

# Turmchoral

## “Christ ist erstanden”

From the “Liederbuch” issued by Peter Schöffler (Mainz 1513)

edited by Klaus Bjerre (2003) for

compatible 4 part ensembles composed of diverse instruments reading from several transpositions and clefs.

This “Turmchoral” for 4 wind instruments is inscribed into the German tradition of playing religious music from church and townhall towers. The range of the ensemble parts suggests that the original ensemble consisted of ATTB trombones.

This piece is built around a then well known German chorale, which is carried, in a freely treated form, by the third part. This setting has a somewhat special trait to it, insofar as the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> parts at some points carry the true bass notes. This implies, that the quite common practise of adding contrabass instruments (and of bass line players randomly transposing parts an octave down) cannot be applied in this piece. Especially when the bass line strays into a relatively high range, it is most important, that it is performed in the exact written octave, as it carries tenor or alto functions at these points.

This editor is a strong believer in the musical and educational values of playing directly from a score. Hence this piece is presented in 14 fully compatible scores, 9 in the original octave, 5 one octave up.

The 9 scores in the original octave are:

Trombone quartet in ATTB clefs

Brass quartet: Bb trumpet, F horn, trombone (BC), and tuba

Horn quartet: 4 horns in F

Tuba quartet with all parts in bass clef

String quartet: violin, 2 violas, and cello in SAAB clefs

Clarinet quartet: Bb soprano, Eb alto, Bb bass, and Eb contralto

Saxophone quartet: 3 Bb tenors, and Eb baritone (if an alto is chosen for the 1st part, then it can be played from the Eb alto horn version)

Two brass band type quartets: Bb cornet, Eb alto horn, Bb baritone, and Bb euphonium respectively Eb alto horn, Bb baritone, Eb tuba, and BBb tuba (which should not distract from the fact, that the trombones, baritone, euphoniums, and Eb tubas in some ensemble permutations are best played from the saxophone score).

This implies, that

the 1<sup>st</sup> part can be found in alto clef and bass clef, plus in treble clef concert, Bb soprano, F, Eb alto, and Bb tenor

the 2<sup>nd</sup> part can be found in alto clef, tenor clef, and bass clef, plus in treble clef F, Eb alto, and Bb tenor

the 3<sup>rd</sup> part can be found in alto clef, tenor clef, and bass clef, plus in treble clef F, Eb alto, Bb tenor, and Eb basso

the 4<sup>th</sup> part can be found in bass clef concert and F, plus in treble clef Bb tenor, Eb basso, and BBBb contra-basso

The 5 scores in the “super”-octave are:

A brass band type quartet of Eb cornet, Bb cornet, Bb cornet/flugelhorn, and Eb alto horn

Two flute choir quartets consisting of SSSB or SAAB flutes respectively

A quartet of S/A, T, T, and B/GB recorders

A quartet of 4 Bb standard soprano clarinets

Any imaginable well balanced 4 parts ensembles in either the original or the super octaves are fully acceptable within the original tradition. This somewhat special setting does not allow for the addition of single lower octave parts to a super octave ensemble. Either 4 well balanced parts in the original octave or none.

However super octave parts can be added to a well-balanced ensemble in the original octave following this sequence:

First the 3<sup>rd</sup> part, which is a quasi *cantus firmus* (this implies, that one trumpet in a brass quintet can read from the 3<sup>rd</sup> tenor saxophone line)

Then the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> parts should be added as a balanced pair

Lastly the 4<sup>th</sup> part, which should not outbalance its fellows in the original octave

Why so much ado about a quite short piece of music?

With its syncopations it represents its era-typical crossover field between church and dance music very well. This edition opens up for the representation of sub-ensembles within larger ensembles in soundwise contrasted repeats.

This edition allows for an audience-effective presentation of smaller ensembles seated/standing all over the hall (or church) playing successively and finally joining into a full tutti.

And then the options of employing Eb and piccolo Bb trumpets, Eb clarinets, piccolos, or sopranino/soprano recorders in further super and super-super octave permutations will not be discussed here. This setting calls for ensemble directors with imaginative ears. But then they are those I want to address.

This edition, where all articulations and rehearsal numbers are by the editor, can be used free of charge, but postcards or mails reporting on performances would be nice.

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