

Music
IN HISTORY

MCKINNEY AND ANDERSON

MUSIC IN HISTORY

THE EVOLUTION OF AN ART

HOWARD D. MCKINNEY and W. R. ANDERSON

Authors of Discovering Music

*There is no truer truth obtainable
By man, than comes of music.*

ROBERT BROWNING

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY · New York · Cincinnati
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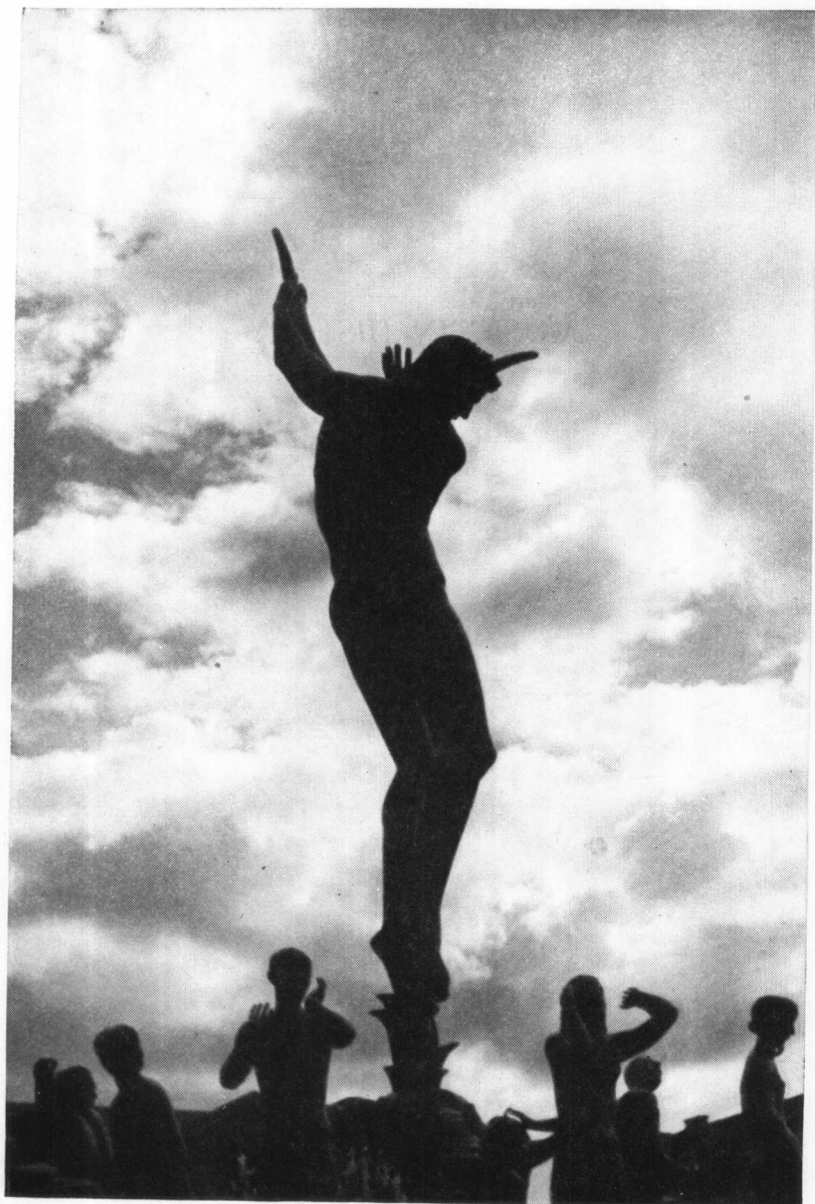
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MUSIC IN HISTORY

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MUSIC IN HISTORY



H. D. McKinney

ORPHEUS, THE GOD OF MUSIC
Statue by Carl Milles in Stockholm

Prelude

NO MERE introduction to such an art as music can satisfy an eager student. After becoming aware of his capacity for participating in the great heritage of the world's musical experience, it is natural that to his enthusiasm he should wish to add knowledge; and that he should desire to increase his modest ability by every available means. This work has been written to help him fulfill such purposes.

Prepared along the lines of a general historical survey of the whole subject, it is meant for the average listener of today who has secured a start on his journey of discovery into the extensive land of music and would go further. It is not a work for the specialist who desires to become versed in the intricate details of the historical development of his subject. The writing of this book was motivated by the same pedagogic principle that governed the shaping of the material in *Discovering Music*, namely, the study of an art can "educate" only if it can be made to give a sense of pleasure. The authors feel that the most potent reason for a music listener's wanting to learn more of the rich heritage of his art is the greatly increased sense of pleasure and satisfaction that he will derive from the music he hears; and they have kept this viewpoint in mind throughout.

Most works that treat of the story of the development of music employ a different procedure. They are content to convey information by a chronological arrangement of facts, with little attempt to relate these to general cultural backgrounds and none whatever to make them live by means of actual listening experience. The authors have avoided this stereotyped method of arrangement and have adopted several cardinal principles for their work which differentiate it in aim and scope from the older types of musical histories:

First. Reading or hearing about music without being able to listen to it is largely a profitless experience; the music is always the important thing. Therefore the authors have arranged their treatment so as to embrace, for the most part, only those works from the various composers which are available in standard phonograph recordings, so that the student can actually know what he is reading about, without merely taking the authors' word for it. The developments of the art are traced by discussions of general periods, such as Medieval, Gothic, Renaissance, and Romantic, as well as by study of the works of its greatest composers — Palestrina, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt, Brahms, Wagner, Strauss, Stravinsky — together with those of such significant though less eminent men as Monteverdi, Scarlatti, Telemann, and so forth. Thus the reader gradually becomes familiar with a large and varied listening repertoire.

Second. None of the arts — and this is especially true of music — has developed in a void, unassociated with its time and period. Even the specialists, once content largely to dig up facts and pigeonhole them so that they might be used to verify or refute other facts, have become conscious of the need for relating these neat parcels of data to the larger influences which have shaped all the periods of history. To understand music as we have it today, it is necessary to know something of the forces which have shaped and conditioned the various epochs of its growth. Music reflects the temper of the time that gives it birth and has a definite relationship to the political, economic, and cultural conditions that surround its composers and practitioners. Therefore this treatment has been planned to show the outstanding social and aesthetic characteristics of the great epochs in art history — Greek, Early Christian, Romanesque, Gothic, and the rest. All the music has been discussed against the general backgrounds of its time and co-ordinated with some of the other arts — painting, literature, sculpture, and architecture. In a word, the authors have tried to show that music is an integral element of the general spirit which informs the whole exterior or interior world of a period. In carrying out this scheme they have used a large number of pictures in order to give the reader a wider conception of the part which the other arts have played in the life of man.

Third. Owing to its very nature, music, in so far as the average individual is concerned, is more a matter of emotional significance than of intellectual understanding. Real interest in music begins, therefore, for everyone except the specialists, with the works of the eighteenth century. While recognizing this fact, the authors have paid the music written before that time more attention than is usually accorded it in a work of this kind. They have also given an adequate description of the backgrounds out of which our modern music has come, with as complete reference as possible to the works involved.

Fourth. An important factor in forming any good historical perspective in art is the judgment of contemporary opinion. A wise essayist has said that the best history of music that could be written would be one composed entirely of contemporary judgments — extracts from letters and autobiographies of musicians and persons having musical experience. As many of these as is practicable have been included in this work, covering the most important periods and movements.

Fifth. An attractive style not only helps understanding but increases enthusiasm. The authors have therefore tried to make their writing alive and interesting as well as informing; they have avoided textbook phraseology and have not hesitated to use many quotations. This book thus provides a humanistic background for the study of music, the comprehension of which will increase the understanding and heighten the enjoyment of every piece of music the average listener may hear, whether it be by Guillaume de Machaut, Johannes Brahms, or Paul Hindemith; whether it stem from the believing twelfth, the brilliant sixteenth, the gallant eighteenth, or the cynical twentieth century.

Acknowledgments

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- London Observer for selections by Basil de Sélincourt, April, 1933, and William Glock, July 26, 1936.
- Longmans, Green & Co. for a passage from *The Theatre* by Sheldon Cheney.
- The Macmillan Company for selections from *Art and Society* by Herbert Read; *Gluck's Preface to Alceste in Music & Nationalism* by Cecil Forsyth; *Beyond Good and Evil* by Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, translated by Helen Zimmern; *Music Study in Germany* by Amy Fay; and the map adapted from *A Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe, Volume I*, by C. J. H. Hayes. These selections are used by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.
- Music & Letters*, London, for the selection by Eva Mary Grew, January, 1938.
- Musical Courier* for "My Dream" by Franz Schubert, translated by César Saerchinger.
- New York Herald Tribune* for the item by Lawrence Gilman; the Schönberg item translated by J. D. Bohm; and the item signed "J. S., May 25, 1939."
- The New York Sun* for the article by W. J. Henderson.
- The New York Times* for the excerpt from Olin Downes's interview with Ernest Bloch, January 22, 1939.
- Novello & Company, Ltd., London, for the extract from *The Organ Works of Bach* by Harvey Grace.
- Oxford University Press, London, for selections from *The Music of Bach* by C. Sanford Terry and *The Oxford History of Music, Volume I*, edited by H. W. Wooldridge.
- Oxford University Press, New York, for the quotation from Shaw's translation of *The Odyssey* and the poem by Ford Madox Ford from his *Collected Poems*.
- Duncan Phillips, author, for part of his article on Giorgione from *The Enchantment of Art*.
- G. P. Putnam's Sons for selections from *The Dance; A Short History of Classic Theatrical Dancing* by Lincoln Kirstein.
- Random House, Inc. for a paragraph from *Beloved Friend* by C. S. Bowen and B. von Meck.

G. Schirmer, Inc. for selections from the following articles in *The Musical Quarterly*:
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English,” *New York Herald Tribune*, May 12, 1937.

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