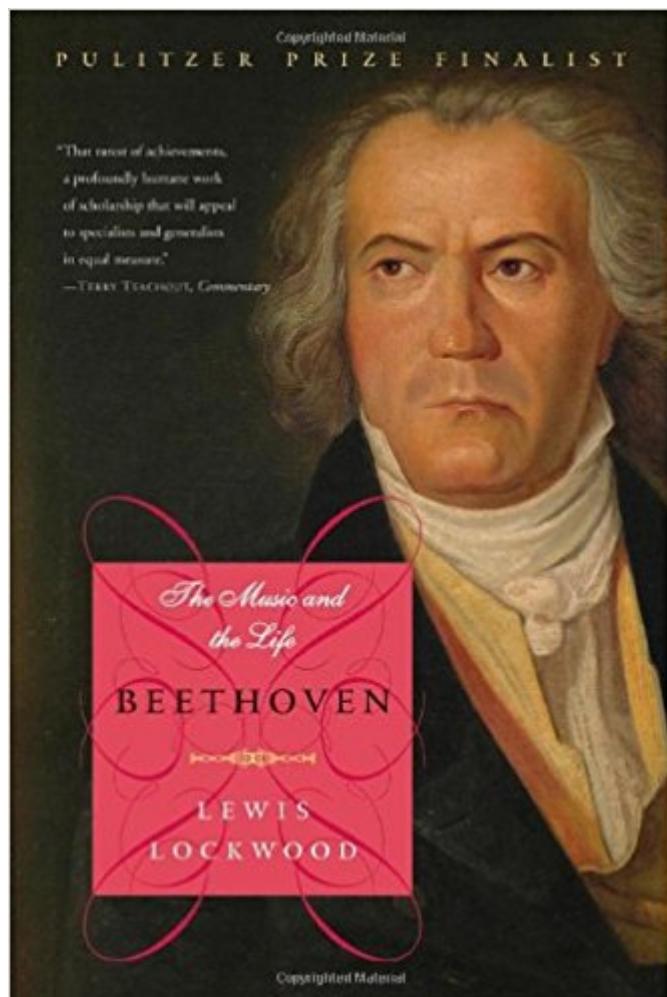


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Beethoven: The Music And The Life



Synopsis

An authoritative work offering a fresh look at Beethoven's life, career, and milieu. "Magisterial" • "New York Review of Books. This brilliant portrayal weaves Beethoven's musical and biographical stories into their historical and artistic contexts. Lewis Lockwood sketches the turbulent personal, historical, political, and cultural frameworks in which Beethoven worked and examines their effects on his music. "The result is that rarest of achievements, a profoundly humane work of scholarship that will • or at least should • appeal to specialists and generalists in equal measure" (Terry Teachout, Commentary). Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. "Lewis Lockwood has written a biography of Beethoven in which the hours that Beethoven spent writing music • that is, his methods of working, his interest in contemporary and past composers, the development of his musical intentions and ideals, his inner musical life, in short • have been properly integrated with the external events of his career. The book is invaluable." • Charles Rosen "Lockwood writes with poetry and clarity • a rare combination. I especially enjoyed the connection that he makes between the works of Beethoven and the social and political context of their creation • we feel closer to Beethoven the man without losing our wonder at his genius." • Emanuel Ax "The magnum opus of an illustrious Beethoven scholar. From now on, we will all turn to Lockwood's Beethoven: The Music and the Life for insight and instruction." • Maynard Solomon "This is truly the Beethoven biography for the intelligent reader. Lewis Lockwood speaks in his preface of writing on Beethoven's works at 'a highly accessible descriptive level.' But he goes beyond that. His discussion of the music, based on a deep knowledge of its context and the composition processes behind it, explains, elucidates, and is not afraid to evaluate; while the biographical chapters, clearly and unfussily written, and taking full account of the newest thinking on Beethoven, align closely with the musical discussion. The result is a deeply perceptive book that comes as close as can be to presenting the man and the music as a unity." • Stanley Sadie, editor, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* "Impressive for both its scholarship and its fresh insights, this landmark work • fully accessible to the interested amateur • immediately takes its place among the essential references on this composer and his music." • Bob Goldfarb, KUSC-FM 91.5 "Lockwood writes like an angel: lucid, enthusiastic, stirring and enlightening. Beethoven has found his ablest interpreter." • Jonathan Keates, *The Spectator* "There is no better survey of Beethoven's compositions for a wide audience." • Michael Kimmelman, *The New York Times Book Review* 50 illustrations

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Customer Reviews

Lewis Lockwood's "Beethoven: the Music and the Life" (2003) is an outstanding introduction to Beethoven, aimed at the nonspecialist rather than the scholar. Those readers who are new to Beethoven's music will find this book a guide to his major work. Readers familiar with Beethoven's music and life will find much to learn and enjoy as well. I found this a book to be savored. Reading the book, I think, will encourage the reader to explore further the inexhaustible richness of Beethoven's music. Lockwood concentrates on Beethoven's compositions and on their historical and musical contexts. He does not offer a full biography of Beethoven but rather offers only sufficient broad outline of Beethoven's life to give a sense of the composer and to allow the reader to reflect upon the relationship between the life of Beethoven and his music. Lockwood himself has some interesting things to say on various views of this relationship. (pp 17-21) Lockwood sees Mozart and Bach as Beethoven's primary musical influences. As a young composer, Beethoven both set out to learn from Mozart without becoming an imitator. His early works are greatly influenced by Mozart, Lockwood argues, until Beethoven breaks away and finds his own voice in what Lockwood terms Beethoven's second maturity. As Beethoven continued to compose, his work becomes more influenced by the counterpoint of Bach. (Beethoven had played Bach's "well-tempered clavier" as a boy of twelve.) Bach's influence becomes increasingly apparent in the close-textured and fugal works of Beethoven's third maturity. Lockwood basically organizes his book in terms of what he describes as Beethoven's first, second and third maturities of musical development.

Lewis Lockwood's Beethoven: the Music and the Life is a tremendous portrayal of this great

composer. Lewis Lockwood is a highly recognized expert on Beethoven and is a Professor of Music at Harvard University. The book was a finalist of the prestigious Pulitzer Prize. In the book, he goes into great detail about almost every one of Beethoven's pieces. He does so in a fashion that encompasses the theoretical aspects of the music, what was occurring in Beethoven's personal life and the political and historical situations at the time of his compositions. The book also includes several illustrations that consist of portions of compositional sketches, handwritten letters, and portraits of influential people in Beethoven's life. With the use of letters, conversations books and sketchings, some of which are over two hundred years old, Lockwood provides an intimate glimpse of Beethoven. The book is divided into four different parts that cover different eras of Beethoven's life. The first discusses Beethoven's childhood up until he moved to Vienna and the other three are about Beethoven's stages (or as Lockwood refers to them, maturities) as a composer. Each part starts with biographical information, but then moves on to the musical descriptions of his Beethoven's pieces, of which Lockwood discusses all known works. I found it surprising that his life could be divided so concisely, but in actuality, this form is tremendously helpful and gives the reader a greater understanding of the evolutionary development of Beethoven. Some have criticized the book for its traditional format and its lack of innovation, but I find the layout of the book fitting and unobtrusive.

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