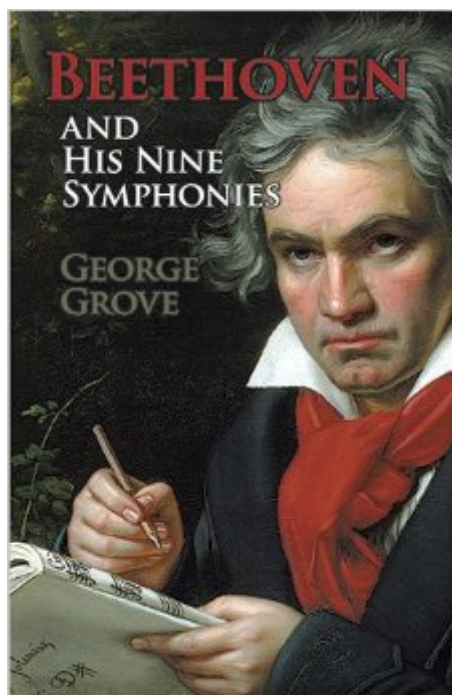


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Beethoven And His Nine Symphonies (Dover Books On Music)



Synopsis

This classic of music analysis by a noted musicologist offers revealing insights into Beethoven's personality and music. George Grove, the founding editor of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, interweaves fascinating background information on the composer's historical era with quotations, letters, and anecdotes. He examines the nine symphonies in chronological order, movement by movement, illustrating his points with numerous excerpts — more than 400 in all. In addition to emphasizing the uniqueness of Beethoven's music and its iconoclastic renunciation of established musical theory, Grove comments at length on the relation of the symphonies to the minor works, events in the composer's personal life, the conditions under which he worked, and other fascinating details. Examples of Beethoven's correspondence include several letters to the Countess Theresa and the famous letter to his brothers Carl and Johann.

Book Information

Series: Dover Books on Music

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications; 3rd Revised ed. edition (November 21, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486203344

ISBN-13: 978-0486203348

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars — See all reviews — (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #730,740 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #94 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Forms & Genres > Symphonies #147 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Composers > Beethoven #248 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Instrumentation > Orchestra

Customer Reviews

Sir George Grove (1820 -1900) is best-known as the writer of the original "Dictionary of Music and Musicians" which, with its many updates and versions over the years, has become the standard English reference work on classical music. In 1896, Grove wrote "Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies" which, unlike the "Dictionary" is still read today in the form in which Grove wrote it. I have recently returned to Grove's study as a guide in listening to and reviewing the Beethoven symphonies in the recordings by David Zinman and the Tonhalle Orchester Zurich and have learned

a great deal. Grove's book is written in an accessible late-Victorian style. He devotes a chapter to each of the nine symphonies. He begins with a summary of the instrumentation, publication history and early metronome marks of the symphonies. Grove offers material on Beethoven's life at the time each symphony was composed and describes Beethoven's compositional process. He offers information on early performances and on the reception of each work, including a great deal of commentary from the works of later composers. But the highlight of the study is Grove's movement-by-movement analysis of each symphony. It is a difficult skill to write about music in a way that amateurs may follow; and Grove succeeds admirably. He gives the score for the principal themes and highlights of each movement and discusses them in a way that anyone with a basic skill in reading music can follow easily. I used Grove many years ago when I was just coming to the Beethoven symphonies, and I continue to learn from his book. Much of what Grove says is still current in studies of the symphonies.

The following review was posted October 23, 2007, on an earlier printing of this title. I reposted the review after reading Jan Swafford's large new biography, "Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph" Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph and reviewing it here on . Sir George Grove (1820 -1900) is best-known as the writer of the original "Dictionary of Music and Musicians" which, with its many updates and versions over the years, has become the standard English reference work on classical music. In 1896, Grove wrote "Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies" which, unlike the "Dictionary" is still read today in the form in which Grove wrote it. I have recently returned to Grove's study as a guide in listening to and reviewing the Beethoven symphonies in the recordings by David Zinman and the Tonhalle Orchester Zurich and have learned a great deal. Grove's book is written in an accessible late-Victorian style. He devotes a chapter to each of the nine symphonies. He begins with a summary of the instrumentation, publication history and early metronome marks of the symphonies. Grove offers material on Beethoven's life at the time each symphony was composed and describes Beethoven's compositional process. He offers information on early performances and on the reception of each work, including a great deal of commentary from the works of later composers. But the highlight of the study is Grove's movement-by-movement analysis of each symphony. It is a difficult skill to write about music in a way that amateurs may follow; and Grove succeeds admirably.

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