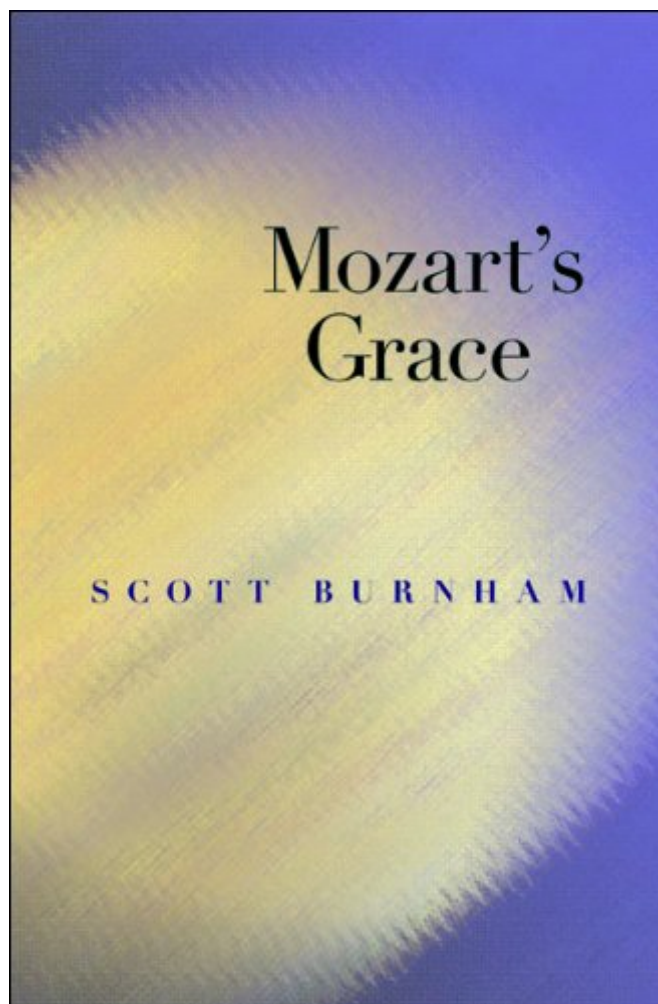


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Mozart's Grace



Synopsis

It is a common article of faith that Mozart composed the most beautiful music we can know. But few of us ask why. Why does the beautiful in Mozart stand apart, as though untouched by human hands? At the same time, why does it inspire intimacy rather than distant admiration, love rather than awe? And how does Mozart's music create and sustain its buoyant and ever-renewable effects? In *Mozart's Grace*, Scott Burnham probes a treasury of passages from many different genres of Mozart's music, listening always for the qualities of Mozartean beauty: beauty held in suspension; beauty placed in motion; beauty as the uncanny threshold of another dimension, whether inwardly profound or outwardly transcendent; and beauty as a time-stopping, weightless suffusion that comes on like an act of grace. Throughout the book, Burnham engages musical issues such as sonority, texture, line, harmony, dissonance, and timing, and aspects of large-scale form such as thematic returns, retransitions, and endings. Vividly describing a range of musical effects, Burnham connects the ways and means of Mozart's music to other domains of human significance, including expression, intimation, interiority, innocence, melancholy, irony, and renewal. We follow Mozart from grace to grace, and discover what his music can teach us about beauty and its relation to the human spirit. The result is a newly inflected view of our perennial attraction to Mozart's music, presented in a way that will speak to musicians and music lovers alike.

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Customer Reviews

This book is an extraordinarily intelligent, sensitive, and perceptive study of the details of Mozart's writing that makes his music so wonderful. It will, however, be, perhaps, more of value to readers who can read music scores than to those who cannot, since there are many long passages from various Mozart compositions throughout the book.

A good half of this books consists of musical scores, and since I'm not trained in music and cannot read it, all those pages were lost on me. Burnham's text, however, is very illuminating, and by actually playing recordings of the pieces cited, it's possible to follow his essays on what makes Mozart's music so very special. If you are an enthusiastic layman like me, don't be afraid to tackle this short book -- even shorter if you skip the scores. Come armed with a good memory or some compact discs, and enjoy the ride.

There is no one like Scott Burnham. This is writing that rivals the beauty of the music. The insights are purely musical, deeply spiritual, and the two are so intertwined as to be often inseparable. Written with deep love.

Its not a quick read but if you are a student of Mozart you will love this book. If you just have a passing interest than you will not enjoy it as much. You have to love Mozart and perhaps no a little about reading music to get the full use of this book.

Wonderful. Well written, excellent musical examples. The man knows of what he speaks.

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