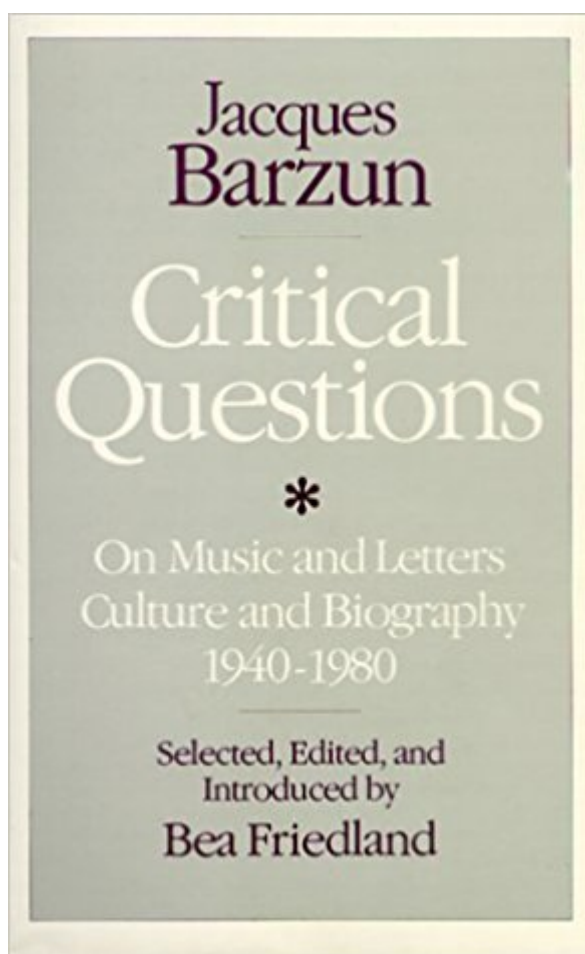




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# Critical Questions: On Music And Letters, Culture And Biography, 1940-1980



## Synopsis

This collection of writings allows the reader a rare opportunity to see Barzun's lively, engaging, rich, and original mind at work on several strategic areas of cultural inquiry: music and the musical life, esthetics, biography, criticism, and social commentary. Barzun makes use of a variety of contexts as a forum for evidence and opinion, including essays, program notes, letters, and reviews. And he approaches a wide variety of particular and general questions. What is it like to sit in on a recording session with a great orchestra? What is the role of the piano in Western culture? What is art in relation to objective reality and to the perceiving mind? Can one translate music into words? What is cultural history? For anyone unfamiliar with Barzun's work, Critical Questions will serve as a valuable introduction to one of the most important cultural historians of our time. Others will be glad to have these pieces—most of them no longer easily available—brought together in a single volume. Uniformly insightful, provocative, and a pleasure to read, they show the consistency of Barzun's thought even as they exhibit diversity.

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Jacques Barzun is literary advisor at Charles Scribner's Sons, and University Professor Emeritus at Columbia University. Bea Friedland is a musicologist and executive editor at Da Capo Press.

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