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Hans Leo Hassler.

Three Madrigals for Five Trombones

transcribed by David Mathie. N.p.: Cherry Classics Music, 2008. Playing time 7:00.
Score and parts.

David Mathie has set this short collection of late sixteenth century madrigals for four tenor trombones and one bass trombone. Transcribed from a five-voice texture, they are directly transposed from their original pitches, retaining the integrity of Hassler's counterpoint within an easily accessible range. For example, the principal tenor part, written in tenor clef, does not exceed a¹ in range aside from a single b-flat¹ in the first movement.

Placed together as movements in a set, the three madrigals work excellently together. All three are predominantly homophonic in nature; There exists only one brief polyphonic scene within *Ach, weh des Leiden*. Texture aside, the late sixteenth century madrigals feature characteristics of a proto-tonality common for the era, complete with tonal sounding cadences that melodically conclude on the first scale degree. In general, these pieces carry more Baroque characteristics than those of the Renaissance and should be treated accordingly.

Tanzon un Springen is a robust dance historically performed in a detached style. The madrigal, however, should still be regarded with a vocal style. Mr. Mathie delineates phrases with breath marks that correspond with the original text. It should be noted that the repeat signs cause the form of the movement to vary from some original sources, changing it from an AAB-AAB structure to AABB. This aside, the madrigal remains an excellent starting point for the set. The second movement, *Ach, weh des Leiden*, transposed into a nominal B-flat minor, should be played in a legato style, as indicated by the transcriber's marks. The third madrigal, *Herzlieb zu dir Allein*, is a brisk love-song that contrasts the earlier movements. There will undoubtedly be a tendency to play this in a detached style, but such urges should be resisted. While not a pure legato, as experienced in the second madrigal, the original text of *Herzlieb* offers musical contrasts to the sound of the preceding madrigals.

-Andrew Farina
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