



Essays on Music

By Theodor Adorno

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Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969), one of the principal figures associated with the Frankfurt School, wrote extensively on culture, modernity, aesthetics, literature, and—more than any other subject—music. To this day, Adorno remains the single most influential contributor to the development of qualitative musical sociology which, together with his nuanced intertextual readings of musical works, gives him broad claim as a continuing force in the study of music. This long-awaited collection of twenty-seven essays represents the full range of Adorno's music writing. Nearly half of the essays appear in English for the first time; all of the essays are fully annotated; and the previously translated essays have been corrected and missing text restored, making this volume the definitive resource on Adorno's musical thought.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Dense with insight, Theodor Adorno's 'Essays on Music are essential lessons in the art of hearing.'--'The Independent (UK)

From the Inside Flap

"A book of landmark importance. It is unprecedented in its design: a brilliantly selected group of essays on music coupled with lucid, deeply incisive, and in every way masterly analysis of Adorno's thinking about music. No one who studies Adorno and music will be able to dispense with it; and if they can afford only one book on Adorno and music, this will be the one. For in miniature, it contains everything one needs: a collection of exceptionally important writings on all the principal aspects of music and musical life with which Adorno dealt; totally reliable scholarship; and powerfully illuminating commentary that will help readers at all levels read and re-read the essays in question."—Rose Rosengard Subotnik, author of *Deconstructive Variations: Music and Reason in Western Society*

"An invaluable contribution to Adorno scholarship, with well chosen essays on composers, works, the culture industry, popular music, kitsch, and technology. Leppert's introduction and commentaries are consistently useful; his attention to secondary literature remarkable; his interpretation responsible. The new translations by Susan Gillespie (and others) are outstanding not only for their care and readability, but also for their sensitivity to Adorno's forms and styles."—Lydia Goehr, author of *The Quest for Voice: Music, Politics and the Limits of Philosophy*

"With its careful, full edition of Adorno's important musical texts and its exhaustive yet eminently readable commentaries, Richard Leppert's magisterial book represents a brilliant solution to the age-old dilemma of bringing together primary text and interpretation in one volume."—James Deaville, Director, School of the Arts, McMaster University

"The developing variations of Adorno's life-long involvement with musical themes are fully audible in this remarkable collection. What might be called his 'literature on notes' brilliantly complements the 'notes to literature' he devoted to the written word. Richard Leppert's superb commentaries constitute a book-length contribution in their own right, which will enlighten and challenge even the most learned of Adorno scholars."—Martin Jay, author of *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of The Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research*

"There is afoot in Anglo-American musicology today the first wholesale reconsideration of Adorno's thought since the pioneering work of Rose Rosengard Subotnik around 1980. *Essays on Music* will play a central role in this effort. It will do so because Richard Leppert has culled Adorno's writings so as to make clear to musicologists the place of music in the broad critique of modernity that was Adorno's overarching project; and it will do so because Leppert has explained these writings, in commentaries that amount to a book-length study, so as to reveal to non-musicologists the essentially musical foundation of this project. No one interested in Adorno from any perspective—or, for that matter, in modernity and music all told—can afford to ignore *Essays on Music*."—Gary Tomlinson, author of *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera*

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often unreliable. Until now, there has been no comprehensive scholarly treatment of Adorno's musical thinking. This volume remedies both problems at a single stroke. It will be read equally—and eagerly—for Adorno's texts and for Richard Leppert's commentary on them, both of which will continue to be essential resources as musical scholarship seeks increasingly to come to grips with the social contexts and effects of music. No one knows Adorno better than Leppert, and no one is better equipped to clarify the complex interweaving of sociology, philosophy, and musical aesthetics that is central to Adorno's work. From now on, everyone who reads Adorno on music, whether a beginner or an expert, is in Richard Leppert's debt for devoting his exceptional gifts of learning and lucidity to this project."—Lawrence Kramer, author of *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History*

From the Back Cover

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