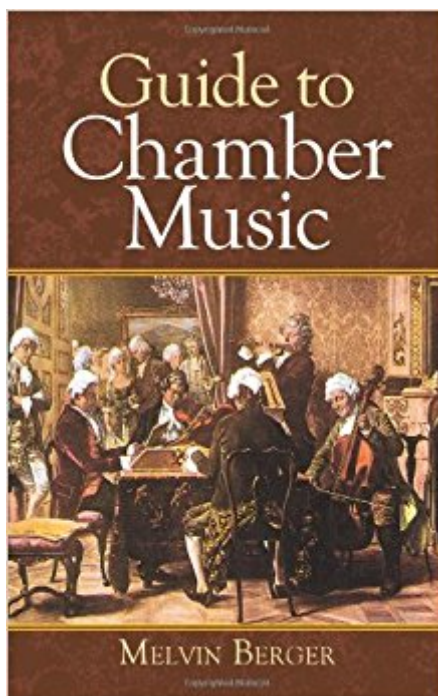


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Guide To Chamber Music (Dover Books On Music)



Synopsis

"Not only worthwhile but so beautifully written and so informative that it should be in every chamber music lover's library." — Los Angeles Times. Authoritative, beautifully written guide presents 231 of the most frequently performed pieces of chamber music by 55 composers. For each, the author gives a brief biography, followed by discussions of the individual compositions — both their historical and musical contexts and their salient features, including formal organization, content, and any extramusical associations. "No lover of chamber music should be without this Guide." — John Barkham Reviews. Preface. Glossary.

Book Information

Series: Dover Books on Music

Paperback: 480 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications; 3rd edition (July 18, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486418790

ISBN-13: 978-0486418797

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #704,695 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #120 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Classical > Chamber Music #527 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Music > Theory, Composition & Performance > Appreciation #2246 in Books >

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Customer Reviews

As another reviewer mentions, these are like the liner notes from a CD. Like him, I listen to a lot of works for which I don't own a disk (or I have budget works that lack notes). You'd think you could find these sorts of things online, but I've been disappointed in what I've found. The notes are fairly brief, adjectival and not technical. "The two violins state the suave and elegant theme, while the viola and cello share a complementary countermelody." That sort of thing. Typically a paragraph per movement, and not deep enough for those who seriously study music. The choice of works won't please everyone. It was written in '85, and fashions change. There's no Glass, Schnittke or Ligeti, but you do get Lutoslawski and Crumb. The lesser known composers seem to skew heavily American (Kirchner, Fine, Druckman). Personally, I don't care if it isn't exhaustive or reflective of

any consensus. I enjoy working my way through all the works in it (thank you, Spotify). Good value.

Years ago, I purchased this book. It has been an invaluable way to review chamber works to guide my listening. Berger is able to reveal what to listen for movement by movement without relying on the details of music theory. The continuity from one work to another is also useful. Many comparable books are anthologies of previews prepared over long periods of time and lack consistency. There are works missing, of course, but I find the choices optimal - especially when comparing a series of key compositions by one of the great composers. Now the book is available on Kindle. This is a great resource to carry along on my phone, especially when I don't know in advance what specific works will be performed. This is especially true for informal campus recitals.

Basically program notes for a number of chamber works - I purchased it as most of my music is streamed and I don't have CD or record covers to hand. It tells you a bit about the background to works and points out themes and developments - it is OK and can give you a leg up in understanding the structure of the music you are listening to. I can't say it goes very deep or teaches you how to listen.

As far as we know, this is the best available book of commentary on standard repertoire of chamber music. It is also terrific - gives a little relevant biographical information on composers as well as notes on the works. Useful to look at before hearing a performance of a work, and great material (when combined with other sources) for writing program notes.

This book covers quite a vast output and describes each work movement by movement. A very useful reference.

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