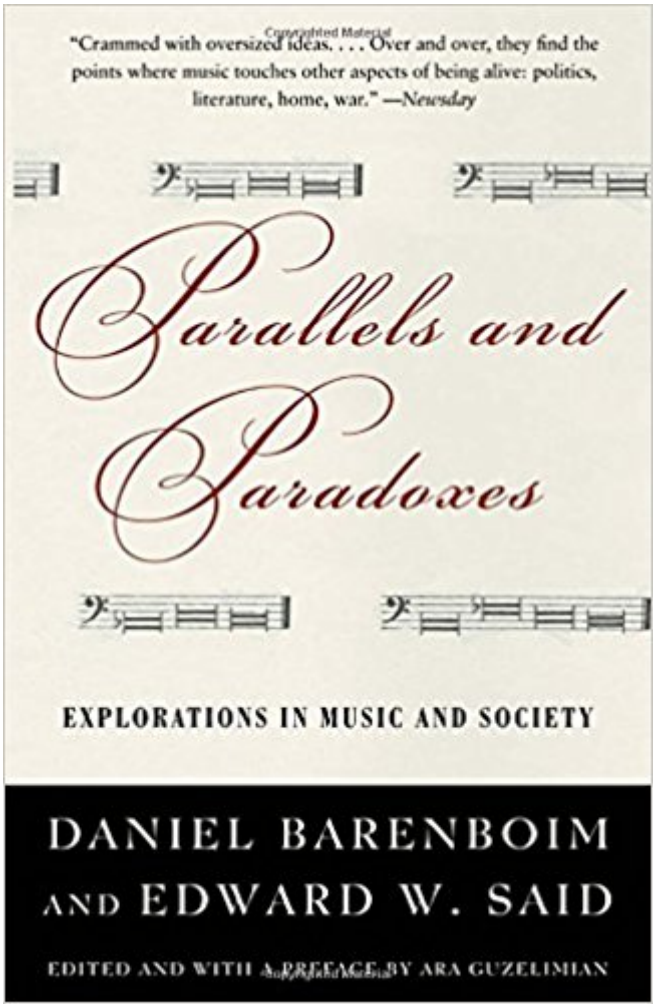
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Parallels And Paradoxes: Explorations In Music And Society



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Synopsis

These free-wheeling, often exhilarating dialoguesÃ¢â ¬â •which grew out of the acclaimed Carnegie Hall TalksÃ¢â ¬â •are an exchange between two of the most prominent figures in contemporary culture: Daniel Barenboim, internationally renowned conductor and pianist, and Edward W. Said, eminent literary critic and impassioned commentator on the Middle East. Barenboim is an Argentinian-Israeli and Said a Palestinian-American; they are also close friends.As they range across music, literature, and society, they open up many fields of inquiry: the importance of a sense of place; music as a defiance of silence; the legacies of artists from Mozart and Beethoven to Dickens and Adorno; WagnerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s anti-Semitism; and the need for Ã¢â ¬Å“artistic solutionsÃ¢â ¬Â• to the predicament of the Middle EastÃ¢â ¬â •something they both witnessed when they brought young Arab and Israeli musicians together. Erudite, intimate, thoughtful and spontaneous, Parallels and Paradoxes is a virtuosic collaboration.

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Customer Reviews

Renowned pianist and conductor Barenboim, currently general music director of the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, comes from a Russian Jewish family transplanted to Argentina and Israel. Said (Orientalism), Columbia professor of English and comparative literature and an accomplished amateur pianist, is a Palestinian who grew up largely in Cairo in an anglicized Christian Arab family. Their differing but entwined histories have led to friendship and a number of public and private conversations about music, culture, politics and "the parallels as well as the paradoxes" of their

lives. Edited by Guzelimian, Senior Director and Artistic Adviser of Carnegie Hall, these stimulating discussions-written in the form of three-way Q&A interviews-touch on the nature of sound, some of the similarities and differences between music and literature, performances and audiences, and the authenticity movement. The two agree on the importance of music in uniting people of conflicting political views, and in 1999 they collaborated in setting up the Weimar workshop, which brought together Arab, Israeli and German musicians to form an orchestra. The importance of setting aside national identity in favor of a larger ideal is stressed throughout the book. Barenboim shows himself to be unfazed by the recent controversies surrounding his work in Berlin and his determination to perform Wagner in Israel. Said remarks that in today's world, it has "become quite rare to project one's self outward, to have a broader perspective." These enlightening conversations show that Said and Barenboim are able to do just that.Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In 1995, during a Wagner conference at Columbia University, pianist/conductor Barenboim and literary scholar Said joined in a discussion before a live audience that touched on both Wagner's anti-Semitism and his pivotal position as a composer. The two, already good friends, so enjoyed the experience that they continued taping conversations privately and eventually brought in Carnegie artistic adviser Guzelimian to give some shape to the proceedings. The result is a thought-provoking book that ranges from the intricacies of performance (in which music is described arrestingly as a means of defying silence) to the need for an "artistic solution" to the Middle East crisis. Readers would probably benefit from some sense of the history of Western music, but the authors are successful in their aim to reach a larger audience and have done splendid job of reinvigorating the delicate task of talking about music. If, as Said observes, "[classical] music is losing its authority," perhaps the failure to discuss it both bracingly and embracingly is a main reason. This stimulating and enjoyable little book, the most underlined this reviewer has read since college, goes a long way toward redressing the balance. Highly recommended.Barbara Hoffert, "Library Journal" Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A gem of a little books that records Said's relations with his well known musical world personalities. We get to have a front row seat on the young middle eastern music students' awakening to the cruelty of racial and religious pre juice as bell as the what peace can bring,I wish the book contained brief biographies of all the participating musicians, and an index.Go buy and read it!

Having heard Barenboim and Said interviewed on NPR I rushed to to acquire this book. I was not disppointed! These are highly literate men, wise men, who see music in a social context. Although their roots are Israeli and Palestinian, their exposure to other cultures has broadened their perspectives so that their opinions are informed by their experiences in Egypt, Argentina, America, Germany, Israel, etc. The continuing theme is music, especially that of Beethoven and later Wagner, but in the context of their societies and ours. It may be that the hope forpeace in the world is shared music!

As expected! nice from start to end!

Item arrived as described.

If there is a book that presents valuable and valid lessons in how to resolve differences, be they in attitudes towards the arts, the lack of music in our educational system, the etiology of the Israeli/Palestinian dichotomy, and so much more, then this collection of conversations between Daniel Barenboim and Edward W. Said as edited and synthesized by Ara Guzelimian is it. This powerful but too brief book reaches for the Nobel Peace Prize in its courage, exploration of the state of man and the possibilities for the future, and in its tremendously accessible format that makes the workings of these three great minds available for us all. Each of the extended conversations taped betaween 1995 and 1999 addresses an interesting topic that serves to open vistas that go far beyond the crux of the topic. Hearing Barenboim expound on the fact that no one can exactly interpret a composer’s score because the spirit is not on the page but in the making and experiencing the ’sound’ that happens in a live performance rather obliterates all critics who descry individual interpretation of the great composers as "not the composer’s intention!" Said carries this into the realm of literature, suggesting that contemporary writers are where they are because of the giants of the past and that we, as readers, are influenced in our interpretation of new work dependent upon our exposure and digestion of works by the old masters. Contemporary music by composers such as Carter, Schoenberg, and Birtwistle are discussed in a way that assists our concept of listening and learning in the concert hall. Similar parallels and similar paradoxes in the international political arena are given the same level of inspiring dialog and paths to understanding. This is a fine, fine book and we are indebted to Ara Guzelimian not only for his written and conversational contributions, but for persevering in having this volume published. Read this and

gain insight and intelligence on many streams of thought that will help us all save this planet.

I was very excited to read a book written by one of my favorite 20th century intellectuals and one of my favorite pianists. This is not a musicology text; it is perhaps, something more valuable than that. Edward Said, who died recently, was a pianist himself; this fact combined with his explorations into the meaning of democracy and social culture made reading this book a very interesting proposition alone. The book did not disappoint and offered many surprises both in terms of exploring what classical music can offer to contemporary culture and what music - especially Beethoven's music - means in political terms. The book is organized as a series of conversations in which Baremboim and Said discuss topics that include the apparent detachment that classical music has today from the rest of culture as opposed to the time when an understanding and admiration for it was deemed indispensable for the educated and higher classes. However, what makes the book a pleasure to read is one one level Said and Baremboim clealry love music passionatley, on the other Baremboim is an Israeli citizen, who was the first to perform in the occupied Territories with a palestinian orchestra and also sponsored a Palestinian orchestra to play inn Germany. Edward Said was an intellaetcual that argued passionatley for the Palestinian cause. Their firendship and coomon interest in music offers an undeniable sense of hope for those of us, like myself, who are troubled by the ongiong Arab-Israeli conflict that appears to worsen ebery day. That this hope should be nunaced and coloured with the music of Beethoven seems to be not only fascinating and beautiful, but a tribute to a composer who saw and used music to shake the world and argue for freedom. In so doing baremboim and Said discuss the possibility that music can serve as a model or for undertsanding between peoples and global citizenship. They are both idealists in this sense, but their vision makes beautiful sense nonetheless.

Mutual (intellectual?) masturbation!

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