Pfitzner and Musical Politics

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It should come as no surprise that the repertory of concert houses and opera stages is slowly expanding to include works that were successful and highly regarded in the past but have since all but vanished from the stage. Canonical status in the active repertory derives from a murky process that can hardly be described as an objective verdict of history in terms of normative aesthetic value. One of the constants in that process is the pressure exerted by the character and flow of new contemporary works. The new helps push out the old. Which parts of the once new disappear is determined in turn by the nature of what seems novel and succeeds with audiences and critics in new music and the way history is, as a consequence, steadily rewritten. What is relatively anomalous is the fact that since the early twentieth century we have found ourselves faced with an ever-weakening pressure from the new. Despite some optimistic signs, including a growing number of new operas and a cadre of successful young composers, the demand for contemporary music still remains weaker than it was a century ago and than it should be. Since constant repetition in live performance, even of Mahler's symphonies or Puccini's La Bohème, is in the end implausible, the inevitable demand for something new is now being filled by a reconsideration of what the past has still to offer. Historical revisionism occupies a place once reserved for contemporary repertory, particularly in North America. This is not altogether bad, since there are treasures of first-class material languishing in the proverbial archives of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The only question is which ones we choose to revive and in what sequence of priority. Valery Gergiev has pioneered the rediscovery of the neglected Russian opera repertory. His is clearly a nationalistic enterprise, based at the Kirov, whose efforts he deftly exports. Sir Charles Mackerras has helped bring Janáček beyond Jenůfa to the fore, but in terms of the Czech repertory, our familiarity with the dramatic works of Dvořák and Smetana in performance still lags. There is much to look forward to.
By reconstructing the past through revivals and contemporary performance we end up influencing not only how we think of history but the course of the future. Not only is a traditional account of the past, based on a standard repertory, challenged, but the revival of more obscure works can influence a new generation eager to strike out on its own in unpredicted ways. The history of music and of painting is filled with cases that reveal the impact of a live encounter with a work of music by an aspiring young composer. Once upon a time, catching—by happenstance and certainly by intent—a performance could be life changing, shaping a composer's creative process. The encounters with Tristan and Parsifal in the late nineteenth century occupy first place in the business of leaving lasting impressions on young composers, painters, and poets. Not only does an opera company's strategic decision to stage an unfamiliar work long absent from the repertory reflect a calculated judgment about what will succeed in the context of present tastes, but it can also mirror some aspiration about how the shape of the future might be influenced by repertory choices. It is no coincidence, therefore, that Gergiev's project is so successful precisely at a moment when postcommunist Russia seeks to redefine the character of its national culture and its political agenda. Since 1989 Russian composers have worked to underscore a break with Soviet traditions. The trajectory of new Russian works will be influenced by the repertory of one of its leading opera houses whose purpose is equally driven by the search for new sources of inspiration for the construct of a national culture.

Consequently, the revival of Palestrina, by Hans Pfitzner, in 1999 at the Vienna State Opera, as well as its prominent place at the Lincoln Center Festival '97, is an important if not telling sign of the times. There is no end of choice when it comes to choosing from the German language operatic output dating from 1883, Wagner's death, until the end of World War I. James Conlon has begun to reawaken interest in Zemlinsky; a true appreciation of Franz Schreker's genius as an opera composer is yet to come. The suppression of these two composers' achievements after 1933 for reasons of race politics has, after fifty years and the death and retirement of leading artists who collaborated with the Third Reich and continued to have successful careers after 1945, finally been reversed. It is not an accident that the proponents of this process of rediscovery are frequently non-German artists born after World War II. Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century French opera also has remarkable gems, including Chabrier's Gwendoline, d'Indy's Fervaal, Magnard's Guercoeur, Chausson's Le Roi Arthus, and Dukas's Ariane et Barbe-Bleue. The obscurity of these works has less
obvious political roots. To return to the German tradition, why, then, are we revisiting Pfitzner’s *Palestrina*?

One answer lies in the growing audience and critical enthusiasm for the conservative (stylistically speaking) composers of the first half of the twentieth century, of whom Pfitzner was among the most prominent, if not the most outspoken. After all, our current view of the character of twentieth-century composition has changed dramatically enough to restore the continuous antimodernist traditions from the oblivion to which they were consigned by modernist readings of history. Pfitzner’s output includes some distinguished chamber music, including the Violin Sonata and several string quartets, as well as some remarkable choral and orchestral music and an impressive corpus of songs. But Pfitzner’s ambitions and indeed his fame rested on his works for the stage. *Palestrina* was far and away his greatest achievement in any genre. No doubt he struggled and suffered in the shadow of Richard Strauss, with whom he was relentlessly compared and whose later and much-maligned music from the 1920s and 1930s is only beginning to be heard once again. Unfortunately, Pfitzner’s not altogether most satisfying moment of greatest official approbation occurred during the Third Reich, with which he was, despite persistent disclaimers, in deepest sympathy. Unlike Strauss, he had no postwar Indian summer and died in relative disgrace and obscurity.

Pfitzner was also decidedly unlovable—ruthlessly self-centered and ambitious. Not only was he envious of potential allies, but he was fiercely intolerant of colleagues who pursued a different path with respect to the future of music after Wagner. Pfitzner’s place in history has been assured more by two famous polemical essays, *Futuristengefahr* and *Die neue Aesthetik der musikalischen Impotenz*, one directed against Busoni and the other against Paul Bekker and a newer generation of modernists, including Schoenberg, than by Pfitzner’s music. The uncanny correspondence between conservative musical aesthetics and particular strains in German nationalist thinking during the first half of the twentieth century is familiar. In our post-postmodernist eclectic moment, we have begun to see fissures in the all-too-neat structural correspondence between aesthetic and political conservatism, just as there turns out to be no precise parallelism between modernism and progressive politics. At the same time, the passage of time has buried the unsavory links between Pfitzner’s aesthetics and his politics.

The revival of interest in Pfitzner’s *Palestrina* has therefore its immediate surface nonpolitical origins, if one accepts the idea that tastes in music per se are nonpolitical matters, which of course they are not. Nonetheless, *Palestrina*‘s musical idiom suddenly seems quite attuned to
contemporary taste. The subject matter of *Palestrina* and Pfitzner's careful evocation of sixteenth-century sounds and compositional procedures will strike sympathetic responses in audiences today. These audiences are enamored of and accustomed to the post–World War II early-music revival. They are enthusiastic about the operatic language of new works by John Corigliano, John Adams, Tobias Picker, Louis Andriessen, Tan Dun, Philip Glass, and André Previn. At the same time, there is a lingering political significance to the 1999 revival, particularly in German-speaking Europe.

In the first place, any exhumation of a work from its burial of neglect requires a champion. The residual and current political overtones associated with Pfitzner, and *Palestrina* in particular, are immediately suggested by the figure of the work's most prominent advocate, the conductor Christian Thielemann, who brought the work to New York. If one is to believe the report in MusicalAmerica.com, Thielemann's strikingly conservative political sympathies are not in doubt. He found himself embroiled in an open legal battle in which he was accused of flagrant anti-Semitism, and he made his distaste for what he has perceived as the *Juderei* in Berlin musical life painfully explicit. It is no shock to discover that Thielemann made his career not conducting Schoenberg, Berg, or Kurt Weill (or, God forbid, contemporary music) but through performances and recordings of Strauss and Wagner. Pfitzner is a logical addition to this pantheon of standard-bearers of a particular strain of German cultural nationalism. Insofar as Thielemann is Germany's answer to Gergiev, aesthetic and political ambitions seem to coincide. Post-1989 Germany is being challenged to reassess its past by reclaiming composers and works once tainted with the brush of influence on, collaboration with, and responsibility for Nazism. Revisionism through performance may be designed to achieve the effect of cleansing a work's provenance and reception history and restoring pariahs to respectability.

The irony, of course, is that when *Palestrina* was written and first premiered, its champions were none other than Bruno Walter (who never lost his attachment to the work despite his revulsion at Pfitzner's political odyssey in the 1930s and 1940s) and Thomas Mann. Mann's embrace of the work helped make it world famous. Mann's politics were more complicated than Walter's, though their views were not entirely dissimilar. Mann found himself pushed, externally and internally, into a posture of opposition to Nazism after 1933. He retained aspects of a conservative cultural nationalism and never denied his nostalgia for Wagner's music and the capacity to succumb to its seductions. Mann never
went the distance in revision that Nietzsche did. Yet he came to understand the limitations of the aesthetic ideals he had espoused in 1915 in his defense of Pfitzner. Even though he never developed a deep attachment to the music of Schoenberg, *Doktor Faustus* notwithstanding, he came to defend the connection between aesthetic modernism in music and its role in forging a resistance to fascism. Walter, an exemplar of German-Jewish acculturation, never thought highly of the modernist innovations of the 1920s. He held on to the skepticism about Schoenberg articulated in 1908 and 1909 by his mentor, Mahler. His involuntary status as emigre and victim of Nazism derived not from aesthetic or political convictions but from his status as a Jew and his undeniable and unrelenting advocacy of the music of Mahler, one of the bêtes noires of antimodernist musical critics in the German cultural scene before 1933. In the end, both Mann and Walter were prepared to defend the notion that Pfitzner’s *Palestrina* was not only a singular masterpiece of twentieth-century music, but a legitimate and welcome alternative to and attack upon a misguided radical construct of the future of music that had gained currency after 1918.

Given this background, what is to be made of *Palestrina* today, in the wake of an effort to bring it back into the operatic repertory as more than a historical curiosity? One of the central tenets of the opera’s libretto and its musical realization is Pfitzner’s conviction that music is at its essence not an intellectual enterprise. The way Palestrina (the protagonist in the opera) goes about composing is a dramatic realization of Pfitzner’s notion of musical inspiration. Spurred on by angels and as if in a trance, the composer in the opera becomes the prisoner of a spiritual, inner compulsion that bypasses reflection. Although fully elaborated only later in his little book *Über musikalische Inspiration*, Pfitzner’s notion that the essence of musical inspiration reflects itself in nearly melodic, if not linearly shaped gestures that cannot be construed as ideas was first articulated in the controversy he entered over Paul Bekker’s 1911 book on Beethoven. 7 Bekker’s notion that what made Beethoven great were ideas and concepts the composer rendered concrete and communicable through music was anathema to Pfitzner. It represented a massive and misleading misconstruction of the defining musical tradition of classicism located in German-speaking Europe. Bekker turned Beethoven into a philosopher who used music, as opposed to a divinely inspired artist through whom an autonomous musical impetus dominated. For Pfitzner the agency from which music in the human being comes is not rational and is independent of other natural and acquired cognitive processes.
What was particularly disturbing to Pfitzner was the appropriation of the great formal achievements of baroque and classical music by twentieth-century contemporaries, composers, and critics, who sought to obliterate the difference between music and language. Since the musical gift was rare, inborn, and God given (metaphorically speaking), a new generation of aspiring, hardworking intellectuals were intent on blurring the boundary between the concreteness of music and its power of expression on one hand, and language, thought, and ideas on the other, all in order to cover up their lack of spontaneous musicality. The mental powers associated with science, mathematics, logic, and language were being applied to the writing of music. These early-twentieth-century writers and musicians mirrored a novel phenomenon unique to industrial modernity: a large cadre of highly trained, clever, and smart professionals who substituted their undeniable skills in reasoning and critical reflection for their bankruptcy of innate musicality and inspiration.

That many of these new types of artists turned out to be Jews was certainly not lost on Pfitzner or his allies. Musicality was understood by Pfitzner as akin to a racial attribute (to which Germans were particularly susceptible) largely absent in Jews. Pfitzner appropriated a conceptual framework most convincingly put forth by Wagner in his notorious essay "Das Judentum in der Musik" (1850/1869). Interestingly, in Pfitzner’s critique the figure of Max Reger (who was not Jewish and celebrated as a powerful new voice in German music in the first decade of the twentieth century), who posthumously has been unfairly accused of technical mastery without a sufficiently distinctive and striking set of musical ideas, plays only a minor role. In Pfitzner’s view, not only was musical modernism—the departure from tonality and formal conventions—artificial, but its surface complexity and novelty were decidedly unnatural and antimusical. Somewhat like Heinrich Schenker, Pfitzner elaborated a notion of the absolute, ahistorical legitimacy of a particular system of musical logic.

What appealed to Mann in Palestrina was Pfitzner’s portrayal of the great artist and his music as above and beyond not only the mundane and the political but the cold rationality of modernity. The second act of Palestrina appealed to Mann because in Pfitzner’s depiction of modern political conflict the aesthetic, in its pure nonrationality, triumphed through music. In the opera, art overcomes the subjugation it has suffered in modern times because of a politics in which argument and language are central. Act 2 is framed and transcended by the spirituality of acts 1 and 3, particularly the artist’s rejection in act 3 of the blandish-
ments of fame and success. *Palestrina* ends by eliminating the title character's ambition for success and acclaim as defined by the dynamics and the commerce of modern musical life. These are set aside as a legitimate source of musical inspiration and greatness. Given Pfitzner's lifelong bitterness about his lack of recognition and acclaim, act 3 assumes its own biographical disingenuous poignancy. Pfitzner's music evoked a purity not present (in Pfitzner's view) in Mahler, whom Mann also admired. Mahler depicted the crisis of modernity but did not transcend it.

Pfitzner confronted the subject of politics directly with music and, so to speak, buried it in art. Richard Strauss, however, thought the second act a failure. But he was no moralist or polemicist, and he was constitutionally allergic to Pfitzner's style of self-advocacy and justification. Strauss used irony (of which Pfitzner was incapable) as a means to confront modernity. Mann's 1915 plea on behalf of *Palestrina* as a welcome mark of the redemption of pure art in troubled modern times was, however, only one part of its allure. Another aspect was Mann's affinity to Pfitzner's critique of the democratization of musical culture. Artistic genius and the sensibility for music were, in the end, elite phenomena and inherently in conflict with the distinctly post-aristocratic modern political projects directed at egalitarianism, mass literacy, and other offshoots of enlightenment liberalism and post-1848 ideologies of social reform. In *Palestrina*, Pfitzner had crafted an aesthetic that constituted an affirmative albeit exceptional challenge to the pessimism inherent in Nietzsche's critique of modern cultural and intellectual life. Art of an elevated nature was still possible; resistance to the philistine and to mere fashion—hallmarks of modern cultural productions—could be successful.

It is understandable then that Pfitzner and Mann shared an unresolved ambivalence about the achievements of Richard Wagner. Pfitzner acknowledged his debt to Wagner even though he sought to chart a new path for German opera. On the one hand, no composer seemed as legitimately inspired, musically speaking, as Wagner, and achieved, for the best of reasons, as magnetic, even narcotic a hold over the most discerning and sensitive souls. On the other hand, the magnitude of Wagner's success, particularly with the middle-class urban public of the late nineteenth century, was a source of discomfort. Nietzsche had come to realize that in the end, Wagner was a kind of master charlatan who manipulated theatricality. Despite his protestations and grandiose claims for himself as the true heir to Beethoven's legacy, he appealed to the worst and most banal dimensions of modern taste. Indeed, Wagner had found a strategy for simplifying musical apperception. Although the
most refined Wagner enthusiasts, particularly those from France, were able to distinguish the musical from the ideological and perceived Wagner as an aesthetic phenomenon whose music, apart from its narrative surface, was bound up with the central problematics of love and death might be dealt with in art, the mass of Wagner enthusiasts embraced his conflation of music and thought, because Wagner rendered ideas concrete, easy to grasp and remember. His musical strategy, repeating fragments and employing a constantly changing and shifting harmonic fabric, created a new dramatic synthesis and patterns that satisfied the demand for extramusical meaning within an audience wedded to the narrative strategies of the prose novel. Music had become oddly mundane, if not illustrative. Pfitzner's *Palestrina* is in this sense not Wagnerian but distinctly novel and twentieth-century in a post-Wagnerian sense. The relationship between text and music in it is more similar to that in Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* than it is to the relationship between word and sound in either Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* or Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue*. Pfitzner's libretto is designed to establish music's preeminence. In it language recedes in a way that Wagner hoped his poetry would not in his own works.

Pfitzner's critique of modernism and modernity—particularly their attendant intellectualization of the musical and the artistic—was of course closely connected to the need to reconsider the future of German politics and culture as World War I dragged on. Although both Mann and Pfitzner were patriots, there was much in Wilhelmine Germany that was repugnant to them. The questions of what shape German culture and life would take after the war and what role art might play were clearly burning ones. In Pfitzner's case, his conception of the nature of music and musicality led him down the road of cultural chauvinism and a racism that made Nazi ideology attractive. Nazism's vulgarity and populism receded in his embrace. The inherent conflict between Pfitzner's ideals and Nazi ideology was not lost on the Nazi hierarchy after 1933. The elite of Nazi cultural policy clearly recognized Pfitzner's old-fashioned, antipopulist conservatism and showered him with more official praise than genuine attachment. They hoped to support a new generation of ideologically relevant populists. Carl Orff's 1937 *Carmina Burana* would eventually mark the most successful venture in crafting a musical aesthetic largely in tune with the regime's aspirations.

If, however, one separates *Palestrina* from Pfitzner's subsequent career, one can recognize the significance and originality of the work. It engages a central question of musical aesthetics within the composi-
tional and philosophical discourse of the early twentieth century. That
question has to do with the nature of language. One wants to avoid any
implausible suggestion of excessive parallelism in a given moment of his-
tory that justifies the suggestion of a reigning Zeitgeist. But if one consid-
ers the ruminations of Karl Kraus, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Arnold Schoen-
berg, Claude Debussy, Stéphane Mallarmé, and even Sigmund Freud,
one can discern within the same time period radical attempts to probe
the relationship between language and thought, the limits of language,
experience, and the ways of knowing either through speech or in silence.
Discussions of the presumed autonomy of the visual and the musical be-
tween 1890 and 1914 possessed this shared context. Pfitzner's *Palestrina*
is an essay that defends on several levels the ideal of the autonomy of
music, and its connection to neoplatonic truths, against alternative
modernist constructs. During the early 1920s, with the advent of logical
positivism, advocates of positivism and science revealed a desire to de-
limit the destructive consequences of an imprecise metaphysics and per-
haps mystical sensibility. Alternative theories akin to Pfitzner's musings
exploited the perceived limits of rationality and modern science in the
service of quasi-religious claims. One can think here as well of the fears
expressed in 1919 by Max Weber about comparable critiques of modern-
ity and rationality in the wake of World War I. The emergence of the
philosophical and metapractical movements with which we associate the
names of Stefan George, Max Scheler, and Martin Heidegger owes
something to the sorts of ideas to which Pfitzner was sympathetic.

A final and less obvious perspective on the late twentieth century
revival of Pfitzner's *Palestrina* can be obtained by comparing it and its re-
lation to the historical moment of its creation and premiere to that
of Max Bruch's *Odysseus* from 1872. At first glance, the connection
between Bruch and Pfitzner seems implausible. In fact, however, Pfitzner
greatly admired Bruch. Max Bruch died in 1920, having had the mis-
facture of living so long that he experienced his own obsolescence and
displacement from the center of musical life. It is ironic that in this
sense Pfitzner and Bruch ended up living parallel lives even in their
later years. Pfitzner single-handedly sought to restore to the repertory
Bruch's 1863 opera *Die Lorelei*, op. 16, based on the libretto that had
been written for Mendelssohn. Pfitzner became a master of the choral
orchestral genre, precisely the arena in which Bruch excelled. Bruch's
secular oratorios were inspirations for Pfitzner's enormously successful
ventures into the same genre. Bruch's reputation before World War I,
particularly in Germany, rested not only on the well-known music for
violin and orchestra and on Kol nidre, but on works like Odysseus, Arminius, Moses, Das Lied von der Glocke, Gustav Adolf, and Achilleus. For Pfitzner, Bruch was a quintessentially ideal German cultural figure. Furthermore, Bruch, far from being an academic and uninspired post-Mendelssohnian figure and rigidly anti-Wagnerian, was—correctly, in Pfitzner's view—a great underrated composer with singular melodic and dramatic gifts who sought to participate in a German cultural renewal after the unification of Germany in 1870.

Bruch's Odysseus (to which I referred in the MQ Notes, 84:4, as an example of how nostalgia can be expressed in music) was the composer's most successful oratorio. Its protagonist was modeled quite evidently after Wotan, if only to undermine Wagner's influence. At the same time, despite the audible evocations of Wagner, Bruch sought to fashion an aesthetic alternative that redeemed traditional musical practices against Wagner's dismissal of them. Odysseus transforms the well-known Greek mythological tale into a contemporary aesthetic-political parable. Pfitzner in Palestrina used a famous moment in music history and transformed it into a modern myth much the way Bruch took a classical myth and turned it into a history lesson. Just as Pfitzner used the sounds and contrapuntal techniques of the sixteenth century in a modern score, Bruch employed past models (particularly Bach and Handel) for his own ends. For both composers, the forms of the past were not, as Wagner suggested, dead, nor were the musical procedures on which these forms depended. Employing his uncanny melodic gifts (evocative of Pfitzner's notion of inspiration), Bruch, through music, celebrated Odysseus's return to Ithaca as emblematic of the spiritual essence of German unification. Shorn of the Germanic theatrical trappings of Wagnerian music drama, Bruch integrated recognition into his score of the shared traditions of musical Bildung possessed by the choral societies of Germany and the German audience. The popularity of Odysseus (and its successors) in the 1870s and 1880s was attributed to Bruch's ability to lend the realpolitik achievements of Bismarck spiritual coherence through a musical work of art. Bruch, in contrast to Pfitzner, distanced himself decisively from Wagner and focused less on the operatic than Pfitzner. He sought to achieve his goal without the visual, concentrating instead on how music and language worked without action. In an equally momentous historical context, Palestrina sought to provide an aesthetic and spiritual model. Here was a form of civic education through music. During the period in which Palestrina was conceived and written, Pfitzner, in contrast to his contemporaries in Eastern Europe (Bartók, Janáček, Szymanowski, Stravinsky) realized that the alternative to atonality in other radical
modernist experiments in the area of pitch and timbre could not, for
German composers, lie in a revival of premodern folk and national musi-
cal traditions. In this sense there was an underlying correspondence be-
tween Schoenberg's blend of cultural chauvinism and radical novelty at
the time of the development of the twelve-tone strategy and Pfitzner's
conceits about Palestrina. Although they realized seemingly contradictory
solutions, both composers sought to construct an ideal nonquotidian con-
temporary musical language and sensibility rooted in neo-classical and
early romantic aesthetic notions about music's unique substance and
power.

Although one can adduce considerable if not decisive divergences
between these two composers, at the core of the projects of both men
was the search for a way around or beyond Wagner through the assertion
of the primacy of some version of absolute musical aesthetics in defense
of the ahistorical truthfulness of the autonomous logic of musical art.
The Wagnerian integration and the perhaps unwitting subordination
of music to a narrative logic were resisted by both. And both composers
wrote works in which their ambition was to help shape the direction of
a nation and its culture at moments of indisputable historical change. It
is in the dynamics between Odysseus and Palestrina and their contempo-
rary audiences—nearly a half century apart—that the similarities be-
come most interesting.

Recent efforts at the revival of Bruch's Odysseus have resulted
equaliy in the recognition of the work's unquestionable beauty and
the affecting realization of how dated the Gründerzeit sensibility and
ideology of the work now seem. The same may turn out to be true for
Pfitzner's Palestrina. The issues that made it so compelling to Thomas
Mann and Bruno Walter have largely passed us by. The 1990s revival of
Bruch's Odysseus in the wake of the unification of Germany after the fall
of communism made the work more approachable and rendered audi-
ences, particularly in Germany, more sympathetic than they might have
been in, for example, the 1960s. In the case of Pfitzner's Palestrina, the
renascence of right-wing nationalism in Central Europe, the success of
Jörg Haider's Freedom Party in Austria, and the growing respectability
accorded the sentiment in Germany that the question of German re-
sponsibility for the Holocaust needs to be placed once and for all into
the dustbin of history all conspire to make Pfitzner's Palestrina more
timely.

Let us hope that the politics of Christian Thielemann and the ex-
tramusical circumstances that attend the reconsideration of Pfitzner's
masterpiece will be transcended, if not defeated. What then remains are
the not inconsiderable beauties of the opera itself and the provocative nature of Pfitzner’s contribution to defining the paradoxes inherent in the relationship of language and music and the historical connection between music and politics during the first decades of the twentieth century. In the end, Pfitzner’s *Palestrina* cannot be presented or heard in our time as a work about politics. Yet it still cannot slip by as apolitical in Thomas Mann’s sense. It is a brilliant foray into the mixed genre that opera must be, a genre that, more than any other, forces us to think about the several ways in which music creates and communicates meanings in the context of the simultaneity of words, action, sound, and the visual. *Palestrina* may be doomed to remain a brilliant anomaly, a disturbing but powerful antidote to the arrogant claim that a progressive modernism, one that jettisoned the conventional surfaces bequeathed by the nineteenth century, was and ought to have been the only legitimate path for music in the twentieth century.

**Notes**

This paper is a revised version of a paper delivered at the *Palestrina* conference from which some of the other essays in this issue of MQ are drawn.


8. See Williamson, 83.