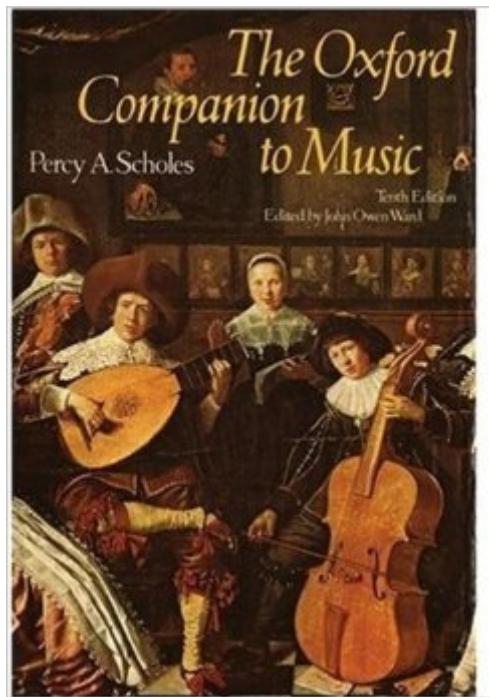


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The Oxford Companion To Music



Synopsis

The original 'Companion' by Percy Scholes remains a favourite for its friendly unpompous helpfulness and portraits of the composers by 'Batt'.

Book Information

Hardcover: 1250 pages

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Customer Reviews

The extraordinary thing about this book is that its first edition was the work almost entirely of one man, Dr Percy A Scholes. He had a certain amount of clerical and secretarial help from his wife and others, but this is no kind of boiled-down version of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians. To produce a one-volume compendium of music called for a single individual with a compendious enough knowledge of the matter, and Scholes was such an individual. I cannot suppose that the legendary lexicon of classical Greek was to any comparable extent the work solely of Mr Liddell and Mr Scott, who presumably had an army of hoplites, helots and slaves to do their donkey-work. Yet music is a far bigger topic than classical Greek, or indeed than any language that I know or even can imagine. It's in the nature of the case that any work of this type is partly out of date before it has got past the printers. A modest list of new entries is given at the start, and obviously some articles have been updated. Equally obviously, some others have not. At the time of the first edition in 1938 it was certainly true to say, as is said here, that knowledge of Handel was not advancing and possibly even declining. The revival of interest in his work was under way, but only just, at the time of Scholes's death 20 years later, but by the time of the tenth edition the transformation in that situation was well advanced, and one might have expected a drastic rewrite of that particular article.

In other cases unexpected developments in our musical culture have caught the editors unawares. There has been, for instance, a remarkable increase in the recording of out of the way composers.

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