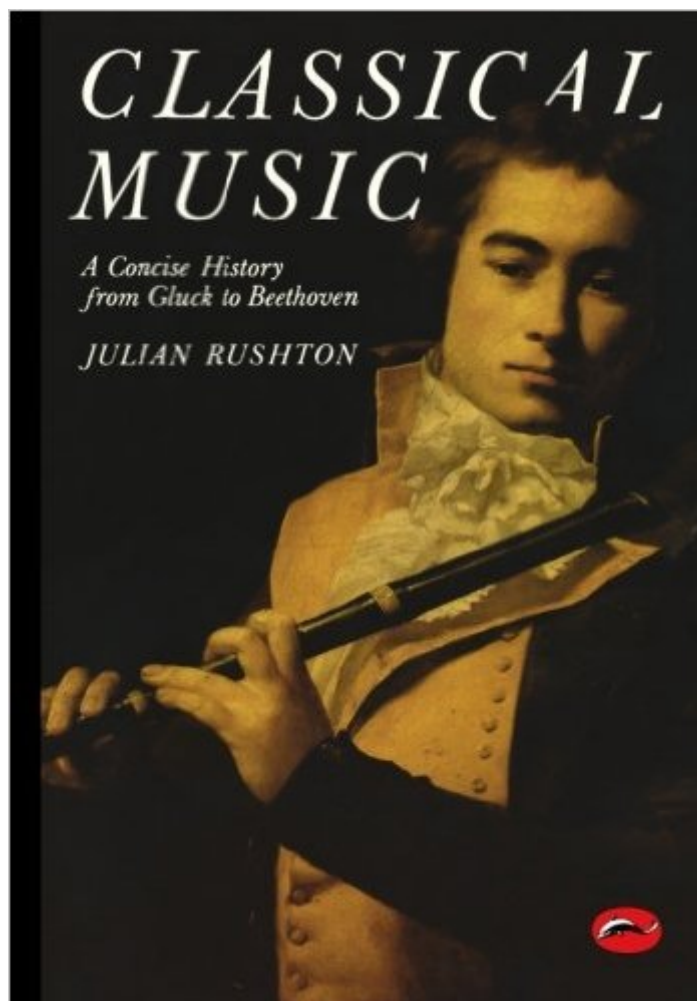


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Classical Music: A Concise History (World Of Art)



Synopsis

The period of musical history from c. 1750 to c. 1830, generally known as the "Classical" era, gave birth to a body of works that has come to be regarded as the indestructible foundation of the modern repertory of Western Music. It is the period of such masterpieces as Mozart's "The Magic Flute," Haydn's "The Creation" and Beethoven's "Choral Symphony"; of Gluck's innovative operas and the flamboyant ones of Rossini; and of fascinating and beautiful works of all kinds from such composers as C.P.E. Bach, Weber, and Schubert. But as Julian Rushton reminds us, there are many composers less celebrated today (Jommelli, Traetta, Hummel, Spontini, Mehel, to name a few) whose contribution is still being evaluated. Rushton illuminates all of these composers and their works within the cultural background of the Encyclopaedists, of Goethe and Schiller, of Neoclassicism and incipient Romanticism. 50 illus.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This fine book provides a concise history of classical music from about 1750 to 1830. This is 'only' a century but this period contains both the Baroque and Romanticism. The book is pitched at the beginner, which suited me (not a rank novice but by no means an expert). Rushton writes clearly, eschewing the language of the specialist. He explains things like 'sonata' and 'symphony', but he does so while also covering a lot of ground. E.g., opening the book at random, I found references to Goethe, D'Alembert, Rousseau, and Schopenhauer, though I should make it clear that the

intellectual and cultural history is secondary to the discussion of the music (its provenance, material production, genre, form, style, and spread and influence; he also pays attention to the recital halls) Opera is not omitted. There are illustrations that are most useful. For example, on one page there are pictures of three kinds of early piano, so the reader can see not only the fortepiano of Mozart's era, but also the physical differences between pianos. I should think that this book ought to be reprinted by Thames and Hudson, and perhaps put into softcover (if it wasn't originally). Rushton is eloquent, learned and interesting. I should add that he doesn't fail to discuss the so called musical unknowns, even as he also, understandably, focuses on the great names (Mozart, Gluck, Haydn and Beethoven). I was pleased to find it in a used bookstore.

FYI, I mistakenly reviewed the hardcover rather than the softcover edition of Rushton's fine book. Please look for that review if you are interested in this smart, gracefully written, thorough introduction to classical music from the Baroque through to Romanticism.

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