

“Self-Portrait with Orlando” : program note

“Self-Portrait with Orlando” revolves around the three-voice motet # 54 (Breitkopf & Hartel edition) by Orlando di Lasso...hence the title. Originally for three female voice parts, I first made a transcription of Lasso’s motet for three flutes. I then composed additional (original) music to surround the motet, such that “Self-Portrait with Orlando” is organized into five sections, according to this pattern: A1 B A2 C A3 (in which the ‘A’ parts are each different versions of the original Lasso motet. Although the three versions of the motet in my piece are easily recognizable in relation to the original, none of them is an exact transcription. The A3 version is closest to the original, followed by A1 and then A2. In addition to transposing the original into different keys, the differences between the original and the versions in my piece include alteration of some of the phrases, added repetitions of various moments and, especially, a number of silences which are injected into the music. Some of these silences are small, others large, still others even radically large.

By contrast, sections B and C are quite different both from the Lasso and from each other. B is a fairly furious set of fast canons while C—also very intense and quick—is itself a miniature rondo structured similarly to the piece as a whole. One other note: “Self-Portrait with Orlando” calls for a fair amount of instrument changing (piccolo, C flute and alto flute) by all three players throughout the piece. In this way, a great degree of timbral variety is explored such that each section has its own distinctive set of colors and musical personality.

Joel Hoffman, 2010