

Sat-Maras Polska

Swedish folk dance

Arranged for quartets or 4-part ensembles of low instruments by Klaus Bjerre (2003).

This Swedish traditional was introduced to me, when an American tuba-friend asked about its rhythm and tonality. I have played a good deal of Swedish traditional dance music, but aside from being more or less able to tell what is authentic and what is not, I am no strong expert on the genre.

The word “Polska” may be confusing as it means Polish in Polish, but so it does in Swedish, here with a reference to a dance type. Traditionally there has been some exchange of labour forces across the Baltic Sea, so there is nothing surprising in finding a Swedish dance based on a Polish rhythm.

The tonality is D minor with the surprising twist, that the sub-dominant is G major.

Having listened to the tune a few times in the context of the discussion with my friend mentioned above my ears started forming an arrangement. And as there is no overflow of music presenting quartets of low instruments, I wrote this present arrangement with those in mind. The melody rhythm, the pulse, and the tonality all have been kept within the original framework. However some of the voicings hardly stay within the practises of Swedish folk musicians. And the demands on the players are not at a 1.0.1 level, if a performance shall be successful.

This edition comprises four fully compatible two-pages, that is “butterfly”, playing scores with no single parts provided:

Bass clef instruments in an all *loco* notation as used by brasses like euphoniums and tubas. Constellations can be 2 euphoniums, bass tuba, and contrabass tuba, or 3 euphoniums and contrabass tuba.

Bass clef instruments with the lowest part written 1 octave up as used by contrabasses and contrabassoons. Quartets of 3 celli/1 contrabass and of 3 bassoons/1 contrabassoon would be obvious.

Low Bb instruments reading treble clef with the 3 upper parts being in Bb tenor notation and the lowest part being in BBb contrabass notation. Obvious users would be euphoniums, tenor saxophone, bass clarinets, BBb tuba, and contrabass clarinet.

Low Eb instruments reading treble clef with the upper part being in Eb alto notation, the two middle parts being in Eb baritone/bass notation, and the lowest part being in EEb contrabass notation. Obvious users would be Eb horn, Eb alto clarinet, Eb tubas, Eb contralto clarinets, Eb baritone saxophones, plus the admittedly rare birds: the EEb octo-contralto clarinet and the EEb contrabass saxophone. But then this arranger has been marked by his membership of the Contrabass mailing list.

As long as good balance is maintained any mix of the instruments mentioned above here should be workable. Even exotica like the Sarrusophones and Rothophones would act well in this low-low melting pot.

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