

Sat-Maras Polska

Swedish folk dance

Arranged for quartets or 4-part ensembles of SATGb (or B) recorders by Klaus Bjerre (2004).

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 my ears started forming an arrangement. And as there is no overflow of music presenting quartets of low instruments, I wrote the original 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 voicing hardly stays within the practices of Swedish folk musicians. And the demands on the players are not at a 1.0.1 level, if a performance shall be successful.

As a response to an asking I made a transposed version for horn quartet. During that work it became clear to me, that this piece might be changed into a recorder quartet, albeit a quite challenging one.

The original setting was made for instruments with much wider ranges than recorders (euphoniums and tubas) allowing the tune to wander between the three upper parts. In the recorder version this wandering had to be limited. Still the range of the recorder version parts is wider than found in most settings for recorder quartet. If a recorder ensemble performs this piece, some of the accompanying passages may call for a thinning of the number of players.

The original bass-line is within reach of the great-bass, but will some times descend below the range of the far more common bass recorder. As a not entirely happy solution cue notes accessible by the bass recorder have been entered into the great-bass recorder part. Then more players can perform this wonderful dance.

This arrangement can be used free of charge, but a postcard or an e-mail would be nice. If this arrangement should happen to appear on a printed concert programme, then a scan would be very much appreciated.

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