Philip Weller

“Thoughts on reconstructing renaissance polyphony”

The detailed empirical work of polyphonic reconstruction is something many of us, and many of our friends and colleagues, may have experienced, in small or in large measure, at first hand. These thoughts on reconstructing polyphony set out to offer a larger perspective. There will of course be much lively discussion of technique, style, counterpoint and methodology at this conference. The approach here is to ask wider, often open-ended questions, sometimes in the realm of theory and philosophy, more often in the realm of Kulturwissenschaft with one eye on Historizität and another eye on pragmatism and good creative practice. This in itself is in principle, I believe, a historically grounded approach. The aim is to prompt debate, rather than to pursue my own detailed arguments and views on any given subject, though, like all of us, I obviously hold such views.... ‘Wie es eigentlich gewesen’ is not possible to us, and ‘Wie es hätte sein sollen’ is wish fulfilment, if not to an extent presumptuous. We move around, pragmatically but with theoretical circumspection, somewhere in between....