



# Timpani Tone and the Interpretation of Baroque and Classical Music

By Steven L. Schweizer

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## Timpani Tone and the Interpretation of Baroque and Classical Music By Steven L. Schweizer

*Timpani Tone and the Interpretation of Baroque and Classical Music* explores the nature, production, and evolution of timpani tone and provides insights into how to interpret the music of J. S. Bach, Handel, Haydn, and Mozart. In drawing on 31 years of experience, Steven L. Schweizer focuses on the components of timpani tone and methods for producing it. In so doing, he discusses the importance of timpani bowl type; mallets; playing style; physical gestures; choice of drums; mallet grip; legato, marcato, and staccato strokes; playing different parts of the timpano head; and psychological openness to the music in effectively shaping and coloring timpani parts.

In an acclaimed chapter on interpretation, Schweizer explores how timpanists can use knowledge of the composer's style, psychology, and musical intentions; phrasing and articulation; the musical score; and a conductor's gestures to effectively and convincingly play a part with emotional dynamism and power. The greater part of the book is devoted to the interpretation of Baroque and Classical orchestral and choral music. Meticulously drawing on original sources and authoritative scores from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, Schweizer convincingly demonstrates that timpanists were capable of producing a broader range of timpani tone earlier than is normally supposed. The increase in timpani size, covered timpani mallets, and thinner timpani heads increased the quality of timpani tone; therefore, today's timpanist's need not be entirely concerned with playing with very articulate sticks. In exhaustive sections on Bach, Handel, Haydn, and Mozart, Schweizer takes the reader on an odyssey through the interpretation of their symphonic and choral music.

Relying on Baroque and Classical performance practices, timpani notation, the composer's musical style, and definitive scores, he interprets timpani parts from major works of these composers. Schweizer pays particular attention to timpani tone, articulation, phrasing, and dynamic contouring: elements necessary to effectively communicate their part to listeners.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"This book will help any player breathe new life into their approach to the Baroque and Classical era timpani parts. Well-researched, authoritative, and thorough, it is a tremendous resource for the timpanist of any level." --Jack Brennan, Principal Timpanist, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

"Steven Schweizer provides a comprehensive and thorough explanation of the proper performance practices, tone production, and other useful information for the timpanist's correct interpretation of Baroque and Classical repertoire. I highly recommend this insightful book to the student and professional timpanist." --John Tafoya, Chairman, Percussion Department, Professor of Percussion, Indiana University Jacobs School of Music

"If you are looking for an in-depth exploration of what artist-timpanists seek in their playing, a wonderful tone quality appropriate for specific musical styles, here it is! This reference thoughtfully delves into aspects of timpani playing usually uncovered only in private lessons." --Mark Yancich, Timpanist, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

"This is a highly satisfactory book, which is both scholarly and of more general appeal. Schweizer has gathered, assembled and illustrated his material in such a way that it can be assimilated in a handful of concentrated sittings, which will be as generally enlightening on this area of musical performance as it will directly inform the professional. It seems likely that *Timpani Tone and the Interpretation of Baroque and Classical Music* will re-enliven the style of already competent and committed timpanists. In fact, it goes further. It throws new light on some of the wider issues which have to be understood in order to make the most of the music of the period. Recommended without hesitation." --*Classical.net*

"Important and up-to-date...Recommended reading for college timpani students especially." --*National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors Journal*

"It should be included in the timpanist's library." --*American Musical Instrument Society*

#### About the Author

Steven L. Schweizer has served as timpanist with the Topeka Symphony and Florence [S.C.] Symphony Orchestras. He is Associate Professor and Program Coordinator of the Political Science Department at

Newberry College.

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