Klaus Pringsheim aus Tokyo. Zur Geschichte eines musikalischen Kulturtransfers

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Few aspects of the cultural relations between Europe and Japan raise more stimulating—and controversial—questions than the assimilation of classical music in the East Asian country since the late nineteenth century. On the one hand, classical music is widely regarded as a foundational element of European civilization. By conveying its values and sensitivities in a non-verbal way, it can facilitate a deeper intercultural communication than many other cultural products. In this sense, however, its dissemination in Japan could be seen as an example of cultural imperialism that marginalized local traditions and corroborated the idea that Western civilization was truly universal and superior to other cultures. Moreover, by presenting something classical as an access key to modernity, this cultural transfer of classical music reveals how the process of modernization was indeed an ideologically disguised form of westernization, in which the alleged opposition between the concepts of "classical" and "modern" became ambiguous. On the other hand, even though Japan received classical music as part of the "modernization package" in the military, diplomatic, and educational spheres, its incorporation in the Japanese cultural landscape was anything but a passive imitation of foreign expressive styles and aesthetic standards. It was, rather, a process of appropriation and reconfiguration, closely entangled with the development of Japanese society and self-representation after the Meiji Restoration, which made today's Japan one of the world's most important consumption and production centers of classical music and a substantial contributor to the evolution of the genre throughout the last century.

Any scholarly understanding of this music transfer as an historical process entails closer attention to the role and agency of both Japanese cultural actors and European intermediaries. Among the latter, few were more important in the music landscape of twentieth-century Japan than Klaus Pringsheim, the subject of the biography authored by Ralf Eisinger. From 1931 to 1937, Pringsheim taught composition and directed the choir and the symphonic orchestra at the Imperial Music Academy in Tokyo. During his long career in Japan, which continued in other private institutions after World War II, he had a great influence on Japanese classical music, as both interpreter of the late Romantic tradition—especially Gustav Mahler—and teacher of many leading Japanese musicians of later years, such as Abe Kōmei, Ifukube Akira, and Wakasugi Hiroshi. Nevertheless, Pringsheim's role in the development of Japanese classical music has so far received scant attention outside Japan.

Indeed, to the rest of the world Pringsheim's name is mainly associated with his brother-in-law: Thomas Mann. Together with his twin sister Katja, the future wife of the German writer, he grew up in an educated middle-class family of Jewish origins in Munich, which was the source of inspiration for Mann's controversial short novel *Wälsungenblut* (1921), whose twin protagonists could be identified with Klaus and Katja. In 1906, Klaus Pringsheim decided to become a professional musician and applied for a position as a musical assistant at the Vienna Court Opera under Gustav Mahler, who was close to the end of his directorship and increasingly targeted by the local anti-Semitic press. Pringsheim's 1906-1907 stay in Vienna had a deep influence on his artistic education and his future career: from then, he became "Mahler's pupil" (37). After directing choirs and opera orchestras in different Swiss,

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Austrian, and German theaters, Pringsheim arrived in Berlin in 1918, where he premiered the first Mahler cycle in 1923-1924 and wrote for journals such as the *Weltbühne* or the social-democratic newspaper *Vorwärts*. As a music critic, Pringsheim mirrored many of the contradictions of the educated middle-class milieu. He was a left-wing intellectual who advocated for a "proletarian" art and supported the experimental Kroll-Oper, but still preferred Mahler and Richard Strauss over the Second Viennese School of Arnold Schoenberg. Especially Mahler was to him the spiritual "Führer" that Germany after the Great War had been longing for: "the musician of German democracy" (50–51).

In 1931, Pringsheim moved to Japan in a highly critical moment, which witnessed the crisis of Japanese democracy and the rise of militarism that started with the invasion of Manchuria in 1931–1932 and led to the rapprochement with Nazi Germany and the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936. Even though he was not strictly an exile, after the Nazi seizure of power Pringsheim had to face growing hostility. Being a "half-Jew" and "cultural Bolshevik" (108), he was seen by German press and authorities as completely unacceptable to be a leading representative of the German music tradition in Japan, particularly at a time when classical music became an object of political propaganda and a way to tighten cultural bonds between the two countries. Nevertheless, he managed to direct the Music Academy's orchestra during the celebration of Strauss' seventieth birthday in 1934, which was also broadcasted in Germany. Eventually, he lost his German citizenship in 1944 due to direct intervention by the SS and Gestapo functionary Joseph Meisinger, and, in the last months of the war, he was interned in a Japanese prison camp.

Eisinger's book succeeds in reconstructing the complexities and ambiguities of Pringsheim's life, covering not only his Japanese experience, but also his family background, his position in cultural debates during the 1920s, and his reintegration in the German music scene after World War II—which was characterized by compromises and omissions where the legacy of the Nazi period was concerned. However, Eisinger seems much more interested in telling the story rather than analyzing it. In this sense, he partially fails to use Pringsheim's biography as a vantage point for dealing with broader historical problems. Important issues—such as the actual reception of German music and Pringsheim's teaching by his Japanese students—are merely glimpsed but not explored. Moreover, Japan's cultural history, together with the meaning and consequences of the "cultural transfer of music" mentioned in the title, fades into the background, buried in footnotes and short digressions that are not sufficient to answer the many questions raised by the assimilation process of classical music in modern Japan. Perhaps this was not the author's intention, but it is still a missed opportunity.

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Einstein on the Run: How Britain Saved the World's Greatest Scientist

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Albert Einstein (1879–1955) sits oddly in the historiography of Central Europe. Of course, he is a single person, and by far the dominant tendency in histories of this region has been to

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