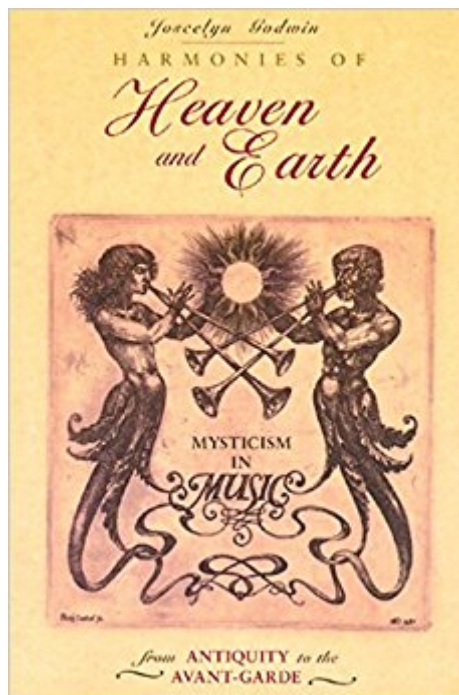




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# Harmonies Of Heaven And Earth: Mysticism In Music From Antiquity To The Avant-Garde



## Synopsis

Joscelyn Godwin explores music's effects on matter, living things, and human behavior. Turning to metaphysical accounts of the higher worlds and theories of celestial harmony, the author follows the path of musical inspiration on its descent to Earth, illuminating the archetypal currents that lie beneath Western musical history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Through a rich, eclectic mix of mythological, philosophical, literary, and scientific references, the deeper meanings of sound and music are revealed." (Gnosis)

**MUSIC / PHILOSOPHY** What lies beneath the surface of music and what gives it its transcendent power? For many people, music is the primary catalyst for experiences of expanded consciousness. Musicians and lovers of music--all those who have ever reflected on its inner reality--feel that a true philosophy of music cannot deal with physics and psychology alone. It must include the universal and mystical aspect of which Plato, Kepler, Rameau, and Novalis wrote, and of which Wagner said: "I feel that I am one with this vibrating Force, that it is omniscient, and that I can draw upon it to an extent that is limited only by my own capacity." The spiritual power of music surfaces in folklore, myth, and mystical experience, embracing heaven and earth, heard as well as unheard harmonies. Joscelyn Godwin explores music's perceived effects on matter, living things, and human behavior. He then turns to metaphysical accounts of the higher worlds that are the

birthplace of Harmony, following the path of musical inspiration on its descent to Earth, and illuminating the archetypal currents that lie beneath Western musical history. A final section gives the fullest account ever published of theories of celestial harmony, from Pythagoras to Rudolf Steiner and Marius Schneider. JOSCELYN GODWIN, Professor of Music at Colgate University, is the author of *The Harmony of the Spheres*, *Arktos: The Polar Myth*, *The Theosophical Enlightenment*, and many other books on music and esoteric traditions.

*Harmonies of Heaven and Earth* is an intriguing read if you are musically inclined and have a background knowledge of both music and medieval metaphysics. For the lay person it is a little more difficult to wade through. Still, a lay person can gain an appreciation for both music and speculative knowledge of its effects on matter through a perusal of this book. The author, Mr. Joscelyn Godwin, applies knowledge from folklore, and mysticism to the subject of music, introducing several themes including the linkage of music on matter, living things, and their behavior. He explores the affinity between music and the soul, and then he turns to medieval metaphysics, exploring the 'Chain of Being,' the birth place of music in higher realms of being and its descent to earth. In his final chapters he discusses the musical scale and its correlations to planets, utilizing medieval conceptions of cosmology and their notions of the 'spheres.' For me, the most compelling part of this book was it gave insight into the medieval worldview and its ideal of a unified conception of the universe; a conception that was first shattered by Copernicus, then Einstein and the quantum physicists. We still await the unified theory that the medievalists believed they held in their grasps. The downside of this book is there is little information on recent advances in science and the ways it would compel a re-conceptualization of music and its effects on matter. Instead, the reader wades through speculations on where Gurdjieff obtained his law of seven from, among other anecdotes that are not current science. Still if one is interested in alchemy, hermetic knowledge, and esoteric lore this will make a nice edition to the library.

An enjoyable read on a fascinating topic.

This is an excellent book for those who are interested in the metaphysical, transcendent power of music! As a professional music therapist who sees the power that music has to facilitate changes within people on a daily basis, I highly recommend it!

A treasure trove of esoteric musical knowledge

An amazing book on music and spirituality. The harmonies of the spheres become clear through this book. One has to be very familiar with both music and spirituality to better extract all the knowledge within this book.

Book covers a wide range of effects of music from plant and animal to human and society...still reading it and taking notes. I do hope it covers the research from my field of cognitive neuroscience.

Though this may seem an unnecessary addition to my review, Professor Joscelyn Godwin is a professor I have had/will have again at Colgate University, and a man of utmost scholarship. That said, this book suffers from one minor flaw, not worth removing a star: his archaic writing style. Godwin's ideas are intelligent, thought-provoking, and well-presented...but his writing style is the kind that can make the average reader's eyes glaze over. Of course, the "average reader" will not be reading this book, but a bit of accessibility stylistically never hurt anybody...then again, who am I to judge Professor Godwin? He was just grading my papers, hehe. Anyway, this book is brilliant. Vast amounts of information are thrown at the reader in a manageable and coherent fashion, and all the chapters follow a logical course of thought which supports the ultimate thesis that the universe we live in is a musical one, dominated by harmonies and melodies of untold beauty, not equations of mind-boggling complexity. His own 4 chapters are excellent forays into speculative music, presenting scientific evidence of the effects of music in the universe, as well as anecdotal/mythological excerpts to support the idea. At times, it seems as though fact and fiction are indistinct, and this would be an accurate view. But even Godwin himself notes this in Chapter 2. The ultimate relevance is that, whether fact or fiction, Godwin has touched upon some kind of truth (in my opinion), which his scientific evidence backs up, and his anecdotal/mythological evidence presents to us. The final section is the clearest description of complex musical philosophies I have yet found. Certainly the scales and tone-zodiacs (not to mention ideas) he presents are hard to decipher, but he explains them well in layman's terms, so even without a music degree, one can figure out the gist of what is going on. Godwin's own Harmony of the Spheres sourcebook includes much of this in even more detail, some more clear, some less, but this is a great quick guide to many confusing musical philosophies and concepts. Truly mind-blowing stuff if you ask me, especially the stuff on Kepler and the last several pages of the book...Ultimately, this book is a fantastic read, one that will make you question your existence, the realities you perceive, the nature of myth, and the power of music. Godwin opens minds...but try to get the 87 edition used, it has 2

passages he left out of the 95.5 Stars. Without Question.

This was the book which started my continuing quest for information regarding the foundation of music. It is a difficult read ONLY because one needs a huge background covering many individuals--Pythagoras, Kepler, Fludd, Hermes Trismegistus, Gurdjieff, the theosophists Blavatsky, Steiner, and Scott--all of whom I had but scant knowledge prior to reading this book. Godwin covers a wealth of information but only touches briefly on each: cosmology, the monochord, music of the spheres, temperament. I have reread this book several times; whole paragraphs are underlined. If you realize something is seriously wrong with the way music is presently used and abused by society, this book may be a starting point for you as it was for me six years ago.

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