



Stanley Sadie's
*Brief
Guide to
Music*

with Alison Latham

Third Edition



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Guide to
Music*

edited by Stanley Sadie
with Alison Latham

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Abbreviations in music examples:

bn., bassoon; cl., clarinet; cont., basso continuo;
db., double bass; fl., flute; hn., horn; m. (mm.) measure(s);
ob., oboe; orch., orchestra; pf., pianoforte;
str., strings; tpt., trumpet; trbn., trombone; va., viola;
vc., cello; vn., violin; ww., woodwind.

In the Listening Guides and lists of works, capital letters
denote major keys, lower-case ones minor keys.
Square-bracketed times in the Listening Guides signify
timings in repeated sections.

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Preface

The principal aim of this book, a much-revised shortened version of the original *Music Guide*, remains to enhance people's pleasure and understanding in listening to music. Although it is designed for those with little experience or musical knowledge, I hope that its mixture of musical description and background information may also prove attractive and helpful to the general music-lover. This new edition sees a number of modifications, particularly towards the simplification of the discussion of the technical aspects of music and in a presentation of the historical material in a way that focuses more sharply on the works treated in detail.

The approach here to the repertory of music is perhaps slightly different from those commonly found in introductory books. Description and elucidation remain the first considerations; but some emphasis is also placed on history and context. I do not find myself especially sympathetic to a philosophy in which every work of art is regarded as an independent entity that can profitably be discussed simply for what it is: "what it is" – and thus the understanding of it – depends on when it was created, how people were thinking at the time, and the purpose for which it was created, as well as the techniques used in its creation.

The book begins with a section on the "elements" of music, treating pitch, rhythm, harmony, key, etc, chiefly for the benefit of those not familiar or not fully familiar with them. It is designed to equip the reader for what is to come, introducing concepts one at a time and assuming no prior knowledge. This section, which also deals with the structure of music, is followed by one on musical instruments.

The main part of the book, sections III to VIII, discusses the music of six different eras in Western culture, from the Middle Ages to the present day, in chronological order. The first and last of these incorporate material originally supplied by Judith Nagley and Paul Griffiths. In the introductions to these sections, I have attempted to draw attention to features of contemporary social, cultural, and political history that bear on the music discussed, and to outline the new stylistic weapons that composers forged to enable them to rise to the challenges of a changing world. The aim is to give the reader a sense of music as a part of the fabric of life, as something that changes as the world does, and so to heighten his or her understanding of it through this broader human context. The changes in content and emphasis that we have made for this revised edition are indicative of the way that, as time has moved on, perspectives have shifted: we have increased the coverage of music composed by women across the ages, and have made new choices of several twentieth-century items in particular in the light of changing taste and recent developments.

In line with this general approach, we have laid more stress on biography than is usual in introductory books. Without biographical discussion it is rarely possible to explain the purpose for which a piece of music was composed, on which its

structure may acutely depend. Except in the earliest historical section, where the material scarcely exists, and the latest, where the familiarity of the modern world renders it progressively less necessary, biographical information is included for important composers; we also give, in tabular form, summary lists of works. I believe that biography can be inherently interesting, can cast light on the society to which a composer belongs, and that, taken with the music itself, it may serve to stimulate the reader's interest and increase his or her involvement. I hope that the enthusiasm and the love of music that I and my co-authors feel, and have made no special effort to hide, may also infect the reader.

Many people come to music first of all through popular music. Parts of our final section, IX, originally contributed by Alyn Shipton, have been revised or, in the case of the material on rock, written afresh in expanded form for this edition by Andrew Clements. The objective remains: the tradition of popular music is treated in a similar way to that pursued in the other, historical chapters. I hope that this chapter may provide a valuable way into music for students and others more familiar with popular music than with other kinds.

The absence of any substantial discussion of non-Western music ought not to be regarded as a symptom of ethnocentricity. The Western musical tradition (with its relatively recent African-American infusion, as treated in Part IX) is quite big enough, rich enough, and complex enough to be the subject of an entire volume. There are other, non-Western traditions of richness and complexity, too, and to treat them cursorily or perfunctorily would be patronizing.

A set of seven compact discs is available as a listening companion. For students, a single cassette or a three-cassette set of a selection from the featured music is also available. Details of the music are listed on the Contents pages. The recorded items are described in the Listening Guides, printed at appropriate points, with Listening Outlines through which the music may be followed in some detail. These Outlines follow no fixed scheme, since different music needs to be listened to in different ways, though they all follow the same principles, with timings and descriptions of the main events in each piece. The Guides and Outlines have been redesigned to make them easier to use. The Outlines are designed to be read, with help and guidance from an instructor where appropriate, while the music is being heard. Suggestions for further listening, based on representative works, are offered on pp. 427–8.

It is never possible in the discussion of music to avoid technical vocabulary. Much of this is explained as it is introduced, but all of it is covered in the Glossary (pp. 432–40). There is also a general index, principally of names.

Lastly, I should like to acknowledge the collaboration, at every stage in the preparation of the book, of my close colleague and helper Alison Latham, who, as well as working on the main text, prepared the tabular matter and the Glossary; I am grateful, too, to the panel of advisers to Prentice Hall Inc, whose various suggestions have done much to make this edition easier to use.

Stanley Sadie



Part I The Elements

1 *Introduction*

In every society, in every period of history, men and women have made music. They have sung it and danced to it. They have used it in solemn rituals and in light-hearted entertainments. They have listened to it in fields and forests, in temples, in bars, in concert halls and opera houses. They have made it not only with their voices but by adapting natural objects and banging them, scraping them, and blowing through them. They have used it to generate collective emotion – to excite, to calm, to inspire action, to draw tears. Music is not a fringe activity or a luxury one. It is a central and necessary part of human existence.

Every culture has found a musical style, and a means of expressing it, that arise from its needs, its history, and its environment. In Black Africa, for example, where there has been a crucial need for quick communication over large distances, the musical culture is more closely concerned with drums and drumming than any other culture in the world. The “gong-chime culture” of Indonesia (the most important instruments are in effect sets of gongs) owes its existence to the fact that the region found its musical character during the late Bronze Age. The ancient courtly cultures of the East – such countries as China and Japan, India and Vietnam

1 Opposite *Map of Europe showing the principal centers of musical importance.*

The need for notation

In non-literate societies, there was no need for the notation of music. All music was passed orally, one generation learning a stock of tunes, or “repertory”, by listening to older people singing or playing. The same applied for a time with the chant used in churches in Western society. But eventually, so that repertories could be stored, or communicated from a central authority and reproduced in performance, systems had to be devised for writing music down.



2 Blind harpist: scene in sunk relief from the offering chapel of the tomb of Paatenemheb, originally from Saqqara (Egypt), c1340–1320 BC. Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden.

– developed musical traditions of high elaboration and refinement; the rural populations used much simpler music.

In the West (Europe and America), the chief concern of this book, musical traditions arose mainly from chant used in the early church, from the sophisticated art forms developed at the courts of kings and nobles, from the needs of the wider audiences that industrialization created, and from the technologies of the electronic age. The rural population, and in more recent times the urban industrial one, has developed a more popular tradition of its own (see **Part IX**).

What, then, is music? It has been defined as “organized sound”. A musical tone is the product of regular vibration, and is perceived when an inner part of the listener’s ear is made to vibrate in sympathy. A noise, by contrast, is the product of irregular vibration. Of the banging, scraping, and blowing we mentioned above, the first may produce music or noise, according to the object banged and the ways in which it vibrates. Normally, scraping or striking a taut string, or causing a column of air to vibrate, will produce a musical tone. Any musical composition, or piece of music, will be made up of a large number of musical tones, intended to be heard in a carefully ordered pattern.

There are three basic systems of ordering: rhythm, which governs the movement of music in time; melody, which means the linear arrangement of tones; and harmony, which deals with the simultaneous sounding of different tones. There are other important elements, too, including texture (about the strands that go to make up the sound of a piece and their arrangement) and structure (the design of the time-plan of a piece). We shall discuss these in turn; to supplement and clarify this discussion there are boxes to explain how music is notated.

Systems of notation

The notation of music was at first done with little signs (“neumes”) that could be written above or below the words, showing standard small groupings of notes. Many other methods, however, have been devised in different cultures, suited to the kinds of music each culture favored and usually based on a local form of script. Many notation systems tell the performer not what tone is to be sounded but where to put his or her fingers on the instrument being played to produce the tone that is wanted. This kind of system (“tablature”) is still widely used, especially for the guitar. There are two basic facts that any system of notation has to convey: first, the pitch of a tone, and second, its timing.

2 *Rhythm*

The most basic element in music is *rhythm*. Some musical systems, in fact, in culture areas where drumming is important, use rhythm alone. While painting and architecture exist in space, music exists in time. Our perception of time in traditional music of the kind we are discussing in this book is dependent on two factors. First, music needs a regular pulse (for which there are models in nature and everyday life, like a person's heartbeat, breathing, or walking, or the ticking of a clock). Secondly, we can perceive rhythmic groupings where there are regular stresses or accents.

The most usual way for a composer to show rhythmic structure in music – that is, the timing of the notes – is indicating the *pulse*; this is done with a conventional word (see p. 18), to suggest the speed or tempo (Italian terms are chiefly used, as Italian composers dominated European music when tempo marks came into use).

A composer may be more precise and state exactly how many beats are required per minute, using a metronome marking (a metronome is a clockwork pendulum, calibrated so that it can be set at different speeds). Then the composer will indicate how the beats are to be grouped, normally in twos, threes, or fours:

ONE two ONE two ONE two ONE two . . .
 ONE two three ONE two three ONE two three . . .
 ONE two THREE four ONE two THREE four ONE two THREE . . .

(Capital letters denote the accented beats; in groups of four, a secondary, lighter accent falls on the third beat.)

Counting in this manner shows the *meter of a piece of music* – that is, the beats and their groupings. The rhythms are heard with the meter as an understood background. In some kinds of music, for example music for dancing, communal singing, or above all in pop music, the meter or beat will tend to be strongly emphasized. Marches provide a good example of a meter in twos, or duple. Familiar instances of duple meter are *She'll be comin' round the mountain* and *Greensleeves* (this is an example of compound duple meter; see below). Waltzes are always in triple meter; so is *The Star-Spangled Banner*. In quadruple meter are *O come, all ye faithful* and *Way down upon the Swanee river*. (It is worth trying to hum through some of these, thinking about the meter and the accents. Try other songs you know, too, to increase your awareness of meter.) Some music is without meter at all: early church chant is often performed without meter, taking its rhythm from the words (see **Listening Guide 2**), and there are types of non-Western and experimental Western music that have no meter.

PULSE, TEMPO

METER

The notation of rhythm

If the pitch of a note is the “vertical” element when we look at musical notation, then the horizontal element is rhythm. The height of a note on the staff shows its pitch (see p. 19). Its placing in horizontal distance along the staff – reading from left to right, as one reads words in Western languages – shows when it is to be sounded.

In modern rhythmic notation, the shape of a note, its color (whether it is hollow or solid), and the stem attached to it (and the flags attached to the stem) signify its duration. Nowadays the longest note in normal use is the “whole-note”. Below are shown the standard note values. Musical notation has to provide not only for notes but also for silences of exact length: so there exists a system of *rests*, equivalent in length to each of the note values.

American

whole-note



half-note



quarter-note



eighth-note



sixteenth-note



thirty-second-note



British

semibreve

minim

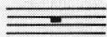
crotchet

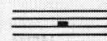
quaver

semiquaver

demisemiquaver

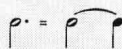
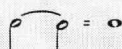
Rests


(also used for a
one-measure rest
whatever the meter)



ties are used to join notes together

dots increase a note by half its value



The American note names work on a mathematical basis of proportional lengths (as do the German): the British (like most other European) preserve something of the original Latin names.

Eighth-notes and shorter ones may be written with “beams” (as shown on the left) to improve legibility and to indicate metrical groupings; the grouping with beams may be shorter (as shown just right of center) as long as it conforms to the metrical divisions, or the notes may be shown separated (as on the right). Note the “flags”: none on a quarter-note, one on an eighth, two on a sixteenth, and so on.

