

German traditional
Es ritten drei Reiter

Arranged for brass quintet by Klaus Bjerre (2003 & 2017).

This traditional is part of the huge German cultural heritage and can be found in diverse variations from various regions of the large German speaking area. Even in my country it, with a new text, has found usage as part of a party medley celebrating birthdays and the like.

The tune can be played on natural horn and on natural trumpet, which is reflected in this arrangement. The horn is treated as natural horn in F, except in the stopped passage. The trumpets are treated like natural trumpets in low F, even if a natural trumpet of this low pitch hardly ever was used in orchestral contexts. The only instruments treated diatonically are the trombone and the tuba.

It has been the intention to keep this setting close to the style of the tune. Hence it has been the intention not to employ musical elements, which could not have been found in orchestral scores around the end of the era of the natural horn. A quote from a composer loving the natural horn has been hidden in the accompaniment.

However there has been experimented a bit with the voicing of the parts. In one of the 3 verses the tuba plays the lead above the trombone. For some bars the horn even goes below both of these instruments. These octave indications shall be followed exactly, if the harmonic structure shall work. Especially the tuba part should not be transposed down an octave, nor should it be swapped with the trombone part. (This arranger knows common tuba crimes, as he has committed most of them himself).

The horn part is written, as it is intended to sound. However there are a very few cue notes added to indicate acceptable compromises in a stressed performance situation.

The 2017 revision fixes a voicing problem between horn and tuba in the second last bar. It also adds 2 notes in the last bar of each of the trumpet parts making the ending similar to that of the version for 10-piece brass. I have been asked about these notes that some perceive like a transition to a next verse that isn't there. Which is very much the point, as the very depressive German text tells about the parting of lovers and of kids from their parents by war and by death. These few notes form the musical bridge to nowhere. The tempo has been indicated more precisely. Transposed parts allowing for players reading brass band notation have been added. A few graphic parameters also have been changed.

This arrangement may be used free of charge, but reports on readings and performances would be nice. Scans of concert programmes would be most welcome as would performance videos.

Korsør - January 26th - 2017

Klaus Smedegaard Bjerre

yorkmasterbbb@yahoo.com