



by Kai-Ove Kessler
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Non-Fiction

THE WORLD IS LOUD. A History of Noise

Die Welt ist laut. Eine Geschichte des Lärms

review

Wide-ranging and informative, *Die Welt ist laut* is a timely study of noise throughout the history of the world. As well as exploring the various sources of noise – both natural and manmade – and charting how these have changed over time, Kessler examines humanity's ongoing attempts to measure noise and manage its impacts on our health and well-being. International in scope yet with a distinctly European flavour, this is an original book that can be used as a reference text as well as appealing to general interest.

Die Welt ist laut employs a clear chronological structure, moving from ancient history to the present day. Kessler's scope is ambitious as he explores what creates noise, taking in everything from the whine of a mosquito to the eruption of Krakatoa, the rattling of mill wheels to the explosion of bombs in modern warfare. Particularly since the industrial revolution and the introduction of motor vehicles, humans have sought to investigate and curb the effects of noise pollution – a subject that Kessler engages with in detail and that has particular relevance given the rapid pace of urbanisation today.

Drawing primarily on the examples of London and New York City, *Die Welt ist laut* is a relatable work that contains many fascinating insights into human history. In looking to the past, Kessler often turns to

famous German figures, such as Schopenhauer and Heine, whose observations on the rising levels of urban noise are proof that this is not a purely modern phenomenon. With most sound now produced by humans, not nature, will the lessons we have learned throughout the past millennia help us to manage noise levels effectively in the future?

Building on many years of research, *Die Welt ist laut* is a fascinating work of non-fiction that showcases Kessler's talent as a journalist and background in music. Offering a wealth of facts and interesting perspectives, it is a timely and engaging read that is sure to stimulate discussion.

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press quotes

Noise is always associated with power, because anyone who generates noise imposes it on others.

FAZ

Knowledgeable and often surprising.

Der Spiegel

about the author



Kai-Ove Kessler, a journalist, historian and musician, was born in 1962. He has worked as an editor at Norddeutscher Rundfunk for over 20 years, and has been researching the history of noise for almost as long. Noise has been his constant companion since he was young: he is a drummer in a hard rock band. He has two grownup children and lives in Hamburg.

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