

Taruskin

Text and Act

Essays on Music and Performance

Gathers together for the first time Taruskin's influential and insightful essays and articles on musical performance practice written over the past decade. Links issues in musical performance with wider cultural scene. Author's highly respected and controversial viewpoints and reputation will spark intellectual debate in the musical field. Text and Act, a collection of essays and reviews, published over the last dozen years, offers a brilliant evaluation of the early music movement, transforming the debate about "early music" and "authenticity". Demolishing the argument that the movement to revive period instruments and performance practices represents the recovery of an ancient truth or a reinstatement of a lost tradition, these writings show that the movement actually represents the triumph of a modernist esthetic - and consequently that "period" performances are in fact the only truly modern performances of classical music on offer. Yet far from impugning the movement's claim to authenticity, Taruskin argues that as the only truly contemporary performance practice, "early music" is authentic in a much more profound and relevant sense than a mere historical verisimilitude could ever be. These essays cast fresh light on many aspects of contemporary music-making and music-thinking, with lighthearted debunking taking its place alongside impassioned argumentation. A wide-ranging, newly written introduction explores the relationship between issues surrounding musical performance and other areas of contemporary intellectual ferment in the humanities and the social sciences, including philosophy, law, history, and anthropology. Bringing his considerable skills as a scholar and a performer to bear on the situation, Taruskin's essays, ranging from theoretical speculation to practical criticism, cover a repertory that includes Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Stravinsky.

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Kundenservice Fachmedien Otto Schmidt

Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@fachmedien.de | 0800 000-1637 (Inland)

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