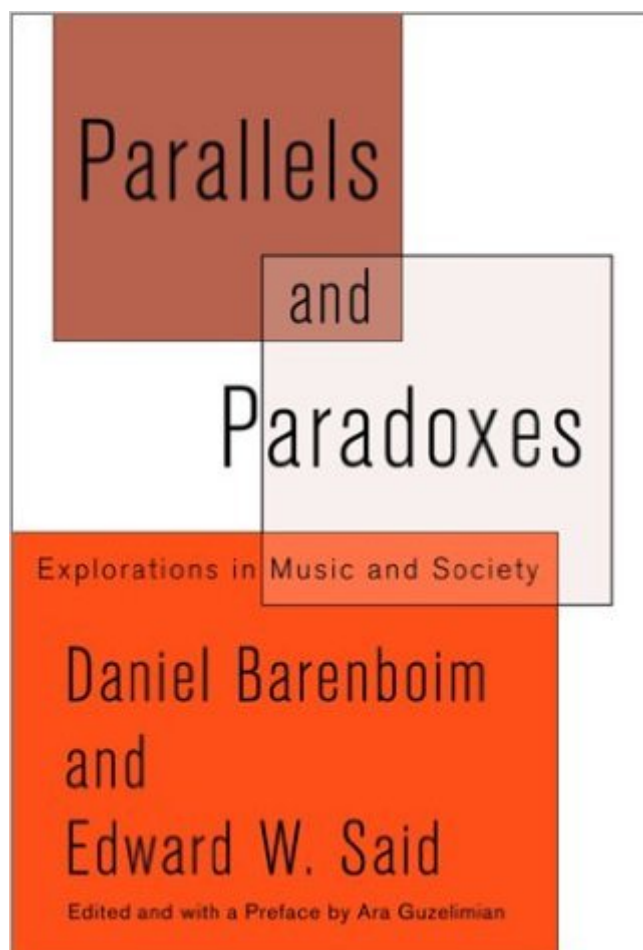


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Parallels And Paradoxes: Explorations In Music And Society



Synopsis

This fascinating exchange between two of the most prominent figures in contemporary culture, Daniel Barenboim, Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, and Edward W. Said, the eminent literary critic and scholar and a leading expert on the Middle East, grew out of the acclaimed Carnegie Hall Talks. A unique and impassioned discussion about politics and culture, it touches on many diverse subjects: the importance of a sense of place; the differences between writing prose and music; the conductors Wilhelm Furtwängler and Arturo Toscanini; Beethoven as the greatest sonata composer; the difficulty of playing Wagner; the sound at Bayreuth; the writers Balzac, Dickens, and Adorno; the importance of great teachers; and the power of culture to transcend all national and political differences—something they both witnessed when they brought together young Arab and Israeli musicians to play at Weimar in 1999. Although Barenboim and Said have very different points of view, they act as catalysts for each other. The originality of their ideas makes this a book that is both accessible and compelling for anyone who is interested in the culture of the twenty-first century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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 between 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 decry 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.

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