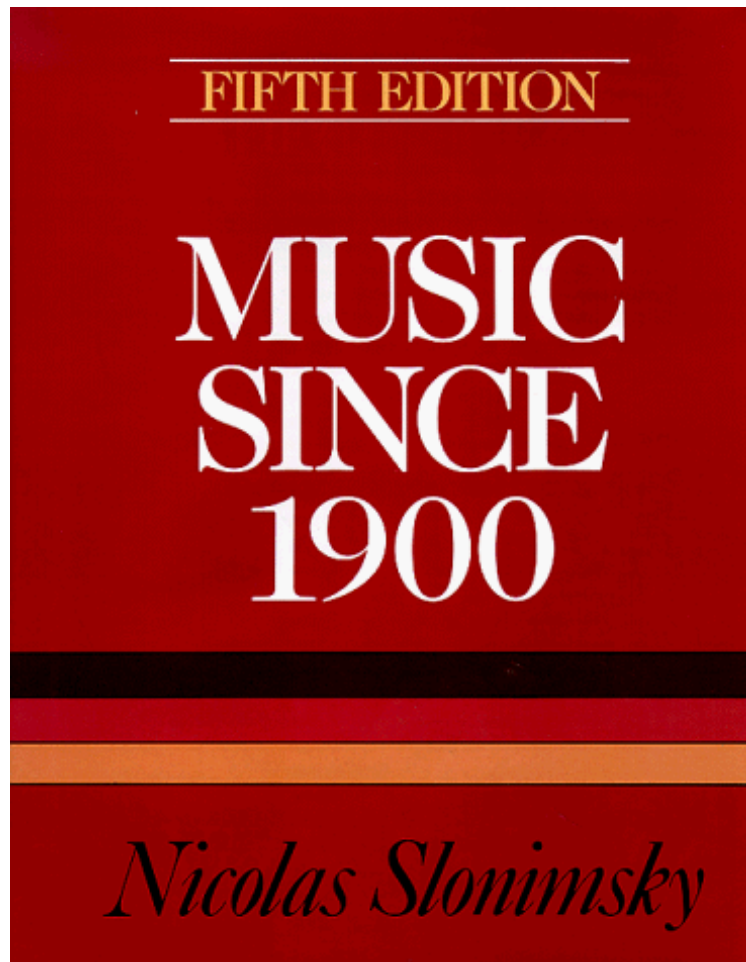


[Free] Music Since 1900

Music Since 1900

Nicolas Slonimsky

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Nicolas Slonimsky : Music Since 1900 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Music Since 1900:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. How Often Does a Reference Book Make You Laugh Out Loud?By J Scott MorrisonNicolas Slonimsky (b. St. Peterburg, Russia in 1894 - d. Christmas Day 1995 in Los Angeles at the exceptional age of 101 years, 9 months, 28 days) was an institution. He labeled himself a 'musical lexicographer,' having written several indispensable musical reference works such as 'Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians,' and 'The Lexicon of Musical Invective' (containing hilarious entries from reviews and other sources), as well as the esoteric and encyclopedic, 'Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns.' He also wrote one of the most amusing musical autobiographies around, 'Perfect Pitch.' But before he became a scholar/writer he was a pianist, conductor, composer, and champion of modern music. For instance, he was the first person to conduct an orchestral work of Charles Ives in Europe, and in an appendix of this gargantuan book (1260 pages) he prints twenty pages of letters he received from

Ives. Because he lived so long he knew just about everybody in the field of twentieth-century music. (I even met him once when he was approaching his 100th birthday.) The primary content of the book is a day by day account of musical events throughout the Western world from January 1, 1900 up to the death of Ernst Krenek in 1991. This volume, its Fifth Edition, contains all the material of the previous editions (with corrections and additions) plus 1500 additional entries for the period after the Fourth Edition. For a reasonably well-informed music-lover there is rarely a page in this book without information about events in music history that are familiar, as well as others that are interesting but otherwise unknown. To illustrate this I opened the book literally at random to pages 150-151 and found entries, among others, on the premiere of Zandonai's 'Francesca da Rimini'; a squib about the fifteen-year-old Henry Cowell demonstrating 'tone clusters' to the San Francisco Music Club; the premiere of 'Hashish,' a tone-poem by Sergei Liapunov; the premiere of George Butterworth's 'The Banks of Green Willow'; the premiere of Vaughan Williams's now-beloved 'London Symphony'; the premiere of Franz Schmidt's opera 'Notre Dame'; the premiere of Albric Magnard's magnum opus, his Fourth Symphony; the first performance as orchestral piece (as opposed to accompaniment of a ballet) of Stravinsky's 'Sacre de printemps,' Pierre Monteux conducting. All these took place in February-April 1914. You get the idea. Also included is a section of musical 'documents' such as the Ives letters mentioned, as well as things like the Futurist manifesto, a talk by Alban Berg entitled 'What is Atonality?,' letters to Slonimsky from luminaries such as Arnold Schoenberg, George Bernard Shaw, Anton von Webern and Edgard Varèse. There are documents from Soviet Russia illuminating the control the government placed on composers and some of their responses. Also included is a valuable section of definitions of musical and allied terms applicable to the modern era with entries from abecedarianism (a gentle term to describe simplistic music - oh, what he has to say about what we would now call minimalism!) to Zen (and its influence on the avant-garde). He also defines some of his own neologisms; for instance, he tends to refer to twentieth-century music as 'vigesimosecular.' One can imagine him smiling at his mock-pompous use of such words. Slonimsky's writing style is idiosyncratic. He is frequently puckish, sometimes acerbic, always superdensely, polysyllabically multifactual; I counted 300 words in one exuberant Russian-doll-like sentence. He created an enormous number of musical neologisms to describe musical processes and styles, some of which have entered the technical vocabulary; for instance, 'pandiatonicism' to describe the process by which 'all seven degrees of the diatonic scale are used freely in democratic equality.' He takes sly pokes at music he does not admire but is never mean-spirited. He gives technical analyses of major works (e.g., his extensive exegeses of the Mahler symphonies which were premiered in the 20th century.) He has some inexplicable hobby-horses. For instance, he gives the precise age at death of important musicians as I've done in my opening sentence. He raves about composers that few others seem to care for, e.g., the Swiss Hans Huber. He completely omits some composers that are now well-thought-of, e.g. Sweden's Wilhelm Stenhammar. He tends to go on at length about uses of scales and melodic patterns, not surprising considering his expertise in that area. But overall he is fair-minded and although not anywhere near complete - that would be impossible - the encyclopedic nature of the work requires fervent admiration. There are a few typos along the way - unavoidable - and an occasional error of fact, although it is clear that he makes every effort to correct them (there are frequent retractions of errors made in earlier editions); this even extends to poring over governmental and church birth and death records and newspaper reviews of premiere performances. For someone like me who often writes reviews of recordings of obscure twentieth-century works, this volume is indispensable. For others who are generally interested in the musical history of the previous century it would be valuable if not absolutely necessary. Every library worthy of the name ought to have a copy. Slonimsky was one of our cultural treasures and thank goodness his words will live on. Review by Scott Morrison

This indispensable music reference provides a day-by-day account of events and accomplishments in the world of music since the turn of the century. This new edition combines the 1971 fourth edition and the 1986 Supplement, and adds 500 new entries covering the years 1986-1991. It provides a complete history of this century's music in one volume. Includes a dictionary of terms and index.

.com Nicolas Slonimsky's first edition of *Music Since 1900* came out in 1937--his entry into the world of lexicography--and this fifth edition, published in 1994, was the last book he wrote. But that's only one reason why this book should be acquired, cherished, and continually browsed. The "Descriptive Chronology" begins January 1, 1900, with the publication of Hector Berlioz's first volume of collected works, wends its way through Gershwin's first performance of "Rhapsody in Blue" (February 12, 1924) and the founding of the Polish Music Publishing Society (April 15, 1945), and ends with the death of Ernst Krenek, composer of "Jonny spielt auf," (December 23, 1991). With letters (such as those to Slonimsky from Charles Ives) and documents (such as the transcript of the House Un-American Activities Committee hearing on Hanns Eisler), a Dictionary of Terms (abecedarianism to Zen), and a comprehensive index, the result is a scrupulous, eccentric, irresistible music reference. From *Library Journal* This fifth edition by idiosyncratic centenarian Slonimsky incorporates material from the 4th edition (LJ 1/1/72) and the supplement (LJ 7/86) with over 1500 new entries. Again, the bulk of the work consists of the descriptive chronology, which now stretches to the death of Ernst Krenek in December 1991. Unlike similar works--Richard Burbank's

Twentieth Century Music (LJ 9/1/84) or Charles J. Hall's *A Twentieth Century Musical Chronicle* (Greenwood, 1989)- this work is strictly chronological. Most index entries are by name, with individual pieces to be found under the composer's name; there are also a few topical index entries, e.g., "AIDS quilt," "endurance records." The value of the new edition is almost entirely in the coverage of post-1985 events and an improved format, as there is little evidence of any editing or correction of previously published material. (Composer Richard Felciano is still erroneously listed as Feliciano.) Taller and wider pages allow for an easier-to-scan two-column format, and date headers on each page are a welcome improvement. As in previous editions, coverage is heavily biased in favor of serious music-coverage of popular and jazz music is minimal. Despite its shortcomings, this is recommended for most music collections. Michael Colby, Univ. of California-Davis Lib. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist For the latest edition of *Music Since 1900*, editor Laura Kuhn has taken over the reins from eminent musicologist Nicolas Slonimsky, who died in 1995, just a year after the fifth edition of this work was published. The book is now in a larger format, which allows more content to fit into fewer pages. As with earlier editions, the main text is called the "Descriptive Chronology," with events such as deaths, performances and productions of importance (usually debuts of new works), music-publishing milestones, and more, arranged by date. New to this edition are more than 1,500 entries from January 1, 1992 (the first performance of a Jonathan Lloyd composition), through December 14, 2000 (the start of a three-day festival celebrating Messiaen). Each entry notes relevant data (e.g., performer or composer name, title and type of work, place of performance, cause and place of performer's or composer's death, festival program listings) in a single sentence. The scope is international, with a primary focus on music in the classical realm. Although there are inevitable omissions (e.g., guitarist and composer Celedonio Romero's death in 1996), the breadth of coverage is impressive, and the opinionated writing makes for interesting browsing. The entire, lengthy text of the 1985 Senate hearing on record labeling, including the testimony of the late Frank Zappa, has been added to the "Letters and Documents" section. A "Dictionary of Terms" yields a few surprises along with more serious stuff, such as a little essay on a sleep disorder that notes "symphony concerts are notoriously conducive to narcolepsy." A detailed index to proper names and musical terms is included. Libraries with older editions will want this update. RBBCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved