

Masterworks of 20th-Century Music: The Modern Repertory of the Symphony Orchestra

Douglas Lee

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Douglas Lee : Masterworks of 20th-Century Music: The Modern Repertory of the Symphony Orchestra before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Masterworks of 20th-Century Music: The Modern Repertory of the Symphony Orchestra:

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Reasonable if low-grade reference By R. Gard "Masterworks of

20th-century music" is written nicely enough, but I had hoped for something which focused more on the music and less on biographical tidbits. If I needed to know biographical info I would read a biography. Of course, this is the same problem with 99% of the program notes written today; nobody seems to have ears for the music. I give a minor warning to take things in this book cum grano solis. For example, the article on Ravel's G major piano concerto twice in one paragraph declares the second movement to have a 'languid horn' solo -- but it is an English Horn, not a horn. To musicians, a "horn" is a brass instrument with or without valves, while the languid tenor double reed instrument is the cor anglais or English Horn.

"Masterworks of 20th-Century Music" introduces more than one hundred of the greatest compositions by world-renowned composers that have entered the standard orchestral repertory. The author surveyed dozens of major American orchestras to focus on those works that an average audience member is most likely to hear. Concertgoers who are intimidated by the modern repertoire finally have a single resource that will help them understand and enjoy it. Like an educated guide, he walks the listener through the piece, explaining how all the elements come together to form a unified whole. This book serves the general reader interested in 20th-century music, plus students, teachers, and scholars.

About the Author Douglas Lee is Professor of Musicology, Emeritus, at Vanderbilt U. An active scholar of 18th-century instrumental music, he has also written many articles for journals, reference works, chapters in books, critical editions, plus program and liner notes for concert performances and CD recordings. He lives in Nashville, TN.