

Nothing Is More Important

In Vittore Carpaccio's painting, "Presentation of Jesus in the Temple" from 1510, a trio of angels plays recorder, lute, and viol as the baby Jesus is presented. I tried to compose the music that I imagined that they would be playing, on the analogous modern instruments of flute, harp, and viola. There is grandeur to the painting in its formality, but there is also intimacy and joy in the details of the work. Even though the eye is clearly led to the center of the frame, every element in the painting seems equally important. In the music, every idea is also of equal weight. Repetition, dynamics, duration, and the other means of differentiating musical material are subordinate to the desire to have every moment be of the utmost importance, allowing grandeur and intimacy to coexist.

Nothing Is More Important was commissioned by the Harvard Musical Association. It was composed while in residence at the American Academy in Rome.

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