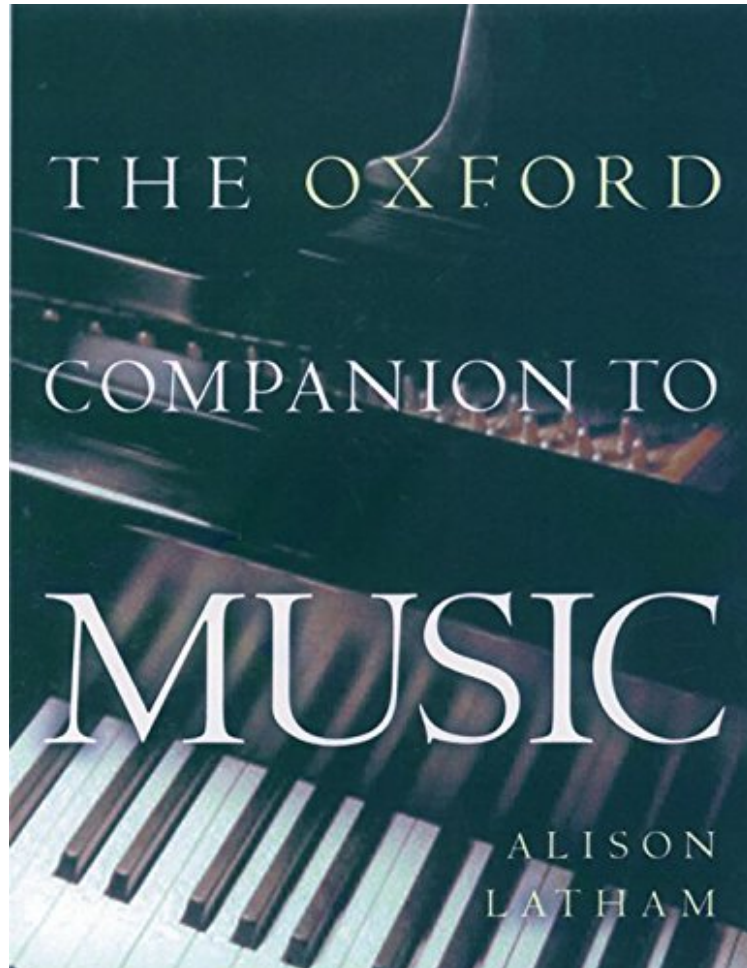


(Download free ebook) The Oxford Companion to Music (Oxford Companions)

The Oxford Companion to Music (Oxford Companions)

Alison Latham

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Alison Latham : The Oxford Companion to Music (Oxford Companions) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oxford Companion to Music (Oxford Companions):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy SocratesWonderful reference.0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Good service communication from supplierBy john sharplesI Like the book. Very good reference material. I recommend his book for any one studying or interested in music96 of 97 people found the following review helpful. Better or Worse than its Predecessor?By David A. KempI've been comparing The Oxford Companion to Music, ed. Alison Latham (2002; 1,434 pages) with its immediate predecessor: The New Oxford Companion to Music, ed. Denis Arnold (1983; 2 volumes, 2,017 pages). In the estimable series of Oxford Companions you can usually expect the new edition to supersede and replace the old one. In this case, however, it's not that simple. A glance at the above reveals that the new edition, in one volume, is some 583 pages shorter than the preceding

edition, in two volumes. Losing almost 600 pages of 2,000 represents a very substantial loss of material. Moreover, when we examine the two editions, we discover that the 1983 edition is lavishly, indeed beautifully, illustrated ("1,100 halftone illustrations and line drawings, 405 music examples"). None of the illustrations are in color, but there is an abundance of well-chosen, functional, illuminating photos, portraits, paintings, manuscripts, figures, line drawings, plates, tables, musical examples. The new edition of 2002, alas, has virtually eschewed illustration: almost all of the illustrations of the 1983 edition have been scrapped. We get a comparative handful of musical examples and figures, but just about everything else has been eliminated; even the greatest composers aren't represented by a single likeness, whereas in the 1983 edition even lesser composers get a photo or portrait. If for example you want to understand what an accordion is, there is no substitute for a picture of one. The 1983 edition has a 4-page entry on "accordion," with photos of four different types (including a musician playing one), plus 2 explanatory diagrams. The 2002 edition has a page-length entry with no illustrative material at all. I find this a significant loss, a significant cheapening of the book, and a significant diminution in the pleasure of using it. It's revealing that Alison Latham, the 2002 editor, refers to the "wealth of illustrative material" as one of the assets of Denis Arnold's 1983 edition, but makes no mention of the fact that she has thrown out almost all of it. But that's not all. If for example we look up "organ" in the 1983 edition, we find a truly comprehensive 20-page entry, with 20 illustrations (plates, figures, tables, drawings, photos). In the 2002 edition we find a 6-page entry with 8 figures; this represents a radical abridgment of the earlier article. Could "organ" be an unhappy fluke? No, unfortunately it's not. I looked up "trumpet," "violin," and "piano," and found the same result in each case: a truly drastic loss of material, both text and illustration, in the new edition. If you look up any of the hundred standard repertory operas in the 1983 edition, you find the basic facts about composer, librettist, and premiere, plus a synopsis of the action, and often an apt illustration and "Further Reading" suggestions. If you look up any of the same operas in the 2002 edition, you find a very short entry (Carmen, for example, gets three lines; Tristan und Isolde gets two lines) giving the basic facts about composer, librettist, premiere--no synopsis, no illustration, no reading list. So you can see why the 2002 edition of this book was received with reservation, indeed with downright disappointment, by those who were familiar with the 1983 edition. Why would Oxford UP have made such Draconian changes? Well, the governing perception seems to have been that the 1983 edition, lavishly illustrated and in two volumes, had outgrown its purpose and over-reached its market. Evidently many found the two-volume format cumbersome and too expensive. The 2002 edition, by eliminating almost all of the illustrations and reducing the size to a single volume, has cheapened and abridged the book, rendered it much less attractive, and in many areas reduced its usefulness, but has made it handier and more affordable. Does the 2002 edition have no redeeming qualities, then, but cheapness and one-volume convenience? Indeed it does have its virtues. For one, it's up-to-date. A blurb on its dustcover breathlessly claims, "Now, thirty years after the last edition, this invaluable companion is back in a completely new edition"--a barefaced falsehood: the period between the two editions was 19 years, not 30. But the new edition benefits from the scholarship of the last two decades; many new and updated articles ("over 1,000 new entries") reflect the perspective of 2002. Many articles conclude with mini-bibliographies (in both editions), and these are inevitably more current and useful in the 2002 edition. Perhaps the most valuable feature of the new edition is the inclusion for the first time of entries not just for composers but for distinguished performing musicians. In the 1983 (and earlier) edition, there were no entries for conductors, singers, instrumentalists. In the 2002 edition you'll find entries for Toscanini, Walter, Furtwangler, Caruso, Melba, Ponselle, Melchior, Flagstad, Callas, Heifetz, Casals, Artur Schnabel, Horowitz, Segovia, Dennis Brain, and many others. This change was overdue and certainly enhances the usefulness of the book. Many of the "over 1,000 new entries" in the 2002 edition are in this category. "Space limitations have restricted these [entries] to artists who are no longer alive and who had significant influence on composition or performance." These entries are also limited to classical musicians. In some cases the perspective of 2002 has warranted an expanded version of a composer entry in the 1983 edition. For example, Orff, Moussorgsky, and Scriabin all get expanded treatments (but lose their portraits) in the new edition. So, what to do; which Companion to choose? My solution is obvious but perhaps not very helpful: if you love music and like good reference books, get both. I believe the Alison Latham 2002 edition should be viewed as an updated supplement to the more substantial and lavish 1983 edition, not as a replacement. Denis Arnold's 1983 two-volume edition was the first complete revision since the original 1938 Oxford Companion to Music, edited (and largely written) by Percy Scholes; it is not perfect, but I think it represents the high-water mark of the three editions. If you have only the spartan 2002 edition, be aware that you are missing much of value and beauty in the 1983 edition. (Unfortunately I'm not the only one who has noticed that the 2002 edition is no replacement for the 1983 edition: if you check prices for used copies of the 1983 edition in the USA, you'll find that they are high.) If you own both editions, you can enjoy the best of both worlds. If I could own only one, I'd keep the 1983.

First published in 1938, The Oxford Companion to Music has been the first choice for authoritative information on all aspects of music. Now, 17 years since the last edition, the Companion is here to serve a new generation of students, teachers, performers, concert goers, record collectors, and music lovers. Completely revised and updated by a distinguished team of contributors, the Oxford Companion to Music features more than 1,000 new entries than the

previous edition; more than 70 percent of the entire text is either new or entirely rewritten. Here, in articles that range from clear, concise definitions of musical ideas and terms to extended surveys of musical forms and styles, is authoritative coverage of virtually every musical subject. Embracing the world of music in all its variety--including jazz, popular music, and dance--the Companion offers a concentrated focus on the Western classic tradition, from the Middle Ages to the present day. More than 8,000 articles sweep across an extraordinary range of subjects: composers, performers, conductors, individual works, instruments and notation, forms and genres. From the study of music--theory, aesthetics, scholarship--to the way it is performed and disseminated, the Companion provides comprehensive, accessible coverage of music in all its artistic, historical, cultural, and social dimensions. Comprehensive, authoritative, up-to-date, and designed throughout for clarity and accessibility, the new Oxford Companion to Music, like every edition before it, will immediately become an indispensable resource for all who wish to enrich their love and knowledge of music.

From Publishers Weekly
Latham, an editor of musical reference works, offers a new edition of this popular volume, which first appeared in a quite different form in 1938 and was last updated in 1983. Latham spruces up this edition with over 1,000 new entries; more than 70% of the book is essentially new material, not just about Western classical music, but also jazz, pop and dance music. Long articles are devoted to the most famous composers, while the approximately 8,000 short entries show a decided British bias there is almost as much space devoted to eccentric English composer Lord Berners as to Leonard Bernstein. There are also, perhaps inevitably, some omissions: while 20th-century German composer Boris Blacher is included, his arguably more original contemporary Wilhelm Killmayer is left out. Some readers may be frustrated with Latham's fondness for qualifying phrases, such as the observation that American composer Libby Larsen's music is "generally bold, clear, and colorful" or that the work of another Yank composer, Vincent Persichetti, "normally [keeps] some relation to tonal centres." Others may disagree with the value judgments assigned here, such as the praise of Gian Carlo Menotti's famously reviled 1970 opera, *The Most Important Man in the World*. Such provocative choices aside, the compendium is solidly researched, with useful biographical information and lists of suggested reading. Priced reasonably, given the book's size, this title may find its way not only into reference collections, but into the hands of music lovers who want an up-to-date browsing tome.
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From Library Journal
The Oxford Companion to Music is back with a deft new editor, a smart new look, and a reasonable price tag, considering the wealth of information. A member of the editorial board of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and former coeditor of the *Musical Times*, Latham oversees more than 150 musicians and scholars in this blending of the tenth edition (1970), edited by John Owen Ward, and the two-volume *New Oxford Companion to Music* (1983), edited by Denis Arnold. The writing team, which includes original Companion author Percy Alfred Scholes (1877-1958) in selected, updated articles, has achieved what a single expert could not in today's expansive musical landscape: that is, it has provided comprehensive coverage of "Western classical music" in a single, reliable book. Among the 8000 entries are articles on composers, theorists, and some performers; instruments, forms, and terms; subjects like electronic music, individual countries, and politics and music; and some pieces (and even some famous arias). Each entry is presented in a dictionary format, with a select index of names appended and sometimes with bibliographic references. Pertinent illustrations, both linear and musical, are sparsely used. The bias is still English, but the book provides cross references to American terms and includes plenty of American composers and musical subjects. A solid reference with a grand pedigree, usefully improved for home and general library use, this is highly recommended for all public libraries. Bonnie Jo Dopp, Univ. of Maryland Libs., College Park
Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.
From Booklist
The new Oxford Companion to Music updates two earlier works: the original 1938 Companion, last published in 1970, and *The New Oxford Companion to Music*, a two-volume set published in 1983. Its focus is classical music from the Middle Ages to the present. In the preface, editor Latham notes that "non-Western and popular musics are included, but mostly in so far as they have had an impact on the Western classical tradition." According to the jacket blurb, there are more than 1,000 (out of more than 8,000 total) new entries, and more than 70 percent of the content has been revised or rewritten. Well over 100 scholars and writers contributed to this edition. Entries, arranged alphabetically, vary in length from one or two lines (Orchestral score; Rite of Spring, The) to several pages (Copyright; Form; Handel, George Frideric; Pianoforte). Biographies (of composers, artists, etc.), instruments, well-known works, countries, societies, musical terms and types, and sociocultural aspects (Music on the Internet, Politics and music) are all covered. Nine major multipage essays on topics such as "The Baroque Era" and "Opera" are printed on a light gray background and arranged in sections. Some are new; some are repeats from the New Oxford with necessary revisions. Some entries show the British origin of the work, such as Eighth-note, defined as the American term for quaver. Tables and examples of notation are added where needed, but the photographs, portraits, and reproductions of paintings and scores found in the New Oxford have been omitted. The writing is accessible to a wide range of users, from students and professional musicians to the general reader and listener. Libraries that own Baker's Dictionary of Music (Schirmer, 1997), which is somewhat similar in scope and size, will want to purchase this as well, because each title has many unique entries. In general, although Baker's has more references to popular music, Oxford includes more

scholarly and technical detail as well as bibliographic references that have been expanded from other editions. This will be a standard purchase for smaller libraries that want to update the classical music section with a reasonably priced, one-volume work. RBBCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved