

Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism

By Thomas Patteson

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Player pianos, radio-electric circuits, gramophone records, and optical sound film—these were the cutting-edge acoustic technologies of the early twentieth century, and for many musicians and artists of the time, these devices were also the implements of a musical revolution. *Instruments for New Music* traces a diffuse network of cultural agents who shared the belief that a truly modern music could be attained only through a radical challenge to the technological foundations of the art. Centered in Germany during the 1920s and 1930s, the movement to create new instruments encompassed a broad spectrum of experiments, from the exploration of microtonal tunings and exotic tone colors to the ability to compose directly for automatic musical machines. This movement comprised composers, inventors, and visual artists, including Paul Hindemith, Ernst Toch, Jörg Mager, Friedrich Trautwein, László Moholy-Nagy, Walter Ruttmann, and Oskar Fischinger. Patteson's fascinating study combines an artifact-oriented history of new music in the early twentieth century with an astute revisiting of still-relevant debates about the relationship between technology and the arts.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover
"The smartest book on the German roots of what happened once electricity joined sound to make music and media. Amid profound historical events technological possibilities were hacked, recordings stopped repeating themselves to perform something new, and the innovative art forms with us today were born."--Douglas Kahn, author of *Earth Sound Earth Signal: Energies and Earth Magnitude in the Arts*

"*Instruments for New Music* is a fascinating story of the technological music instrumentarium that not only gives composers and improvisers new sounds and new ways to play but also engages all of us in new social and philosophical insights."--Pauline Oliveros, Composer and Professor of Practice, Department of the Arts, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

"Every so often a book comes along with something new to say about a familiar topic. Through meticulous new research on electronic music in Germany during the Weimar Republic, Thomas Patteson recovers the forgotten history of early twentieth century music. He provides the most detailed account we have of how electronic music became tainted by the Nazis and how Stockhausen rewrote its history in his Cologne studio. Incredible instruments were developed during this early period--not least the trautonium used by Hitchcock to make the scary sounds of *The Birds!* This book shows how today's sounds were born long before the age of electronics."--Trevor Pinch, author of *Analog Days: The History and Impact of the Moog Synthesizer*

About the Author

Thomas Patteson is Professor of Music History at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He is also Associate Curator for Bowerbird, a performing organization that presents contemporary music, film, and dance.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Brian Bottoms:

This Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book will be information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper a person read a lot of information you will get. This particular Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism without we know teach the one who reading it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't be worry Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism can bring once you are and not make your case space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even telephone. This Instruments for New Music: Sound, Technology, and Modernism having very good arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not experience uninterested in reading.

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