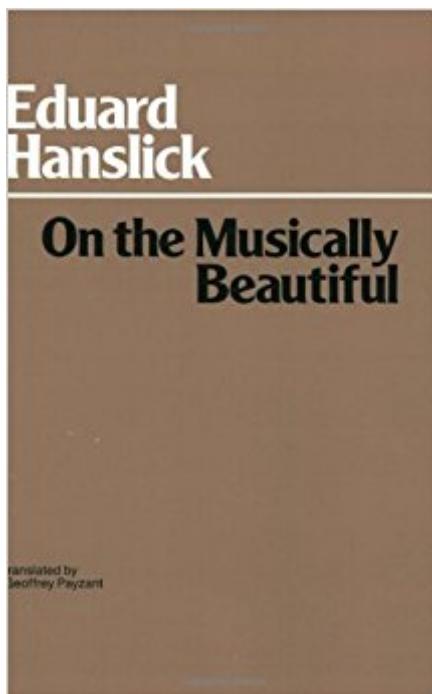


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On The Musically Beautiful: A Contribution Towards The Revision Of The Aesthetics Of Music (Hackett Classics)



Synopsis

"Like Hanslick, Professor Payzant is both musician and philosopher; and he has brought the knowledge and insights of both disciplines to this large undertaking." --Gordon Epperson, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*

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Customer Reviews

Anyone who wants to understand our modern musical prejudices should start here. There's an older translation available, but this one is much easier to read. Hanslick was a Viennese music critic who applauded Brahms and criticized Wagner. His thoughts about what makes music pleasurable are collected in this short book. A lot of it won't make sense if you don't know anything about classical music. But if you do, it's fascinating to have a look at arguments defending the critical perspective that says that instrumental music is better than vocal music, that German music is better than Italian (and Mozart better than Verdi), and so on. Basically, it's a music critic giving the original justification for a lot of what the musical establishment now takes for granted. So it's a fascinating look at how canon formation is justified.

On The Musically Beautiful Geoffrey Payzant, the translator of the book, points out in the preface to On The Musically Beautiful some revealing aspects of Eduard Hanslick's book and views:1. From Eduard Hanslick's autobiography, Geoffrey Payzant writes that "There he (E. H.) says that different times, different peoples, and different schools have different views on

what constitutes the musically beautiful...² G. P. also mentions that ³ H. says wryly that for him the history of music began with Bach and Handel but in his heart it began with Mozart and reached its summit in Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms...⁴ G. P. also mentions that ⁵ It would seem that, for Hanslick, the fundamental principle of music, namely the musically beautiful, while objective (i.e. not determined by our responses to it), is not universal but culturally and historically conditioned. His book, then, is more accurately described as an essay towards the revision of the aesthetics of music belonging to what we may call the Great Tradition, Mozart to Brahms...⁶ G. P. goes on to write that ⁷ Hanslick said that it seemed to him (in the 1890⁸) that a work deserving the title ⁹ Aesthetics of Music¹⁰ was still a long way from being feasible.¹¹ Perhaps it still is. When the time comes to attempt such a thing, however, if it is not built upon Hanslick's foundation, at least it will have to be built around it.¹² I would say that Eduard Hanslick thought that absolute music was superior to programme music. Good music didn't need any external support but the combination of notes and tones made by a composer of genius to be beautiful. That's why composers like Gluck - who complained in his manifesto that ¹³ a means of expression (music) had been made the end; and that the end of expression (drama) had become the means¹⁴ - Berlioz, Wagner and Liszt (the composer of pieces like his tone poems, not the pianist), to name just a few, had fallen out of favor with his criticism. I would also say that Hanslick's precept reflects a highly tonal personality as opposed to an atonal one. With Wagner, Hanslick might subconsciously have sensed that tonality was heading to a slow and untimely demise. Today, I am very happy to realize that the prejudice against programme music¹⁵ is a thing of the XIX century. However, I am even happier to know that atonality, dodecaphony, note-row, serialism¹⁶ you name it never prevailed over the kind of music Eduard Hanslick used to value. The Great Tradition lives on.

A must-read for any student of 19th and early-20th century music, performer, theorist, or musicologist, and anyone interested in Aesthetics more generally.

A well-thought-out translation of the 8th edition of this classic in music aesthetics. Best translation in English available. Highly recommended.

Such a great book! Well constructed argument with enjoyable wit!! Book arrived on time and was in

great condition, as described

I love the book and it came perfect. It even had more than I expected which is great. Anyone involved in music at all should read this book.

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