

Notes Become Music

A Guidebook from the Viennese Piano Tradition



Walter Fleischmann

Translated by Robert J. Crow

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Notes Become Music: A Guidebook from the Viennese Piano Tradition addresses the many unwritten nuances of dynamics, articulation and agogics as an expression of fundamental principles of a common European musical language. It treats the score as an incomplete musical shorthand that outlines the compositional and interpretive imperatives implicit within it, drawing on historical records from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and detailed comparisons of works to underline the author's presentation of Viennese tradition.

This book is not primarily concerned with questions of style or interpretation. Rather, it explains the many facets of musical notation that were taken for granted by composers who assumed a knowledge of the piano tradition of their day. *Notes Become Music* informs not only those students in countries where the central European music tradition is still unfamiliar, but also a younger generation of Europeans who have grown up without a living connection to their musical past.

Walter Fleischmann is Professor Emeritus of Piano at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna.

“Despite its modest length, *Notes Become Music* conveys fundamental insights into how the works of the masters may be played both correctly and beautifully in a way that can move the listener. The study is concerned with nuances of our musical language that are often neglected or overlooked in piano tuition today. Mr. Fleischmann’s insights are the fruit of decades of experience in piano teaching and performing. They offer valuable ideas not just to students but also to teachers and will help to curb the trend away from living musicianship towards music as marketing and show-business.”

—**Paul Badura-Skoda**, pianist and conductor

“This book is valuable and stimulating in a variety of ways. In it the author demonstrates many basic principles for the interpretation of piano music that should not be neglected in a so-called free style of playing but which may also serve to liberate players from what are for the most part acquired constraints. This is particularly important for young players who are struggling to develop their own artistic personalities and for those who perhaps have been guided by their teachers into a sense of mistaken faithfulness to the original, or who have been primarily formed by the ideas of the teachers themselves. In addition, the explanations in this book may prevent many a piano student who is not yet fully mature from attempting to take eccentric celebrities—whose playing should on no account be imitated—as role models. Great piano music has lived for centuries not only on the manuscript paper upon which it was notated by the masters, but also in the changing styles of interpretation over the years. Walter Fleischmann’s intriguing work points out limits that serious pianists should not transgress, at the same time opening up a wealth of possibilities for legitimate interpretation for which there are no traditional means of notation.”

—**Alexander Jenner**, Professor Emeritus,
University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna

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Walter Fleischmann

UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS, VIENNA

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

For the sake of simplicity and easier reading, categories of individuals are sometimes referred to in this translation using solely the masculine form. This form is here taken to refer equally to women and men.

Robert J. Crow

MUSICAL EXAMPLES¹

Streaming audio files can be accessed here:

www.members.aon.at/walter.fleischmann/book_audios_en.html

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