

Lascia ch'io pianga

Almirena's aria from the opera Rinaldo

Composed by G. F. Handel 1711

Arranged by Klaus Smedegaard Bjerre 2011

This aria has been within my knowledge for many years, but it got new life in my ears a few days ago, when I heard it in a soprano version as contrasted to the contralto version I used to listen to. As a couple of friends, Scottye and Wade Rackley of the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, are setting up a professional brass quartet, I took a look at the score and saw some potential.

The original key of F major would take the upper brasses too high, so as I love the key of D major played on brass instruments that became the key for this project.

The opening (and closing) major strain is set for a female vocalist and a 4-part string ensemble. But for fewer slurs the 1st violin is identical with the vocal part.

The second strain of this da capo aria is set only for vocalist and basso continuo. This editor has realised the harmonies in form of two inner voices, which may be omitted if so desired.

Baroque performance practices demand embellishments especially in the da capo sections. This editor has added a few embellishments in the opening section, some more in the minor middle strain, and most in the da capo section, yet with a strive for the melody being kept recognizable. Therefor some measures are embellished very little even in the da capo section. A coda effect has been strived for by letting the inner voices intensify the rhythm in the last bars.

The 4 parts in the score with the available substitute or alternative parts are these:

Bb trumpet (C trumpet, D trumpet)

F horn (Bb flugelhorn)

Trombone

Tuba (Contrabass tuba)

There are very few embellishments in the trombone part. The available parts allow for a performance by two trumpets, trombone, and bass trombone. If performed in this constellation, the bass trombonist might omit some of the grace notes. Some brass quintets may want to use this setting to let one of the trumpet players rest. It is possible to share the trumpet part with one player doing the solo sections and the other one doing the much shorter tutti sections.

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