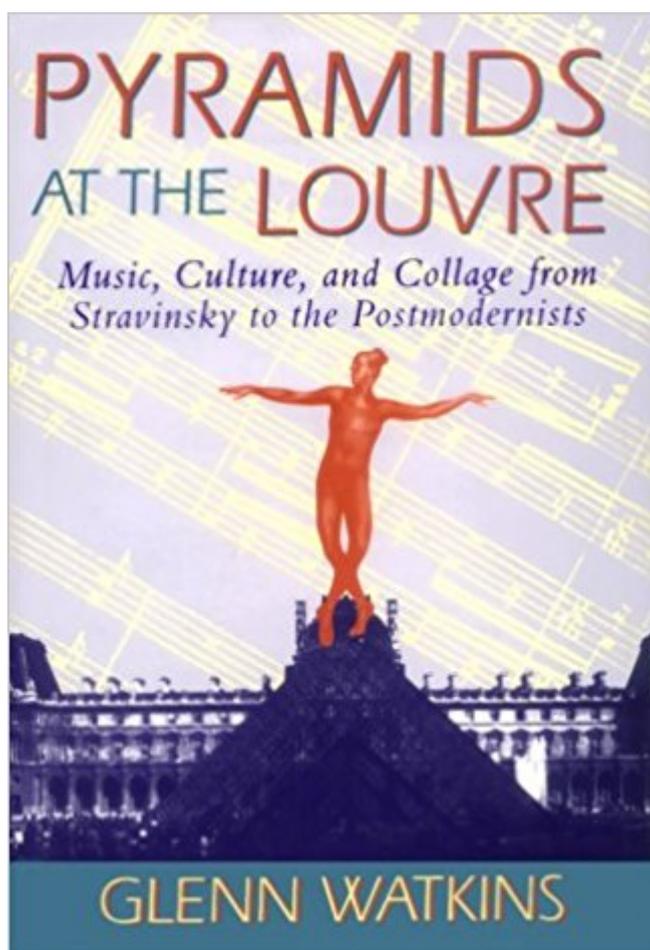


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Pyramids At The Louvre: Music, Culture, And Collage From Stravinsky To The Postmodernists



Synopsis

A pyramid in front of the Louvre. Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and The Rite of Spring. Schoenberg and Shirley Temple. Just as the odd juxtapositions of Modernism produced a new way of seeing, so now collage, in the hands of Glenn Watkins, offers a new perspective on the art of our age. A rich and revealing picture of twentieth-century music and the arts, Watkins' work shows us what our present Postmodern aesthetic owes to our Modernist past. Behind the many guises of Modernism we find an appetite for opposing impulses: the exotic and the home-grown, high and low, black and white, the passionate and the cool, the cerebral and the instinctive. Watkins shows us these oppositions at play in the music of Stravinsky and Ravel, Debussy and Schoenberg, Ives, Satie, Hindemith, Ellington, and Gershwin, in the art of Picasso and the Cubists, Cocteau, Léger, Brancusi and Noguchi, in the anthologies of Nancy Cunard and Main Locke, in the ballet companies of Sergei Diaghilev and Rolf de Math, and in the performances of Josephine Baker. Throughout, collage asserts its power to enlighten through juxtaposition, resist resolution, sponsor pluralism, and promote understanding of an order that eludes all edicts. The masks of Oskar Schlemmer, of Japanese No drama, and of the commedia dell'arte, the mythologies attendant to the retrieval of folk traditions and the emergence of jazz, and the mass relocation of artists in a time of war—all have a place in this depiction and assessment of the legacy of Modernism. A heady exploration of questions surrounding Primitivism, Orientalism, and technology as they surface at either end of our century, this book exposes the millennial preoccupations mutually invested in our search for "first times" and our convictions about "the end of culture"

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Customer Reviews

The real value of the book lies in the intricate network of cross-fertilisations and syntheses it reveals between things we're used to thinking of in isolation. Watkins is an assiduous and enthusiastic cultural detective, adept at ferreting out the obscure lineage of an idea...[An] ambitious and impressive book. (Ivan Hewett Musical Times)[Watkins's] argument is that, just as I. M. Pei's glass pyramids at the Louvre pluralistically resonate against the Napoleon III architecture which provides a backdrop, so the cultural experience of twentieth-century music owes much to the special concern of composers with varieties of collage--with 'cut and paste' methodologies that bring the Orient into alignment with the Occident, the primitive with the sophisticated, the organic with the clockwork. Watkins...brings his infectious cultural curiosity to bear on what we might define, borrowing one of his own phrases about the cinema, as a concern with 'promoting the comprehensibility of fracture'...This book...keeps the crucial questions alive, and nourishes them in an attractively personal and provocative way. (Arnold Whittall Music & Letters)Impressive....Utilizing an immense store of knowledge, Watkins explores the unusual juxtapositions of our century--exotic and indigenous, old and new, black and white, high and low, cerebral and instinctive (the 'collage' of the title). In 17 essays that examine major movements and figures, he draws on music, art, literature, sociology, and cultural history...Much is provocative. (Choice)An ambitious attempt to understand our inherited Western musical culture...An entertaining and clearly written chronicle, no little part of which is new insights and previously slighted historical accounts. And equally valuable to the reader is the exhilarating fun of discovering new details among the familiar. (Alan Andres Boston Book Review)

As described. Reasonable price. Highly recommend.

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