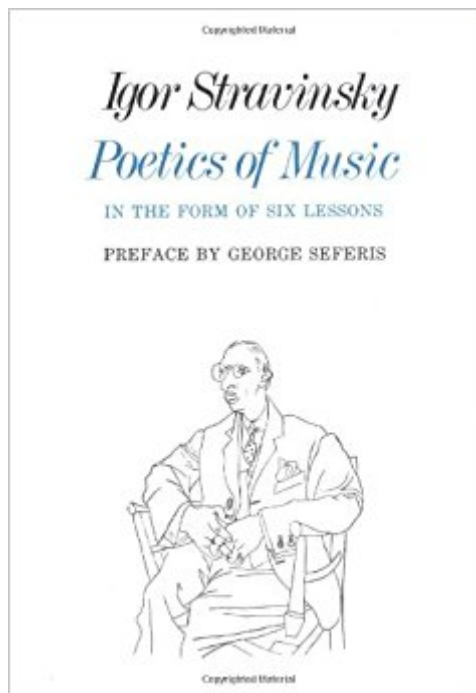




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Poetics Of Music In The Form Of Six Lessons (The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures)



Synopsis

One of the greatest of contemporary composers has here set down in delightfully personal fashion his general ideas about music and some accounts of his own experience as a composer. Every concert-goer and lover of music will take keen pleasure in his notes about the essential features of music, the process of musical composition, inspiration, musical types, and musical execution. Throughout the volume are to be found trenchant comments on such subjects as Wagnerism, the operas of Verdi, musical taste, musical snobbery, the influence of political ideas on Russian music under the Soviets, musical improvisation as opposed to musical construction, the nature of melody, and the function of the critic of music. Musical people of every sort will welcome this first presentation in English of an unusually interesting book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

These six lectures were given at Harvard during the 1939-40 academic year in French. They are presented here in English translation and have been the subject of a great deal of discussion over the past sixty-plus years. In re-reading them, I have to say that my opinion of them has risen a great deal from my student days. Maybe it is because I am now about the age he was when he gave them, maybe it is because I am now more well read and have thought more about music since my youth, or maybe it is because I now see the solid philosophy and healthy insights he had and the rather unhealthy directions that academia was taking that he was resisting. Probably it is all of

these. Reading these lectures are not easy sledding for those not already familiar with Stravinsky, his life, work, and the context for these lectures. Also, the reader will need to go to the various conversation books Stravinsky did with Robert Craft to get later clarification and further insight into what he was saying. However, they are not profoundly technical in music theory. What they require from the reader is a broad understanding of music, art, and European political and religious history to have a framework for understanding what Stravinsky is saying. The first lecture lays out what he intends to do with the lectures. The second talks about what he believes music is, what it isn't, and provides great insight into what Stravinsky believes is important in the art of music and what corrupts it. In the third lecture he talks about composition and provides wonderful insights into what it is for him. He really does undermine the common notion of the role of inspiration in composition. The fourth lecture says it talks about musical typology (whatever that is).

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