



# Absolute Music: The History of an Idea

*By Mark Evan Bonds*

Download now

Read Online ➔

## **Absolute Music: The History of an Idea** By Mark Evan Bonds

What is music, and why does it move us? From Pythagoras to the present, writers have struggled to isolate the essence of "pure" or "absolute" music in ways that also account for its profound effect. In *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea*, Mark Evan Bonds traces the history of these efforts across more than two millennia, paying special attention to the relationship between music's essence and its qualities of form, expression, beauty, autonomy, as well as its perceived capacity to disclose philosophical truths.

The core of this book focuses on the period between 1850 and 1945. Although the idea of pure music is as old as antiquity, the term "absolute music" is itself relatively recent. It was Richard Wagner who coined the term, in 1846, and he used it as a pejorative in his efforts to expose the limitations of purely instrumental music. For Wagner, music that was "absolute" was isolated, detached from the world, sterile. His contemporary, the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick, embraced this quality of isolation as a guarantor of purity. Only pure, absolute music, he argued, could realize the highest potential of the art.

Bonds reveals how and why perceptions of absolute music changed so radically between the 1850s and 1920s. When it first appeared, "absolute music" was a new term applied to old music, but by the early decades of the twentieth century, it had become paradoxically--an old term associated with the new music of modernists like Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Bonds argues that the key developments in this shift lay not in discourse about music but rather the visual arts. The growing prestige of abstraction and form in painting at the turn of the twentieth century--line and color, as opposed to object-helped move the idea of purely abstract, absolute music to the cutting edge of musical modernism.

By carefully tracing the evolution of absolute music from Ancient Greece through the Middle Ages to the twentieth-century, Bonds not only provides the first comprehensive history of this pivotal concept but also provokes new thoughts on the essence of music and how essence has been used to explain music's effect. A long awaited book from one of the most respected senior scholars in the field, *Absolute Music* will be essential reading for anyone interested in the history, theory, and aesthetics of music.

 [\*\*Download\*\* Absolute Music: The History of an Idea ...pdf](#)

 [\*\*Read Online\*\* Absolute Music: The History of an Idea ...pdf](#)

# Absolute Music: The History of an Idea

*By Mark Evan Bonds*

## **Absolute Music: The History of an Idea** By Mark Evan Bonds

What is music, and why does it move us? From Pythagoras to the present, writers have struggled to isolate the essence of "pure" or "absolute" music in ways that also account for its profound effect. In *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea*, Mark Evan Bonds traces the history of these efforts across more than two millennia, paying special attention to the relationship between music's essence and its qualities of form, expression, beauty, autonomy, as well as its perceived capacity to disclose philosophical truths.

The core of this book focuses on the period between 1850 and 1945. Although the idea of pure music is as old as antiquity, the term "absolute music" is itself relatively recent. It was Richard Wagner who coined the term, in 1846, and he used it as a pejorative in his efforts to expose the limitations of purely instrumental music. For Wagner, music that was "absolute" was isolated, detached from the world, sterile. His contemporary, the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick, embraced this quality of isolation as a guarantor of purity. Only pure, absolute music, he argued, could realize the highest potential of the art.

Bonds reveals how and why perceptions of absolute music changed so radically between the 1850s and 1920s. When it first appeared, "absolute music" was a new term applied to old music, but by the early decades of the twentieth century, it had become--paradoxically--an old term associated with the new music of modernists like Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Bonds argues that the key developments in this shift lay not in discourse about music but rather the visual arts. The growing prestige of abstraction and form in painting at the turn of the twentieth century--line and color, as opposed to object-helped move the idea of purely abstract, absolute music to the cutting edge of musical modernism.

By carefully tracing the evolution of absolute music from Ancient Greece through the Middle Ages to the twentieth-century, Bonds not only provides the first comprehensive history of this pivotal concept but also provokes new thoughts on the essence of music and how essence has been used to explain music's effect. A long awaited book from one of the most respected senior scholars in the field, *Absolute Music* will be essential reading for anyone interested in the history, theory, and aesthetics of music.

## **Absolute Music: The History of an Idea** By Mark Evan Bonds Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1107591 in Books
- Published on: 2014-06-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.40" h x 1.50" w x 9.40" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 400 pages

 [Download Absolute Music: The History of an Idea ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Absolute Music: The History of an Idea ...pdf](#)

## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"You should derive considerable enlightenment from Bonds' trenchant and pertinent perspectives." --Arnold Whittall, *The Musical Times*

"...the idea...turns out to be a big one, and Bonds rises brilliantly to his own challenge, writing an epic narrative with a masterly command of 2,500 years of music history from the mysteries of Pythagoras to the mysteries of the CIA...Bonds's concept is immaculately conceived, wonderfully lucid, beautifully organized, and elegantly written."--*Music Theory Online*

"This is an immensely informed, thoroughly documented, and detailed book, offering much to chew on during a delicious and intellectually nourishing journey through millennia of theoretical discussions about the nature of music. Readers with an interest in these matters should find Bonds' account profoundly satisfying, and his book should also provide the basis for graduate seminars on musical aesthetics. Highly recommended."--*Classical.Net*

### About the Author

**Mark Evan Bonds** is the Cary C. Boshamer Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he has taught since 1992. He has served as editor-in-chief of Beethoven Forum and has published widely on music, aesthetics, and the philosophy of music.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Paul Kline:**

Inside other case, little people like to read book Absolute Music: The History of an Idea. You can choose the best book if you like reading a book. Provided that we know about how is important a new book Absolute Music: The History of an Idea. You can add know-how and of course you can around the world by way of a book. Absolutely right, because from book you can realize everything! From your country until foreign or abroad you will be known. About simple matter until wonderful thing you can know that. In this era, we can open a book or perhaps searching by internet product. It is called e-book. You can use it when you feel uninterested to go to the library. Let's examine.

**Robert Hutzler:**

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition details. Even you love Absolute Music: The History of an Idea, you may enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout guys. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

**Sylvia Medina:**

Do you really one of the book lovers? If so, do you ever feeling doubt when you find yourself in the book store? Try and pick one book that you find out the inside because don't assess book by its cover may doesn't work is difficult job because you are scared that the inside maybe not since fantastic as in the outside search likes. Maybe you answer may be Absolute Music: The History of an Idea why because the fantastic cover that make you consider regarding the content will not disappoint a person. The inside or content is fantastic as the outside or maybe cover. Your reading sixth sense will directly show you to pick up this book.

**Harold Esparza:**

Many people spending their time by playing outside along with friends, fun activity using family or just watching TV 24 hours a day. You can have new activity to pay your whole day by examining a book. Ugh, do you think reading a book really can hard because you have to take the book everywhere? It alright you can have the e-book, delivering everywhere you want in your Smartphone. Like Absolute Music: The History of an Idea which is getting the e-book version. So , try out this book? Let's notice.

**Download and Read Online Absolute Music: The History of an Idea  
By Mark Evan Bonds #1RO8ZH6E30F**

## **Read Absolute Music: The History of an Idea By Mark Evan Bonds for online ebook**

Absolute Music: The History of an Idea By Mark Evan Bonds Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Absolute Music: The History of an Idea By Mark Evan Bonds books to read online.

### **Online Absolute Music: The History of an Idea By Mark Evan Bonds ebook PDF download**

**Absolute Music: The History of an Idea By Mark Evan Bonds Doc**

**Absolute Music: The History of an Idea By Mark Evan Bonds Mobipocket**

**Absolute Music: The History of an Idea By Mark Evan Bonds EPub**

**1R08ZH6E30F: Absolute Music: The History of an Idea By Mark Evan Bonds**