

**'GALILEO'S PASSION':  
ASPECTS OF CONTENT AND STYLE**

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Abstract

In this commentary, I discuss the technical and ideological bases of my opera, *Galileo’s Passion*, as well as its connections with contemporary compositional practice. I focus particularly on the work’s eclecticism, and on the ways in which I use stylistic plurality to articulate form. This variety plays out over several unifying factors: a recurring “archaic” harmonic point of reference; increasing dramatic weight across successive scenes; and the implicit view that reason and secularism deepen our connections to each other and to our world. We cannot know who Galileo was, but I endeavored to paint him as eminently *human*, and to combat the commonly held misconceptions that scientists are cold or unfeeling, and that science diminishes beauty. While Galileo’s story cannot be told without a tragic tone, my intent is to affirm and uplift. In the conclusion of this essay, I argue that these intentions are the ultimate source of the work’s accessibility.

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