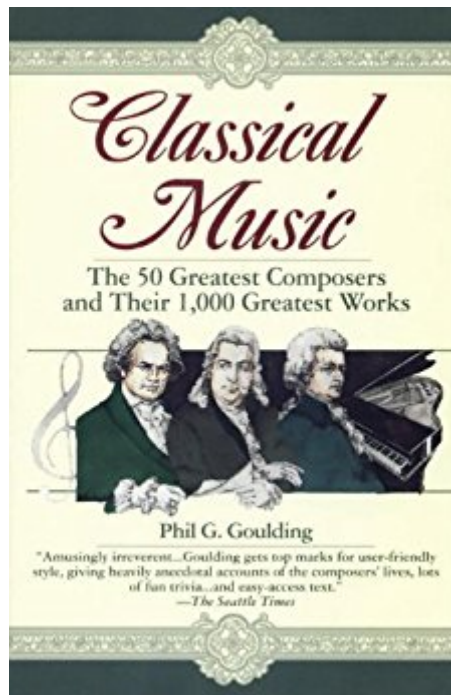


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Classical Music: The 50 Greatest Composers And Their 1,000 Greatest Works



Synopsis

MAKE A SOUND INVESTMENT IN CLASSICAL MUSIC Who are the ten most important classical composers? Who in the world was Palestrina? Why did Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" cause a riot? Which five of each important composer's works should you buy? What is a concerto and how does it differ from a sonata? Maybe you don't know the answers to these questions; author Phil Goulding certainly didn't. When Goulding first tried to learn about classical music, he found himself buried in an avalanche of technical terms and complicated jargon--so he decided to write the book he couldn't find. The result is a complete classical music education in one volume. Comprehensive, discriminating, and delightfully irreverent, *Classical Music* provides such essential information as: * Rankings of the top 50 composers (Bach is #1. Borodin is #50) * A detailed and anecdotal look at each composer's life and work * The five primary works of each composer and specific recommended CDs for each. * Further great works of each composer--if you really like him * Concise explanations of musical terminology, forms, and periods * A guide to the parts and history of the symphony orchestra "This book uses every conceivable gimmick to immerse readers in the richness of classical music: lists, rankings, sidebars devoted to lively anecdotes, and catchy leads."--The Washington Post "One terrific music appreciation book...The information is surprisingly detailed but concisely presented. Goulding's writing style is breezy yet mature....[He] has raised music appreciation from a racket to a service."--The Arizona Daily Star From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

This book makes an excellent addition to the library of any budding classical music aficionado. It is informative and presented in a clear format that gives the reader a foundation for musical exploration as well as logical direction. Much of the early chapters ("The Organization of Sound," "Setting the Stage") is written for the rank beginner. I found myself skimming these chapters, as will most readers who already know the differences between melody and harmony, strings and woodwinds, baroque and romantic. A beginner will find it helpful while not dry, and it's well-organized for later reference. The bulk of the book is then given to a discussion of "The 50 Greatest Composers and Their 1,000 Greatest Works." Goulding gives a nutshell biography, with some colorful sidebars, that gives a good overview of the composers' lives, times, influences, strengths, and weaknesses. After the bio is the most valuable part of the book--the greatest works of that composer. Goulding presents a "Starter Kit," a "Top Ten," and a "Master Collection" for each of the 50 composers. This allows a classical music newcomer to get the breadth of composers and the depth of a composer that appeals to them. That's what makes this book one that will be a long-time reference work rather than a one-off "beginners only" guide. Most "composer's guides" seem to favor an egalitarian, arbitrary ordering--alphabetical, chronological--rather than passing judgment about the composer's worth. (I guess it's fortunate for the music beginner that one encounters Bach and Beethoven early on in either an alphabetical or chronological ordering!) I find that Goulding's rankings give direction to exploring classical music.

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