



by Christian Lehmann
Herbig
Verlagsbuchhandlung
August 2010 / 256pp
Non-Fiction

This book is outside of the five-year window for guaranteed assistance with English language translation. We suggest getting in touch with the relevant funding body for an informal conversation about the possibility of support. Please refer to our recommendations page for books that are currently covered by our funding

The Key to Music's Genetics: Why Music is Part of Being Human

*Der genetische Notenschlüssel.
Warum Musik zum Menschsein gehört*

review

Musicologist, singer and academic, Lehmann brings all these attributes to this fascinating journey through the origins of music and its role in human development, culture and society.

The opening section examines the first stirrings of music in animals, birds and fishes, before moving on to humans in prehistoric times, and how it is an integral part of our nature to make musical sounds for family bonding (e.g. singing a baby to sleep) and social occasions. The second section follows the evolution of musical culture from ancient Greece and the educational theories of Pythagoras and Plato. After the predominantly religious music of the Roman/Christian era, the first great musical landmark was in 1000 AD, when Guido di Arezzo devised the staff and music could now be written down instead of just being passed on verbally. The author examines the relationship between 'art' and folk music (in the Middle Ages, the former was in Latin and the latter in the vernacular), and goes on to explore the flowering of secular music, the development of conservatoires to teach music and the democratisation of music with the rise of the middle classes and salon music. In 1877 came the second great landmark: Edison's invention of the phonograph. Now for the first time music could be repeated and preserved, listened to anywhere, alone or in company.

guarantee.

The third section deplores the decline of singing in our society and how we are becoming a race of listeners rather than music-makers. It considers our personal reactions to music – emotional, intellectual, subconscious and therapeutic – and the effects of the present-day ubiquitous ‘muzak’ which has made music a part of everyday life but also made it independent not just of the performer, as previously, but of the listener as well. It is now experienced impersonally, like the weather or the scent of flowers. With modern technical developments pop music has become the only really lasting ‘new music’ and the chain of ‘serious’ musical development has been broken.

Few books on music are as rewarding as this one. Anything remotely technical is clearly described and yet the musically well-informed are not patronised. Well-chosen examples and amusing asides help to make this a highly informative and extremely readable book – a must for anyone interested in the development of music and how integral it is to the human condition.

press quotes

‘Christian Lehmann sends the reader straight into the history of music, explaining why music is an inherent part of humanity on a journey through various musical and cultural epochs.’ – Financial Times

‘An expert introduction in layman’s terms to the history of music.’ – ekz bibliotheksservice

‘With impressive examples, Christian Lehmann explains exactly why music is part of being human. An entertaining journey through the cultural history and evolution of mankind, he reveals that music is an indispensable part of human nature.’ – BR/HF Klassik

about the author

Christian Lehmann was born in 1966 and studied musicology, biology, German language and literature, as well as vocal arts. He is a professor at the University of Munich, and is currently researching the evolution of music. He was a voice coach for the Regensburg Cathedral Choir for several years, sang in the Gewandhaus-Kammerchor Leipzig, and has worked with various choirs such as the Collegium Vocale Gent, the Rheinische Kantorei, and the Münchner

Kammerchor. He also performs as a vocal soloist.

rights information

F.A. Herbig Verlagsbuchhandlung GmbH

Thomas-Wimmer-Ring 11

80539 Munich

Tel: +49 89 29 088 157

Email: s.schmidt@herbig.net

Contact: Sonja Schmidt

www.herbig.net

Verlagsgruppe LangenMüller is one of the most respected publishing companies in Germany. Their wide range of titles are published in many languages. The company continues to challenge conventional wisdom, setting trends in both subject and format, while maintaining a list that includes novels, biographies, non-fiction, giftbooks and books that entertain the entire family.