

Richard Strauss

Don Quixote, op. 35

This is one of the “big five” for bass clarinet. In performance, the tenor tuba and the bass clarinet should sit together, either the tenor tuba joining the bass clarinet at the end of the clarinet section or the bass clarinet joining the tenor tuba behind the viola section.

Theme

Ex. 1: The solo viola, tenor tuba and bass clarinet play the role of Sancho Panza, the Don’s simple sidekick. This theme is not sophisticated music and it can even tend toward “goofy”. Try to make sure that the first group of 16^{ths} sound like a downbeat (and not as a pick up to beat two of the bar). You can do this by playing the grace note quickly and immediately before the beat followed by a small breath accent and/or tenuto on the first 16th note of each grouping. Phrase the eighth – sixteenth figure with a small *dim.* making the 16th sound lighter. A valid alternative (but less conservative) approach is to play the last 16th slightly clipped -- it certainly supports the “simple” character of Sancho. There is a tendency to rush the eighth – sixteenth figure resulting in the next figure coming too soon.

The half notes in between the sections of the theme are chords for two clarinets and bass clarinet. These are accompanying in nature and have a blended and quieter sound as compared with that of the Theme.

Don Quixote, der Ritter von der traurigen Gestalt.

Maggiore. (Sancho Panza) (♩ = 92-96)



Ex. 2: The Theme is largely in unison with the tenor tuba. It splits into a solo part in the second half of the second to last bar of the Theme.



Ex. 3: The last note is the major third in the chord (G major for the bass clarinet, F major concert). This long B on the bass clarinet is often sharp. To compound matters, the low F on the bass tuba tends to be flat. Finger this long b like a low e and vent the half hole that you would use for the altissimo. The note will be a bit resistant and sound covered, but it will be much better managed as a major third. You might also request of the bass tuba player that he play his F a bit higher in pitch. The piccolo player (who sustains the fifth of the chord under the pause) may also be grateful for this request.



Annotated excerpt from *The Bass Clarinetists' Workbook*

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