

# new grove dictionary of music

**The New Grove Dictionary of Music** is a monumental reference work that has become an indispensable resource for musicologists, musicians, and anyone with a keen interest in the vast field of music. First published in 1980, this extensive encyclopedia has undergone several revisions and expansions, reflecting the dynamic nature of music scholarship. The dictionary offers a comprehensive and authoritative account of music history, theory, and practice, covering an array of topics from composers and genres to musical instruments and cultural contexts.

## History and Development

### Origins

The New Grove Dictionary of Music was conceived as a successor to the original Grove Dictionary of Music, published in 1879 by Sir George Grove. The original work was groundbreaking for its time, offering detailed entries on composers, music theory, and instruments. However, as music continued to evolve, it became increasingly clear that a new, updated reference was necessary to encapsulate the changes and advancements in the field.

### The 1980 Edition

The first edition of The New Grove Dictionary of Music was edited by Stanley Sadie and consisted of 20 volumes. This edition was notable for its inclusivity, covering not only Western classical music but also popular music, jazz, world music, and contemporary genres. It was the first large-scale dictionary to comprehensively address the global diversity of music, acknowledging the cultural significance of various musical traditions.

### Subsequent Editions

The New Grove Dictionary has undergone several major revisions since its initial release:

- **Second Edition (2001):** This edition featured over 29,000 articles, reflecting the latest research and scholarship in musicology. It expanded its focus on non-Western music and included new articles on contemporary composers and genres.
- **Online Version:** The New Grove Dictionary is also available online, which ensures that its content remains up-to-date and accessible to a wider audience. The digital format allows for continuous updates, making it a living document of music scholarship.

## Structure and Content

### Organization

The New Grove Dictionary of Music is organized alphabetically and thematically, offering readers a user-friendly experience. Each entry is meticulously crafted, providing a wealth of information that includes:

- Biographical details of composers and musicians
- Contextual information about musical works and historical periods
- Descriptions of instruments, genres, and musical forms
- Analyses of stylistic developments and techniques

## Noteworthy Features

The dictionary is characterized by several standout features:

1. **Comprehensive Scope:** The dictionary encompasses a vast range of musical styles, genres, and traditions from around the world.
2. **Scholarly Rigor:** Each entry is written by experts in the field, ensuring accuracy and depth. Contributors include leading musicologists, composers, and performers.
3. **Illustrations and Notation:** Many entries include musical examples, illustrations, and photographs, enhancing the reader's understanding of the text.
4. **Cross-Referencing:** The dictionary employs a robust system of cross-references that facilitates navigation between related topics, making it easy for users to explore connections within the field of music.

## Importance in Musicology

### Academic Resource

The New Grove Dictionary of Music serves as a foundational text in musicology and is widely used in academic settings. It is often cited in scholarly articles and serves as a primary resource for students and educators. The breadth of coverage makes it an essential tool for research across various areas of music studies, including:

- Historical musicology
- Ethnomusicology
- Music theory and analysis
- Performance practice

### Influence on Music Scholarship

The dictionary has significantly influenced the way music is studied and understood. It has encouraged a more inclusive approach to music scholarship, promoting the recognition of diverse musical traditions. By providing authoritative and detailed information about non-Western music, The New Grove Dictionary has helped to broaden the perspectives within the field, fostering a more global understanding of music.

## Challenges and Criticisms

Despite its many strengths, The New Grove Dictionary of Music has faced its share of challenges and criticisms:

### Accessibility

While the dictionary is a comprehensive resource, some critics argue that its depth and academic rigor can make it less accessible to casual readers or those new to music studies. The use of scholarly language and detailed analyses may deter individuals without a strong background in music theory or history.

### Representation

As with many reference works, there have been discussions about representation within The New Grove Dictionary. Critics have pointed out that certain genres and cultural traditions may not receive the same level of attention as others. Efforts have been made to address these concerns in

subsequent editions, but the ongoing evolution of music means that representation remains a critical issue.

## Digital Transition

The shift to an online format has raised questions about the future of print encyclopedias in general. While the digital version of The New Grove Dictionary offers advantages such as easy searching and regular updates, some scholars lament the loss of the tactile experience of a physical book. Furthermore, access to the online version may be limited in certain regions, posing challenges for users in less connected areas.

## Conclusion

The New Grove Dictionary of Music stands as a testament to the richness and complexity of the musical world. Its comprehensive scope, scholarly rigor, and commitment to inclusivity have solidified its status as an essential resource in music studies. As music continues to evolve and new genres emerge, The New Grove Dictionary will undoubtedly adapt, ensuring that it remains relevant for future generations of music enthusiasts and scholars. Whether accessed in print or online, this monumental work offers invaluable insights into the intricate tapestry of music history, theory, and practice. As such, it will continue to serve as a cornerstone for understanding and appreciating the multifaceted nature of music across cultures and time periods.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is the New Grove Dictionary of Music?**

The New Grove Dictionary of Music is a comprehensive reference work that provides detailed articles on music and musicians, covering various aspects of music history, theory, and practice.

## **How is the New Grove Dictionary of Music different from other music dictionaries?**

The New Grove Dictionary of Music is known for its extensive scholarly contributions, thorough research, and wide-ranging topics, making it a key resource for musicologists, students, and enthusiasts.

## **When was the first edition of the New Grove Dictionary of Music published?**

The first edition of the New Grove Dictionary of Music was published in 1980.

## **Is the New Grove Dictionary of Music available online?**

Yes, the New Grove Dictionary of Music is available online through various academic databases, providing easier access to its extensive resources.

## **Who are the main contributors to the New Grove Dictionary of Music?**

The New Grove Dictionary of Music features contributions from a wide range of music scholars, composers, and critics, ensuring diverse perspectives and expertise.

## **What are some key topics covered in the New Grove Dictionary of Music?**

Key topics include music theory, historical periods, instrument descriptions, biographies of composers and performers, and analyses of musical works and genres.

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