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Poetics Of Music In The Form Of Six Lessons



Synopsis

POETICS OF MUSIC IN THE FORM OF SIX LESSONS by IGOR STRAVINSKY. First published in 1947. CONTENTS: Preface by DARIUS MILHAUD 1. Getting Acquainted 1 2. The Phenomenon of Music 21 3. The Composition of Music 45 4. Musical Typology 67 5. The Avatars of Russian Music 91 6. The Performance of Music . . . 119 EPILOGUE PREFACE: THE POETICS OF MUSIC is like a searchlight turned by Stravinsky on his own work on one hand, and on music in general on the other. Every new work by this great composer is laden with far reaching significance. Each one possesses its own structure, its own tonal equilibrium, even its own moral climate. And the painstaking honesty the craftsmanly exactitude of each work raises it to the heights of abstract thought and at the same time to that austerity, economy of means, and essential authenticity which characterize the true laying bare of a soul. Igor Stravinsky's book invites us to follow him into the secret world that is the counterpart to the world of soul.

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Customer Reviews

These six lectures were given at Harvard during the 1939-40 academic year in French. They are presented here in English translation and have been the subject of a great deal of discussion over the past sixty-plus years. In re-reading them, I have to say that my opinion of them has risen a great deal from my student days. Maybe it is because I am now about the age he was when he gave them, maybe it is because I am now more well read and have thought more about music since my youth, or maybe it is because I now see the solid philosophy and healthy insights he had and the

rather unhealthy directions that academia was taking that he was resisting. Probably it is all of these. Reading these lectures are not easy sledding for those not already familiar with Stravinsky, his life, work, and the context for these lectures. Also, the reader will need to go to the various conversation books Stravinsky did with Robert Craft to get later clarification and further insight into what he was saying. However, they are not profoundly technical in music theory. What they require from the reader is a broad understanding of music, art, and European political and religious history to have a framework for understanding what Stravinsky is saying. The first lecture lays out what he intends to do with the lectures. The second talks about what he believes music is, what it isn't, and provides great insight into what Stravinsky believes is important in the art of music and what corrupts it. In the third lecture he talks about composition and provides wonderful insights into what it is for him. He really does undermine the common notion of the role of inspiration in composition. The fourth lecture says it talks about musical typology (whatever that is).

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