

THE WINDWORKS RENAISSANCE SERIES

Aria della battaglia by Andrea Gabrieli is part of a series of multi-voiced and single- to multi-choir compositions edited for various instrumental ensembles. It encompasses a philosophy of rediscovering, editing and utilizing early music as a flexible and timeless resource of modern performance potentiality. This work is a wonderful example of the wide range of wind orchestrations that help in defining the modern wind band with its various chamber-through-full resources that reside under the complete wind band umbrella.

The editor's goal is to present not only brass performance possibilities with these works but also many various instrumental groupings that may fit and complement an already existing instrumental pool of players—your current ensemble forces. In the spirit from which this music was conceived, each work includes various C, B \flat , F and E \flat transpositions (analogous to the manner in which Renaissance composers used clefs—some of their manuscripts involved up to six different clefs!). During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, depending on which instrumentalists were employed for a performance, an instrumental rehearsal probably involved not only determining what instrument could play which part (depending on the tessitura of each individual line in the music), but also what dynamic changes and articulations should be used—this depended greatly on the mixture of timbres (brass vs. reeds or strings, etc.).

We have designed this edition with an array of transpositions that is a flexible instrumental source for all groups with the hopes that this music may work itself back into a core compositional curriculum for all instrumental ensembles. Performances can include not only single family groups of cylindrical and conical brass, double reeds and single reeds, but also mixed settings of brass and woodwinds (the “C” parts also create many string instrument possibilities and combinations). This work is also edited to encourage experimentation in rehearsal with suggested tempi marked in the score, plus a guide to suggested articulation included with each set. Implementing an authentically adaptable approach towards instrumentation, dynamics and articulation has become one of the main challenges in this series for modern instruments and represents an attempt at bringing “back to the future” this interactive, flexible and adjustable performance practice.

A “C” score has been provided along with various transposed instrumentations listed in the [Transpositions and Ranges](#) section to serve as a guide for determining those instrumentations that best balance together with an available pool of instruments and players to serve as convenient access to many various performance and rehearsal possibilities. It provides for experimenting not only with instrumentation and balance, but also dynamics, articulation, tempo, seating, etc. The parts are clean and intended to be marked differently with each performance situation. For example, instead of erasing previous markings made by a brass ensemble or scratching out permanent directions, a woodwind group may choose to print out new, clear parts, ready to mark in their own edits that they determine together in rehearsal. Starting with the notes first, without any other outside influence or prejudice can lead to a very creative rehearsal process and a refreshing and unique performance experience.

Because the score and parts have also not been marked with the customary array of articulations, the composer's original intent of interpretive flexibility can be preserved. Slurring and legato passages were rare and were, in fact, frowned upon. Articulation practices of the time were based on very elaborate and advanced methods (see [Performance Practice Guide](#)). Dynamics are left to the performance situation (i.e., all brass, combination of winds and brass, etc.) so that you can determine correct balances. For instance, if you decide to perform the work with an alternation of woodwinds and brass, your dynamics will be very different than if you perform the work with all brass (woodwind sections will probably have to be played louder to balance the brass but can still retain the timbral and dynamic contrast). Score tempo markings and metronomic modulations are essentially editorial determinations—as usual for the time, these original scores included absolutely no performance markings whatsoever.

Andrea Gabrieli's *Battle Aria* was originally an eight-voice instrumental work. This sixteen-voice version takes advantage of the obvious antiphonal and timbral style. This timbral combination/contrast between the two instrumental groups can be accentuated by alternating the forte and piano sections. For instance, this work lends itself to such dynamic/timbral possibilities as brass/forte – double reeds/piano, tutti/forte – brass or double reeds/piano, etc. Of course, using two brass choirs or mixed groups is always possible with contrasting dynamics increased by spatial seating (forte group right, piano group left, etc.). The acoustics and size of the hall and stage may contribute to the effect and balances. Informed and careful experimentation can provide for creative rehearsals and unique performances. Whatever the instruments and dynamics are employed, experiment with the flexibility. Again, the key is to experiment, taking full advantage of the freedom this music offers. The possibilities are endless, and considering the amount of music available from this era, it is conceivable that one could include “new” Renaissance works during a concert season every year.