



Music, Modernity, and God: Essays in Listening

Jeremy Begbie

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When the story of modernity is told from a theological perspective, music is routinely ignored - despite its pervasiveness in modern culture and the manifold ways it has been intertwined with modernity's ambivalent relation to the Christian God. In conversation with musicologists and music theorists, in this collection of essays Jeremy Begbie aims to show that the practices of music and the discourses it has generated bear their own kind of witness to some of the pivotal theological currents and counter-currents shaping modernity. Music has been deeply affected by these currents and in some cases may have played a part in generating them. In addition, Begbie argues that music is capable of yielding highly effective ways of addressing and moving beyond some of the more intractable theological problems and dilemmas which modernity has bequeathed to us.

Music, Modernity, and God includes studies of Calvin, Luther, and Bach, an exposition of the intriguing tussle between Rousseau and the composer Rameau, and an account of the heady exaltation of music to be found in the early German Romantics. Particular attention is paid to the complex relations between music and language, and the ways in which theology, a discipline involving language at its heart, can come to terms with practices like music, practices which are coherent and meaningful but which in many respects do not operate in language-like ways.

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