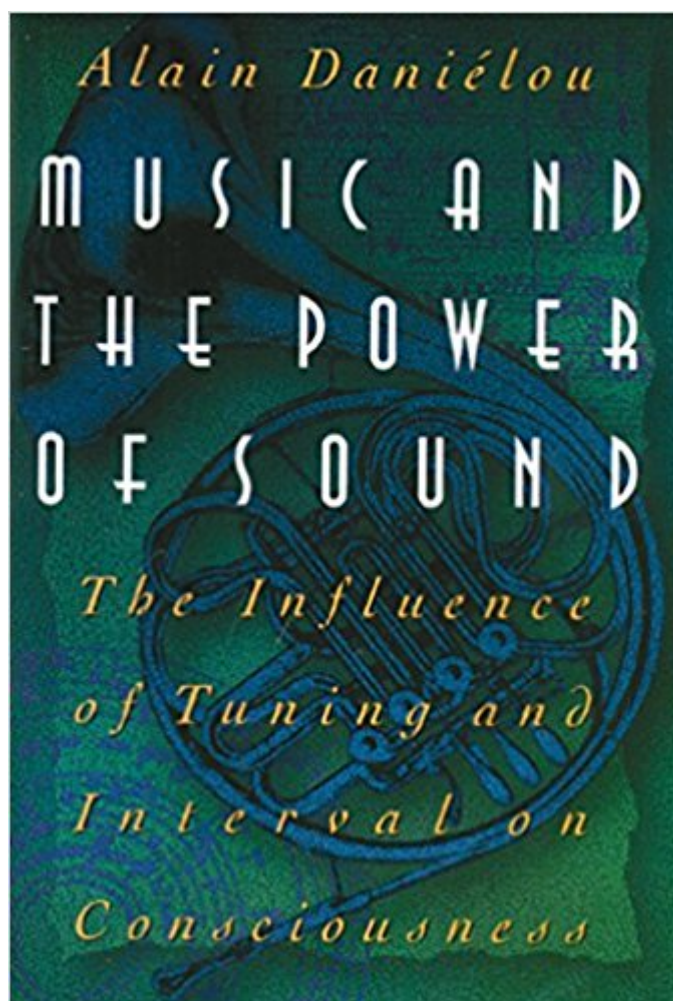


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Music And The Power Of Sound: The Influence Of Tuning And Interval On Consciousness



Synopsis

Music has always been esteemed for its power to speak directly to our higher consciousness, a power founded in the purity of simple harmonic ratios. In this book, Alain Danielou traces the development of musical scales and tuning from their origins in both China and India, through their merging in ancient Greece, and on to the development of the Western traditions of modal and polyphonic music. Understanding these potent harmonic relationships offers a way for today's musicians to transcend the limitations of overly rationalistic music by drawing on its metaphysical roots.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"With his fierce, global intelligence, Alain Danielou was the first to wake up the West to the universality of musical harmony and its potential for planetary consciousness." (W.A. Mathieu, author of *The Listening Book* and *The Musical Life*) "Our debt to his scholarship and humanity is immeasurable." (The Times Literary Supplement)

Text: English, German (translation)

This is a wonderful book. It's not long in pages but it is a heavy read and requires mathematical thinking. The logic, while subversive to western thought, is sound. I recommend this to any musician.

If you looking to dive deeper into how sound and music work, this is a great book. Expand your knowledge here, as there much food for thought! Although I have finished the book as of yet, I am finding it an enjoyable, you might too!

This is a classic that I had read a long time ago in its original French. I was surprised and quite pleased at the excellent quality of the translation, and delighted to find it available. Delivery and condition were both entirely satisfactory..

Alain Danielou has done a wonderful job of researching ancient scales of music and has really opened my mind to microtonal scales and purer harmonies than equal tempering offers. A favourite book.

It is perfect book about ancient musical system in Chine, India and Greece. Such a good reading for better undestanding these topics.

Wonderful book! A must if you are a musician!

Danielou writes not of mere bookish knowledge. But mainly out of experiential knowledge. That makes a world of difference.

Alain Dani  lou is known first of all for his musical semantics based not on notes but on intervals, hence not on punctual sounds but on the articulation of one note onto another to form an interval and then on the articulation of intervals one upon another. In this book of articles and studies brought together, some of them being unpublished before, he used his approach to further some other ideas. The basic principle is that an interval is the ratio produced by the frequencies of the two notes that define that interval. He tested and identified the psycho-mental effects of these intervals on listeners and connected them to three numerical elements appearing in such ratios (basically 2, 3 and 5). But he further brings into his approach an important inspiration from the old Sanskrit approach of music. We have to note here he assumes that this Vedic tradition is the oldest human musical tradition, is the basic and sole because only possible musical approach, and it has been kept in later Hinduist music. We can see here he is totally unaware of the fact that Sumerian music is at least one thousand if not one and a half thousand years older. Vedic music is not the original

form of music. He also forgets that Hinduism is an old approach in India and he does not consider at all the Buddhist approach. All his symbolism with an ever present God as a creator would have to be challenged in the Buddhist understanding that there is no god and the world is not seen as created. Yet his symbolic approach that brings together musical notes, geometrical shapes, colors, animals, planets, basic elements, etc., ... and gods, is interesting if we let the divine elements out of a modern assimilation. The book is a lot more interesting when he shows how an interval has to go through an acoustic trip from the ear up into the brain and the mind to be interpreted and felt. Then his formal approach can lead to a new question he does not ask: are the effects of the intervals what they are because of the correspondence between the functional structures of these intervals and the brain cells that process the acoustic stimuli, and the stimuli of other senses? And further on, that could lead to the question: are the formal structural characteristics of sounds in agreement or disagreement with the same in a building (like in a church) that has perfect acoustics? In other words Danielou's agreement with the deistic and altogether rather purely experiential approach of the Hinduistic school limits his vision of his subject. What's more, that blocks him totally against any form of music posterior to let's say the romantics or at the latest Debussy. He rejects all music composed over the last hundred years that does not follow the basic musical principles from the Renaissance to the Impressionistic era. In fact he states that all Vedic vision of music is the acme of music and he rejects the western principles of harmony that triumphed at the end of the 15th century. There is not much left then except going back to an exiled Tibetan monastery in some lost Himalayan mountain. I don't think anyone wants to be that regressive. It could have been a marvelous book with a little distantiation from his hinduistic absolute reference.

Dr Jacques COULARDEAU

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