

**EIGHTH EDITION** 

## ISTENERS GUIDE TO MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING

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#### TO LYNN

Who did much more than "only stand and wait"



Listeners Guide to Musical Understanding is a textbook designed for use in introductory music courses for general college students. Its purpose is to increase students' enjoyment and knowledge of music and to cultivate the art of intelligent, perceptive listening. No prior training or experience in music is assumed or needed. Technical terminology is kept to a minimum while a working vocabulary of common and essential terms is developed. The various aspects of music are discussed objectively for the ultimate purpose of enhancing the subjective responses of individual listeners.

A distinctive feature of the text is that it guides the listening experiences of readers without reference to musical notation. A survey conducted on representative campuses revealed that a high percentage of students enrolled in music appreciation classes lacked a functional knowledge of notation and that even those who played an instrument could not readily comprehend abstract examples of printed music. The results of this survey were confirmed by a National Assessment of Educational Progress study which found in a random sampling of the U.S. population that fewer than 15 percent could read even the simplest line of music. In view of this evidence and the importance of developing music listening skills rather than music reading skills, notated music examples are not used in the body of the text. An appendix of music examples is provided for the convenience of teachers and those students and general readers who find it helpful, but the ability to read music is not essential for complete comprehension of the text or for listening pleasure.

The listening experiences suggested for the sequential units of study are planned to acquaint students by the end of the course with the principal materials, elements, mediums, forms, genres, periods, styles, and composers of music. In selecting the examples, four criteria were considered: musical value, appeal, suitability, and availability. The specified listening examples or equivalents can be found in most college and university collections of recordings. Except as noted, the composers and works are listed in the current Schwann *Opus* or *Spectrum* catalogs or are included in the *Listeners Guide* recordings, a set of four compact discs or cassettes, available from the publisher. The eighty-five recorded selections in the *Listeners Guide* collection are keyed to the text, and many of them appear more than once to encourage repeated hearings with attention focused on different aspects of the works. Throughout the text, dates are given for composers and works to place them in the proper time frame and historical context. When the exact date is unknown or disputed, an authoritative approximation is given.

The amount and kind of listening can be adapted to the available time, resources, and facilities. Listening can be done in or out of the classroom, individually or in groups, and from the *Listeners Guide* recordings, commercial recordings, or specially prepared tapes. More listening examples are listed than can ordinarily be heard in a typical course for the following reasons: (1) to suggest a wide range of listening experiences, (2) to provide alternate selections when all are not available, (3) to allow latitude for individual preferences, (4) to include adequate material for more comprehensive courses, and (5) to provide multiple examples for teachers who prefer to use excerpts. Performance times are given as an aid in planning classroom listening and outside assignments. Elapsed time is also used as an aid in the perception of musical form.

The organization of the book, starting with the materials and elements of music (Part One), makes it possible to begin the course with music that is immediately appealing to students and for them to focus their attention initially on aspects of music which they can perceive without difficulty. In Part Two the forms and genres of music are discussed, and descriptive outlines provided for the listening examples enable students to follow the various plans of musical organization without recourse to notation. The periods and styles of music are introduced chronologically in Part Three, but the preceding sections contain extensive background information pertaining to style. Chapter 5, Elements of Music, is particularly rich in references to style. The relative emphasis on each area of study and the order of presentation can be adjusted to individual requirements. Modern music, which sometimes receives short shrift, is abundantly represented throughout the book and is the subject of special chapters, as are folk and popular music, jazz, and the music of other cultures.

The information presented in the text, combined with the recommended listening, stimulates the formation of broad and discriminating musical tastes. With its emphasis on general principles that can be remembered and listening experiences that can be relished, the *Listeners Guide* launches readers on a program of enduring pleasure and personal enrichment.

An accompanying student manual, Workbook for Listeners Guide to Musical Understanding, is designed to supplement and complement the material presented in the textbook from the standpoint of both the student and the teacher.

#### **Explanatory Notes**

**Listening Guides.** Throughout the book listening guides, separated from the body of the text by shaded boxes, provide information regarding each listening example. The composer and the work are identified and dated. Complete identifying information, which is sometimes abbreviated in the guides to conform with the page design, is given in the index of composers, performers, and works. Detailed information concerning the listening guides follows.

Recordings. Selections included on the *Listeners Guide* recordings are indicated by a stylized representation of a compact disc and a cassette ( ) in the margin. Numbers above the symbols and aligned with the name of the composer and the title of the work give the location of the selections in the recordings. For example, 2/12 indicates the twelfth selection on CD or cassette number 2. A brief voice identification precedes each selection on the cassette tapes.

Timings. The total performance time in minutes:seconds is given for each listening example in the book. The timings are precise for selections in the *Listeners Guide* recordings, approximate for other performances. Separate timings are given for movements in multimovement works. Elapsed timings are given as necessary to delineate sections or structural divisions within continuous works.

The keys of works are identified by capital letters. The mode is major unless minor is specified.

**Opus (op.) Numbers.** The works of some composers are identified by opus numbers, usually assigned in order of publication.

K. Numbers. The works of W. A. Mozart are identified by K. numbers derived from a chronological catalog of Mozart's compositions compiled by Dr. Ludwig Köchel.

**BWV** Numbers. The works of J. S. Bach are identified by BWV (Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis/Catalog of Bach Works) numbers derived from a thematic catalog of Bach's works compiled by Wolfgang Schmieder.

**Jazz and Popular Music.** It is common in jazz and popular music to identify the performers rather than the composers when they are not the same (unless the composer is particularly well known or copyright credit is required) and to give the date of the performance or recording instead of, or in addition to, the date of composition.

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### INTRODUCTION

Human beings have used rhythms and pitches for expressive purposes since the beginnings of civilization. Some speculate that primitive music antedates speech, and a Stanford research psychologist suggests that infants in their first year respond to baby talk, "motherese" in the jargon, more as a melodic stimulus than as language. Music has been an integral element of human culture as far back as it can be traced, and through the ages it has figured prominently in a wide range of human activities—in rituals, religions, ceremonies, and entertainments.

No completely satisfactory explanation exists for the universality of music. It is not essential for life, yet life without it is unimaginable. It does not provide basic necessities or satisfy obvious instincts, but it has flourished with all peoples in all times and places.

Developing an appreciation of music and an awareness of its place in human culture expands the horizons of music listeners and broadens their base for listening pleasure. Unlike many recreational activities, music listening can be enjoyed by people of all ages and by oneself, with a companion, or in the midst of a crowd.

As a starting point, everyone likes some kind of music. The purposes of systematic listening and study are to heighten the aesthetic experience derived from the music one already likes and to develop one's ability to appreciate additional types and styles of music. This book pursues both objectives, the relative emphasis depending upon one's perspective and previous exposure to music. Reading the book should prove of value in achieving the twin goals of greater understanding and broader taste, but reading alone assures little progress. The reading must be followed by listening. Music must be given an opportunity to speak for itself.

For practical reasons, most music listening is now done by means of recordings. Modern recording and playback technology has made virtually perfect sound reproduction feasible. Though not all listening environments are equipped with state-of-the-art systems, older equipment and formats are rapidly being replaced by digitally recorded, edited, and mastered (DDD) recordings issued on compact discs (CDs) of superlative quality. Only legal problems are delaying the commercial exploitation of digital audio tapes (DATs).

Despite the high quality of electronic sound reproduction, the elusive quality of a live performance cannot be captured by a microphone. More important, the empathy between performers and audiences occurs only when the two come together. Recordings are a marvelous convenience and provide repeated hearings on demand, but only in live performance situations is the full impact of the listening experience achieved. Listening to recordings should be supplemented by concert attendance whenever possible. The performances do not have to be by professional artists. Living presence compensates for any technical limitations of student and faculty performers.

For those whose prior exposure to live music has been exclusively in the exuberant atmosphere of rock concerts, the relatively subdued formality of classical concerts and recitals may require a bit of adjustment. The crowd rarely exceeds the size of the hall, and paid admissions are usually for reserved seats. Plan to be seated before the scheduled time of the performance. Quiet prevails until the appearance of the performers or the conductor (of large groups) is acknowledged by polite applause. Thereafter, applause reflecting the degree of enthusiasm for the interpretation follows each selection but is not customary between parts of extended works. When in doubt about appropriate responses in such matters, follow the lead of seasoned concert goers. Standing ovations and shouts of "bravo" are reserved for the conclusion of truly stellar occasions.

The arrival of the electronic age has revolutionized the listening habits of people worldwide. Gone is the time when music was available only to the privileged and on special occasions, when audiences were restricted to the capacity of a concert hall, and when sound could be preserved only as long as an instrument continued to vibrate. Treasures of music now await the entire population at the turn of a dial or the push of a control switch. The inventions that make this possible are so much a part of twentieth-century life-styles that it is amazing to realize that they have come into general use within a time span of less than a century.

Sound recording has not been enlisted exclusively in the cause of art. It also serves the purposes of commerce and industry. Our ears are bombarded with sounds from loudspeakers while we shop, eat, work, travel, and even when we sleep. Neither music nor advertising has been quite the same since the advent of the singing commercial, and now that music's efficacy in increasing sales and productivity has been recognized, it competes regularly with the hubbub of shopping malls and the din of factories. When we seek diversion, music is generally in the background, if not in the foreground. Since we are engulfed in sound around the clock, a distinction must be made between *hearing* and *listening*.

A person hears music playing in the background but listens to the person with whom one is speaking. A person hears a room full of people talking but listens to one conversation. The ears and mind are capable of concentrating on one sound source to the exclusion of others. This is attentive listening, the first requirement if one is to appreciate music. Persons whose exposure to music is limited to random encounters in the course of other activities are bypassing opportunities for pleasure every day.

In the chain of musical expression there are three mutually dependent links—the composer, the performer, and the listener. Composers and performers are among the most ardent listeners, and it is not uncommon for musicians to be active in all three roles. Most people, however, are content to be listeners most of the time. Just to learn the craft of the composer or to acquire the technical proficiency of an artist performer requires years of arduous study and hours of daily practice, not to mention talent. Fortunately, the pathway to becoming a perceptive listener is considerably less demanding. Only the inclination and a modest amount of conditioning are required. Appreciation inevitably follows sufficient acquaintance with good music. The process is hastened perhaps by acquiring knowledge about music, but most important is a judicious selection of listening experiences.

Music with only transient appeal or that functions primarily on a subconscious level will receive only passing notice in this study. The field is thus limited to music of enduring value that merits or has achieved wide recognition and that sustains interest under scrutiny. Musical works satisfying these conditions are legion. The problem is not one of finding worthy examples but of making choices from the infinite possibilities. Limitations of time and space suggest a search for prototypes illustrating various mediums, forms, genres, and styles that will serve as touchstones to the vast treasury of music.

To open the doors to this treasury, it is not necessary to study the rudiments of music or to take lessons on an instrument. Though these activities can provide a source of pleasure and a sense of accomplishment, they are best undertaken when youthful enthusiasm is high and time schedules are unencumbered. Fortunately for those beyond this point, the lack of such knowledge and ability is no barrier to the joy of music listening. If one has a particular interest in music fundamentals or in learning to play an instrument, that is another matter, but it is going the long way if the objective is to become an informed listener. There are more direct and pleasant routes.

One such course is charted here. It consists mostly of listeninglistening to sounds of inherent beauty organized with consummate skill and brought to life by incomparable artists. This is not to say that nothing is required but to bathe in sound. On the contrary, total concentration on the listening experience is essential. Specific features of the music must be sought out, learned, remembered, and recognized. Music, even a familiar piece, becomes more understandable and more meaningful in the process. There may be no obvious logic for liking music, but there is a high correlation between preferences and the amount and kind of listening. It follows naturally that the person with the broadest and most extensive experience possesses the greatest potential for enjoyment. It is never too late, or too early, to begin acquiring this experience.

