

# Richard Strauss

## Feierlicher Einzug

**Setting for 14-piece brass ensemble, timpani, and SMzATB vocalists with optional woodwind support/substitution by Klaus Smedegaard Bjerre (2013)**

Richard Strauss wrote this monumental procession for a 25-piece brass ensemble with timpani in 1909. The employment of 15 trumpets makes present day performances in the original orchestration next to impossible outside of certain very large conservatories or military bands. Back in Strauss' era opera houses like the one in Leipzig had stage bands, which combined with the pit orchestras could provide such large numbers of trumpets.

As the music is worthwhile there already right from 1909 were several arrangements for orchestra, band, or combinations of organ with a lesser number of brasses. Since then several arrangements have been made combining various numbers of brasses with organ.

In my ears the organ with its many high range stops tends to blur the special sonic effect of several trumpets playing in unison. Strauss never allocates the 15 trumpets to each their own line at the same time. Either there are few trumpets playing or they are doubled in various permutations.

Aside of the number of trumpets Strauss' instrumentation is very close to the 14-piece brass ensemble. Strauss has 2 tenor trombones and 2 bass trombones. The 14-piece brass has 3 tenors and 1 bass. As Strauss gives prominent lines to the 1<sup>st</sup> bass trombone, the 3<sup>rd</sup> tenor part in this present arrangement preferably should be played on a large symphonic tenor instrument. Strauss has two tubas. The 14-piece brass has euphonium and tuba. All notes from the two original tuba parts are presented, but they have to some degree been redistributed between the euphonium and tuba parts of this arrangement.

The 4 horn parts are the same as the original ones. The same goes for the trombone parts aside from bars #82 through 85 where the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> trombones have been given a trumpet fanfare, where the original parts have rests. Very high in the 1<sup>st</sup> part, but all trumpets are busy here. The 1<sup>st</sup> trombone also fills in for a missing trumpet in bar #86.

Aside from this change all melodic trumpet lines and entries are played by the trumpets of the 14-piece ensemble, only not always by the numbers of players wanted by Strauss. Many long harmony notes could not be played for lack of trumpets. Another project of mine was for 14-piece brass with SATB vocalist, so I again chose vocalists as supplements for the brasses.

However the vocal lines had to be written in a way to let the singers combine to a full sound. The sopranos support the very exposed trumpet top line, whereas the mezzos and the altos support the inner lines. The tenors very often sing harmony notes with no obvious melodic line, only they are given a recurring horn and trombone motive. The vocalists do not support the unison horns in the loud passages. The tenors preferably should be very strong readers, but then all vocal parts split into 2 or 3 divisi lines or chord notes at various points. The basses cannot fill in for the missing trumpets but for one or two places in the upper of the bass divisi lines. They follow the trombones and euphonium/tuba lines. Their main function is about creating foundation for the said fullness of the vocal soundscape. As I don't like vocal lines with no text, I wrote one myself. It will be presented in the preface for the vocal score.

Strauss uses counterpoint, fairly simple homophonic settings, fanfare patterns, and then also a more complex 4 part setting, where the melody is played in octaves by the horns and by the upper trumpets. In between Strauss writes 2 harmony lines in the lower trumpets in a fashion sometimes closer to the thickened line known from big band writing than to classical styles of voicing.

Instrumentalists as well as vocalists are likely to benefit from planned for staggered breathing in certain passages. Whether this is organized by the director or by the section leaders may depend on local traditions. For best effects the planning should coordinate the breathing of the instrument and vocalist sections presenting the same musical lines.

To support the vocalists there are several versions of the vocal score transposed for various woodwind instruments common in band contexts. With good taste and with good sense of balance it is possible to let a sufficient, but not overwhelming, number of these woodwinds substitute the vocalists. Please be aware that all parts should be played *loco* (in the exact octave indicated). That excludes instruments with an inherent octave transposition up or down like piccolo flutes, contrabass clarinets, contrabassoons, or string basses. If you want these extreme octaves, please choose one of the many other arrangements. This somewhat rigorous point of view is read from the original score: in some places, where Strauss takes the bass line very high, he lets the tubas rest. He knew exactly, what he wrote.

In contrast practical work in the field of school and community music-making rarely commands ensembles fitting the exact demands of any given score. This present arrangement cannot at all be performed with less than the specifically indicated 14 brasses. Having been out in that field this editor however already hears the question about what to do with trumpet players #5 or #6? Hence two more optional parts have been written. They are not documented in this present score and they are to be played in a supportive rather than in a soloist manner, as they to some degree present voicing not found in the original score. Only in the bars #82 through #85, they should be prominent, as they have been given the said original trumpet fanfare. If these two optional parts are played, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> trombones may omit the fanfare.

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