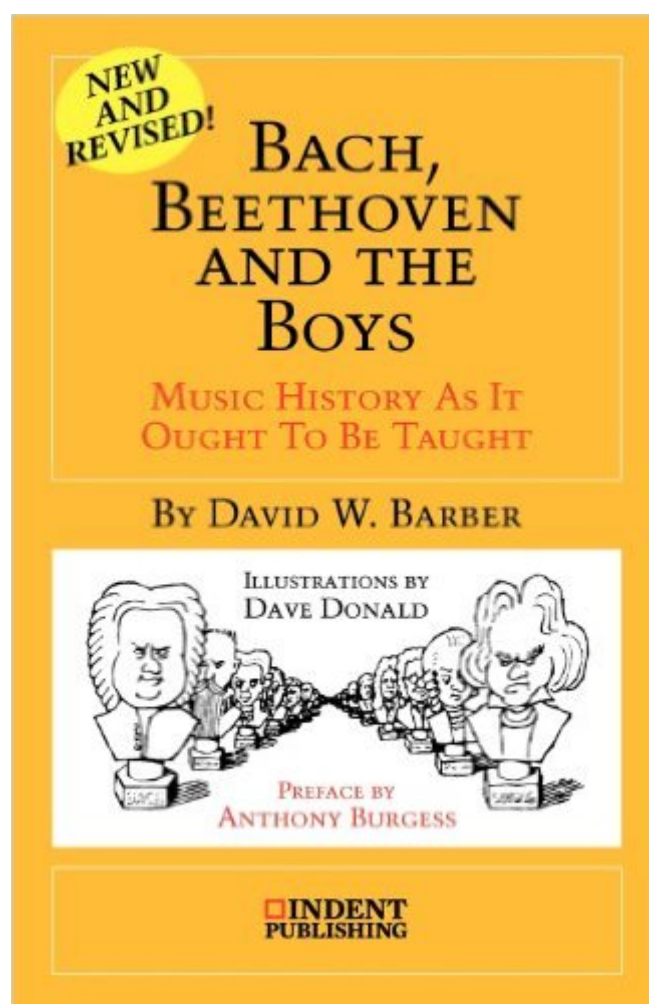


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Bach, Beethoven, And The Boys: Music History As It Ought To Be Taught



Synopsis

David W. Barber has delighted readers around the world with *Accidentals on Purpose*, *When the Fat Lady Sings* and other internationally bestselling books of musical humor. His bestselling *Bach, Beethoven and the Boys* chronicles the lives of the great (and not-so-great) composers as you've never read them before - exploring their sex lives, exposing their foibles and expanding on our understanding of these all-too-human creatures. Filled with information, interesting facts and trivia, this hilarious history covers music from Gregorian chant to the mess we're in now. From Bach's laundry lists to Beethoven's bowel problems, from Gesualdo's kinky fetishes to Cage's mushroom madness, Barber tells tales out of school that ought to be put back there. (Think how much more fun it would be if they taught this stuff.) As always, Dave Donald had provided witty and clever cartoon illustrations to accompany the text.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David W. Barber is to music history what Victor Borge is to classical piano; both invigorate their subject with fresh humor and insight. This book is a wonderfully funny look at classical music, and it is all true! Read this book and you will know that classical music is not the stuffed shirt that many believe it to be. Barber's history is especially humorous for musicians and the musically savvy. One gets the impression that Barber has waded through many scholarly works to pull out these gems of information. It is easy to distinguish between the information and the embellishments, making this a perfect companion to any hard working music student. The illustrations by Dave Donald compliment the text perfectly and are also good likenesses of the composers. The text begins with a painless

history of Gregorian Chant and proceeds through 20th Century music, discussing all of the big composers and the major movements in music history. I wholeheartedly recommend this! book to the musically educated and those who want to be.

A relatively concise history of Western music with quite a lot of comic flair. One also learns about aspects of Western culture one may have forgotten: such as, that musicians were commonly supported in Europe by their patrons who were wealthy dukes or had other hereditary claims. Also I learned that Handel visited Italy spent the latter part of his life in London and grew quite wealthy; that Bach was happily married but never wealthy, and that he lived in many different German cities; that Mozart was not rich at all; that Haydn visited London; that Tchaikovsky was prone to nervous ailments. In the course of reading this book I borrowed the following CD's which assisted me in my understanding, as well as being enjoyable listening: Schumann's "Songs For Children"; Tchaikovsky's "Symphony #6 (Pathetique)", several Beethoven piano sonatas including the Appassionata and Pathetique, Handel's "Water Music"; Mozart's opera overtures, Haydn's "Surprise" and "Military" symphonies.

I received this book from my violin teacher when I was about 8 years old or so, and when I read this book it really helped me to quickly understand the lives behind the music I was playing. The book also had a great sense of humor, and was easy to understand but also not overly simple. It's a great way to have fun and learn about the great classical musicians, and also for a musician like myself to learn early on about the composers who wrote the music that I now play.

"Bach, Beethoven and the Boys" is a quick and fun read, particularly for someone who already knows a thing or two about music history. Author David W. Barber's attempt to show some of the great classical composers as regular guys is refreshing. Unfortunately, his impartiality falters from time to time, such as in the sections on Wagner, opera, and twentieth century music. There are also a couple of factual errors and occasional passing references to a composers without further explanation (such as Mahler), and Barber's penchant for putting most of his funny lines in footnotes becomes annoying after a while. This is not a book for introducing children or students to music history. It would be most enjoyable for someone who is already somewhat knowledgeable about music history.

I read this book when I was in high school and used it on a few papers. I plan to buy it, either here

or elsewhere. If you are a teacher, I recommend this book as it presents a different view of these mythical heroes and shows them as heroes. It also teaches what most historians won't touch in their books and is an easy read for every student. If you are just interested in musical history, I recommend this book as general reading as it is humorous as well as informative.

One of the funniest music books I've ever read. Beloved by my students. I give these as awards for outstanding practice in a semester. Terrific presentation of music history all rue, but not the tales of the history books!

David W. Barber is an excellent writer and writes about music history in a way that makes it highly enjoyable. It consoles the mind to know that even though they wrote incredible music, all of the famous composers were most definitely human. Bach, Beethoven, and the Boys is a fabulous book and I would recommend it to anyone who has any interest in music

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