

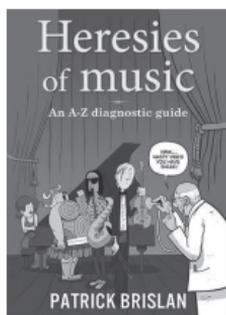
HERESIES OF MUSIC

Patrick Brislan

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heresiesofmusic

“A wonderful collection of truths, and almost all are inconvenient”.



There is an underlying seriousness to Patrick Brislan's book which can otherwise be viewed as an irreverent romp through some of music's more absurd beliefs.

It left me questioning a few commonly-held dogmas that have been unsuspectingly passed down through generations of musicians, teachers and students.

Dispelling entrenched myths, Brislan tells us that there is no 'cycle of Bartok's string quartets', that the future of Batons is in doubt, that Contemporary music is a compound word consisting of con and temporary. Music criticism, electronic music and improvisation also come under his candid scrutiny.

He unearths a plethora of hyperbole, hypocrisy and pretentious nonsense; for example, he dismisses “Even the characteristically unburnished Klemperer sound seemed essentially Beethovenian”, as pure semantics, designed to impress with the incontestable authority of the critic.

Brislan has succinct and witty things to say about the Doctor's Orchestra, Understudies, Temperament and the Sydney International Piano Competition. As for Opera in the Vineyard, Brislan dubs it, “Outdoor Concert Kitsch Experiment Replacing the Stage” (OCKERS).

In short, Brislan takes the lid off the mysteries of folklore and double standards in music.

This is no rancorous attack; his forthright book offers an alternative view of the real ailments afflicting so much of the music world.

I found this an enlightening, enjoyable and above all, thought-provoking read.

Principal horn in the Australian Youth Orchestra, Patrick Brislan has performed with all the major Australian orchestras, including guest principal horn with the West Australian, Adelaide and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras.

In 1970, he was appointed lecturer in music at the Elder Conservatorium, a member of the University of Adelaide Wind Quintet. He was also in the elective position of Director of the Elder Conservatorium for four years, and Associate Dean of Performing Arts at the University of Adelaide. For the past 15 years Patrick has assisted the AYO in developing its alumni program.