placed in the bar, should be played detached, and an emphasis should be given to the following longer main notes. If this piece is performed *tutti*-only, the playing style should be less legato-tenuto, than when soloists are added. Dynamics should rather tend towards the softer shadings.

All phrase indications are by this editor.

Aside from a slight redistribution of functions in the last bars of the soloists' parts this version is fully compatible with all the other versions offered. Only not with the upcoming version for low brasses, which will be in a different key.

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

Klaus Bjerre
DK-4220 Korsør
Danmark

k-bone@mail.dk
