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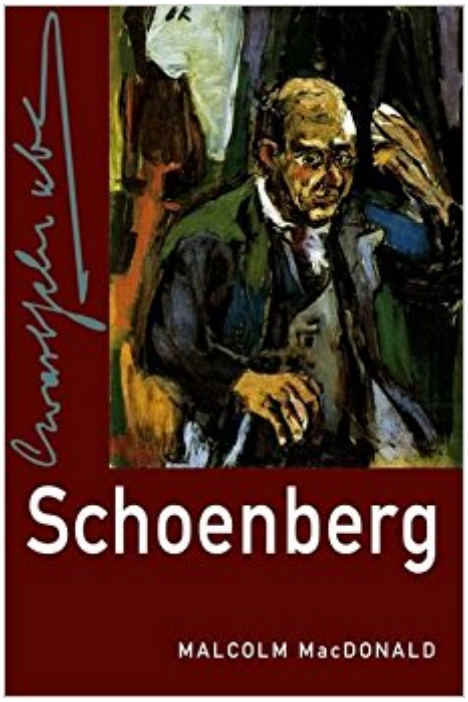

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Synopsis

In this fully updated edition of his long-indispensable study, Malcolm MacDonald takes advantage of 30 years of recent scholarship, new biographical information, and deeper understanding of Schoenberg's aims and significance to produce a superb guide to Schoenberg's life and work. MacDonald demonstrates the indissoluble links among Schoenberg's musical language (particularly the enigmatic and influential twelve-tone method), his personal character, and his creative ideas, as well as the deep connection between his genius as a teacher and as a revolutionary composer.Exploring newly considered influences on the composer's early life, MacDonald offers a fresh perspective on Schoenberg's creative process and the emotional content of his music. For example, as a previously unsuspected source of childhood trauma, the author points to the Vienna Ringtheater disaster of 1881, in which hundreds of people were burned to death, including Schoenberg's uncle and aunt-whose orphaned children were then adopted by Schoenberg's parents. MacDonald brings such experiences to bear on the music itself, examining virtually every work in the oeuvre to demonstrate its vitality and many-sidedness. A chronology of Schoenberg's life, a work-list, an updated bibliography, and a greatly expanded list of personal allusions and references round out the study, and enhance this new edition.

Book Information

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"The Master Musicians are the classics of the repertoire."--Nicholas Kenyon, The Sunday Times"Malcolm MacDonald, an eloquent advocate for Arnold Schoenberg, has done away with the

dry and cerebral bogeyman of modernism. In his place is a complex, multi-faceted, and often contradictory personality whose music pulses with wit, passion, and spiritual depth. MacDonald ably guides us past the 'how' of technical procedures to the 'what' of expressive substance, toward a vast universe of human thought and emotion, at once challenging and entrancing, terrifying and breathtakingly beautiful. This is a Schoenberg of vital relevance to our own fractured world."--Christopher Hailey"No general survey of Schoenberg is more alert than this one to the paradoxical yet productive tensions between tradition and innovation, secular and spiritual in the composer's life and work. Returning to his original text after three decades, Malcolm MacDonald has not only updated the narrative but also intensified his interpretation in ways which fit the book's governing qualities of enthusiasm and admiration for Schoenberg's special capacity to transcend the negative. The result is an absorbing and accessible tribute to one of musical modernism's greatest masters."--Arnold Whittall, author of Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century and Exploring Twentieth-Century Music"The Master Musicians are the classics of the repertoire."--Nicholas Kenyon, The Sunday Times"Malcolm MacDonald, an eloquent advocate for Arnold Schoenberg, has done away with the dry and cerebral bogeyman of modernism. In his place is a complex, multi-faceted, and often contradictory personality whose music pulses with wit, passion, and spiritual depth. MacDonald ably guides us past the 'how' of technical procedures to the 'what' of expressive substance, toward a vast universe of human thought and emotion, at once challenging and entrancing, terrifying and breathtakingly beautiful. This is a Schoenberg of vital relevance to our own fractured world."--Christopher Hailey"No general survey of Schoenberg is more alert than this one to the paradoxical yet productive tensions between tradition and innovation, secular and spiritual in the composer's life and work. Returning to his original text after three decades, Malcolm MacDonald has not only updated the narrative but also intensified his interpretation in ways which fit the book's governing qualities of enthusiasm and admiration for Schoenberg's special capacity to transcend the negative. The result is an absorbing and accessible tribute to one of musical modernism's greatest masters."--Arnold Whittall, author of Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century and Exploring Twentieth-Century Music"MacDonald writes eloquently, with facility, at length and in detail about the works, especially those he considers most important."--Classical Net

Malcolm MacDonald (1948-2014) was a freelance writer and frequent lecturer and broadcaster. He served as the Editor of Tempo, the independent quarterly review of modern music, and wrote a number of books on composers including the Master Musicians volume Brahms.

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