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Music For The Piano (Dover Books On Music)



Synopsis

Seven years in the making, this classic survey of music for the piano is the most comprehensive manual of its kind in English. It achieves a well-rounded treatment of the entire spectrum of the pianistic repertoire, from the pavanes and galliards of Byrd and Gibbons to the bewildering diversity of forms composed today. In a format making for quick and easy reference, it comprises direct and carefully researched brief characterizations of every major work, as well as an enormous number of minor works, composed for the piano by more than 500 composers between 1580 and 1952. The annotations to each piece touch on form, type of fingerwork, degree of difficulty, technical requirements and interpretative treatment, and always include the publisher's name. Critical essays on periods and styles appear where necessary. No other single publication covers such a wide range of material. Not only the solo piano literature is included, but also works for four hands at one and two pianos as well as concertos for piano and orchestra. The selection has many remarkable features, not least of which is a comprehensive view of Latin American music that sends the pianist beyond Villa-Lobos to the works of such lesser-known masters as Bosmans, Paz, Ginastera, Guarnieri, and the Castros. In the case of such outstanding composers of keyboard music as Scarlatti, J. S. Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, and Ravel, there is a short section with a separate list of earlier compositions, as a guide to the student. The piano outputs of Mozart, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms, Debussy, Ravel, and Bartók are listed almost entirely. And the numerous lesser-known composers of individual worth — Portugal's Carlos Seixas, America's Edward MacDowell, Britain's John Ireland, Poland's Karol Szymanowski, and many others — help make this manual an almost unfathomable cornucopia for the pianist. This is an indispensable volume for all performers, teachers, and students of the piano, to be referred to constantly throughout a lifetime. "It should be the constant companion of every pianist and teacher." — Virgil Thomson. "This book should be an eye-opener for those who seek piano repertory. The best and fullest listing of piano repertory available in English and well set up for quick reference." — Catherine Keyes Miller, Librarian, New York Public Library.

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Customer Reviews

James Friskin (1886–1967) and Irwin Freundlich (1908–1977) served on the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music for many years and were highly regarded concert performers. They co-wrote this book in 1954; in 1973, Dover reissued it unchanged, save for a new Introduction by Freundlich.

This is a fine overview of classical piano music from Baroque (starting from 1580) to mid-20th century, written by two authorities. It is more comprehensive than Hinson's magnum opus in that it includes concerted works, and music for one or two pianos for four hands. As such, the comments are more brief, but they are insightful and overall quite helpful. Early works are broken down by countries. From Hadyn through the early 20th century is listed alphabetically. Later twentieth century music is divided into Europe/Russia, the U.S., and Latin America. There is no systematic attempt to classify the difficulty of the works, as in Hinson, but many indicators to the difficulty or ease of pieces are given, with many specific technical difficulties detailed. Still, I have to subtract a half star for the lack of a comprehensive grading of the pieces. A characteristic of this work is that if the authors believe a piece to be of modest or inferior musical quality, they will say so without pulling punches. Chopin, Schumann, and other giants are not spared, so you always know the author's true feelings about a work. A very valuable complement to Hinson's works. Four and one half stars.

this works offers a rapid but very serious coverage of the vast subject. Well written and agreeable to read, it is recommended for all music lovers. The edition is fine and the seller efficient.

James Friskin (1886 -- 1967) and Irwin Freundlich (1908 -- 1977) served on the faculty of the

Juilliard School of Music for many years and were themselves highly-regarded concert performers. In 1954, they coauthored this work, "Music for the Piano: A Handbook of Concert and Teaching Material from 1580 to 1952." In 1973, the book was reissued, without change and with a new introduction by Freundlich, by Dover Press. Although it appears this book is no longer in print, it remains an invaluable guide to the literature of the piano. The book covers in good detail the major composers for the instrument, including Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms, Debussy, and Ravel, among others, but many lesser-known composers as well. It includes short descriptions of many of the works in the piano literature together with comments on matters of expression and interpretation. The book provides an indication of the technical difficulty of many of the works it discusses the particular technical skills required to perform them. The work also includes more general comments on the work of many composers and periods of music with suggestions on how to approach the music. The book is divided into five sections covering 1. early keyboard music before the development of the piano, (with separate treatment for English, French, Italian Spanish, Portuguese, and German composers); 2. solo piano music from Haydn to the early 20th Century (the longest section of the book); 3. 20th Century piano music (with subchapters covering Europe, the United States, and, importantly, Latin America); 4. piano music for four hands (one piano and two pianos) and 5 the concerto literature. Some of the information is dated, and the section on Twentieth Century music covers, of course only the first half Century. But this book remains a find, both for the standard literature and as a guide to little-known music. Friskin and Freundlich are surprisingly thorough on early keyboard literature, especially because they wrote prior to the revival of interest in much early music. Of course, the works of J.S. Bach are covered in excellent detail but there is much else -- including a thorough discussion of many of the sonatas of Scarlatti. I was especially pleased with the treatment of the French clavecinists. I also noted a good discussion of the keyboard music of Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) which manages to omit any mention of his Canon in D. I have long struggled with playing Beethoven's sonatas, and each of these works is given a good brief treatment in this collection. There is also a detailed treatment of the Mozart piano concertos. One of the key attractions of the book is the opportunity for browsing it affords -- and to read about composers and music with which one may not be familiar. I have used this book for several years as background on an instrument and music I love, and as a guide to music I attempt to play. I have also used the book in listening to music, and it has helped give me ideas and insights for several CD reviews here on . This book will continue to delight those who love the piano, either by playing the instrument or by listening to the large and inexhaustible literature with which it is blessed. Robin Friedman

This book is an excellent reference for pianists and music lovers alike. It covers a vast amount of piano literature, essentially all classical and modern piano music heard today and also lots of music little heard. For each piece, organized by composer and period, a short review is presented, intended to give the reader an idea of the piece's artistic value, technical difficulty, etc. Although only to be used as a general guideline, these comments are valuable. Well worth the money!

Don't confuse this book with the 'Guide To The Pianist's Repertoire' by Maurice Hinson. It is not nearly as comprehensive. But for the money, it is a good place to start and might be all that many pianists and teachers need. The price is an added bonus. Much information at a very modest cost. Recommended

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