

The Spirit of This Place

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How Music Illuminates
the Human Spirit

The Spirit of
This Place

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The University of Chicago Press
Chicago and London

The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637

The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London

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Published 2018

Printed in the United States of America

27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 1 2 3 4 5

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-09510-3 (cloth)

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-09524-0 (e-book)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226095240.001.0001>

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Summers, Patrick, author.

Title: The spirit of this place : how music illuminates the human spirit /
Patrick Summers.

Other titles: Rice University Campbell lectures.

Description: Chicago ; London : The University of Chicago Press, 2018. |

Series: The Rice University Campbell lectures

Identifiers: LCCN 2018021453 | ISBN 9780226095103 (cloth : alk. paper) |
ISBN 9780226095240 (e-book)

Subjects: LCSH: Spirituality in music. | Music—Moral and ethical as-
pects. | Music—Religious ethical aspects.

Classification: LCC ML3921.S86 2018 | DDC 781.1—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018021453>

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(Permanence of Paper).

I dedicate this book to
my dear friend Chris Gwaltney,
a profound spiritual companion
on my journey,
and a helluva lot of fun.

“Oh, come par che all’amoroso foco
l’amenità del loco, la terra e il ciel risponda . . .”
(O, how the beauties of this place, the earth and the sky,
 seem to echo the fire of love!)
—Lorenzo da Ponte, from the libretto for Mozart’s opera
 The Marriage of Figaro (1785)

*What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell,
His listening brethren stood around.
And, wondering, on their faces fell,
To worship that celestial sound!
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?*
—John Dryden, from *A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day* (1687)