CITIES BUILT TO MUSIC
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Aesthetic Theories of the Victorian Gothic Revival

Michael Bright

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The photograph of the Royal Courts of Justice, London, used as the frontispiece is a detail from figure 12.

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This book is interdisciplinary, and its title indicates the three disciplines that it encompasses: literature (the main title is adapted from Tennyson), aesthetics, and architecture. Aesthetics is the meeting ground of the other two. That is, on a concrete or practical level literature and architecture have little in common, and one would have difficulty in drawing correspondences between, say, a poem and a church. However, on the abstract or theoretical level of aesthetics, literature and architecture begin to converge, and one can perceive interesting and enlightening similarities between the two. Thus it is that though the poem and the church set side by side may appear to have little in common, the artistic theories upon which poet or architect—or any kind of artist, for that matter—bases his work frequently are similar if not identical. Everything that rises must converge, and this book focuses on the point of convergence, the apex of an artistic pyramid.

Of these three disciplines I came first to literature, the primary subject of my formal education. My interest in aesthetics began during an NEH summer seminar at UCLA directed by G. B. Tennyson. I am, therefore, indebted to the NEH for offering the seminar and to Professor Tennyson, who has since that time continued to encourage my work on this project and to help in various ways with it. His support has been of great value throughout the years that went into the preparation of this book.

I was led to architecture through an interest in the Medieval Revival, for the more I learned about the Revival the more I came to see that architecture is the most important manifestation of the Victorians' fascination with the Middle Ages. I have pursued this interest for the most part independently, with the exception of having attended the Victorian Society's summer school in England. I should like to acknowledge the Society for offering this splendid program and to thank Christopher Forbes for providing me with a scholarship.
Most of the research for the book was done at the Crabbe Library of Eastern Kentucky University and at the Cambridge University Library. The staffs of both of these libraries have been unfailingly helpful and courteous, making my work all the more pleasant. I have used as well the libraries of the University of Kentucky, the University of Michigan, and UCLA, and I am obliged to all three for help and hospitality.

Eastern Kentucky University granted me a sabbatical leave in 1981, which allowed me to spend more than half a year in England, reading, and then writing part of the manuscript. This leave, for which I am very grateful, was of crucial importance to the completion of the book. The research committee of the University also generously provided travel funds that were essential to the gathering of the photographs.

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