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# Introduction To A Philosophy Of Music



## Synopsis

Philosophy of music has flourished in the last thirty years, with great advances made in the understanding of the nature of music and its aesthetics. Peter Kivy has been at the center of this flourishing, and now offers his personal introduction to philosophy of music, a clear and lively explanation of how he sees the most important and interesting philosophical issues relating to music. Anyone interested in music will find this a stimulating introduction to some fascinating questions and ideas.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Peter Kivy is the most influential and prolific author on the philosophy of music within the analytical tradition ... Kivy has written a very readable and elegantly composed philosophy of music, which requires no prior knowledge of musicological terminology. The treasures of the book are the keen analyses of the issues, the sophisticated argumentations, and the wealth of relevant arguments ... It is a most valuable book for those who want to confront their views of music with one of the best-argued positions in musical aesthetics. \* British Journal of Aesthetics \* Written clearly and engagingly, Peter Kivy's introduction to musical aesthetics usefully summarizes his own influential views on various issues in the philosophy of music. \* The Philosophical Quarterly \* Though not a textbook, Kivy's book neatly covers the history of musical aesthetics from Plato onwards, and thus could easily be used in philosophy of music classes. \* The Philosophical Quarterly \*

Peter Kivy is Professor of Philosophy at Rutgers University, New Jersey. He is the author of *New Essays on Musical Understanding*, also published by Oxford University Press (2001).

Nice

If you want an introduction to the philosophy of music, this is the best book available. To some degree, that's because there are no real alternatives. The writing is clear and it really does give an overview of the issues that philosophers discuss, but that means it concentrates on "pure" music (instrumental music of the European classical tradition). The ONLY discussion of music with words is the chapter on opera. If you don't already know a lot about opera, you'll be lost following that chapter. Compared to most philosophers, Kivy has a very informal writing style.

Excellent introduction for practically anyone. Kivy doesn't presume any prior musical or philosophical training on the reader's part, so this is highly readable. If you are new to the field, whether you are a philosopher, a musician, or neither (I am a philosophy student with some music training), you will still find something of interest in this book --- Kivy tackles philosophically interesting issues that all music lovers must have wondered about at some point or other. Whether you agree with what he says, he writes clearly and makes thought-provoking, intelligent points.

Coming from the perspective of one with undergraduate degrees in both music and philosophy I was very eager to flip through this book. It certainly is an introduction: (1) Kivy assumes the reader to have little or no background in either music or philosophy, (2) Kivy aims for breadth rather than depth (not to say there isn't depth), and (3) the overall level of difficulty, in terms of comprehension, is fairly minimal. This is certainly a kind of book I would recommend to someone as a first reading...even one who has had much experience in each of the areas (philosophy and music) separately. The book has suggestions for further reading for those so motivated. Not that I am sufficiently knowledgeable for one to place much credence in the following, but I agreed with a majority of the arguments Kivy professed to be in-line with (where I felt the most disagreement was with extended formalist's argument that music contains no representation of emotions. Kivy considers some opposing arguments but it seems to me there is more to chew on. I have a feeling though that the distance between the two ideas could be brought closer together with a more detailed account of what emotions are). Four stars instead of five for two reasons: (1) I would hesitate to give an introductory work in any field five stars and (2) there were certain stylistic aspects

of the writing that put me off slightly (a small matter of taste and not by any means a substantial criticism).

A great book for beginner philosophy students. This book dives into the different views on the philosophy of music, attempting to figure out what music is at its basic form. Kivy explains everything into simple terms so most anyone can understand what is going on. I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in music and/or philosophy

This book was used as a text in my philosophy of music class. The professor chose the text because she knew that we would be opposed to his views. He barely deals with vocal music at all, claiming that it is not "pure music" because it has text. When dealing with opera, he feels the "problem with opera" is the fact that it is not cyclical. He mentions that when opera was first introduced that emotions were thought to be cyclical, and opera to the best of it's ability tried to accomodate that. However, in the mid 18th century that was discovered not to be the case and it was realized that emotions are linear. Just because the history of music has cyclical background does not mean that with this discovery it should remain as such. Linear and cyclical writing are tools used by a composer to convey certain emotions or to help define an event. Overall I felt Kivy was too verbose. If I were not a music major, I would have found it hard to truly understand what he was talking about

The book was in very good shape and it arrived in a very timely manner. I would purchase from this company again.

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