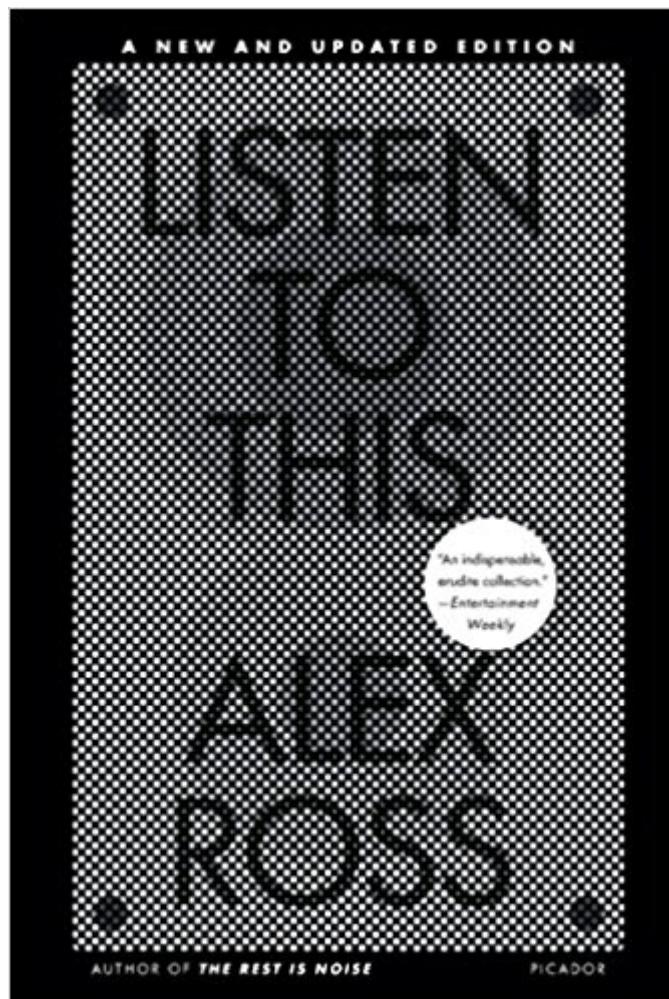


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## Listen To This



## Synopsis

One of The Telegraph's Best Music Books 2011 Alex Ross's award-winning international bestseller, *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, has become a contemporary classic, establishing Ross as one of our most popular and acclaimed cultural historians. *Listen to This*, which takes its title from a beloved 2004 essay in which Ross describes his late-blooming discovery of pop music, showcases the best of his writing from more than a decade at *The New Yorker*. These pieces, dedicated to classical and popular artists alike, are at once erudite and lively. In a previously unpublished essay, Ross brilliantly retells hundreds of years of music history—from Renaissance dances to Led Zeppelin—through a few iconic bass lines of celebration and lament. He vibrantly sketches canonical composers such as Schubert, Verdi, and Brahms; gives us in-depth interviews with modern pop masters such as Björk and Radiohead; and introduces us to music students at a Newark high school and indie-rock hipsters in Beijing. Whether his subject is Mozart or Bob Dylan, Ross shows how music expresses the full complexity of the human condition. Witty, passionate, and brimming with insight, *Listen to This* teaches us how to listen more closely.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. In this brilliant collection, music critic Ross (*The Rest Is Noise*) utilizes a wide musical scale--classical music in China; opera as popular art; sketches of Schubert, Björk, Kiki and Herb--as a way of understanding the world. Featuring mostly revised essays published in the span of his 12-year career at the *New Yorker*, Ross offers timeless portraits that probe the ways that the

powerful personalities of composers and musicians stamp an inherently abstract medium so that certain notes, songs, or choruses become instantly recognizable as the work of a certain artist. The virtuoso performance comes in the one previously unpublished essay, *Chacón, Lamento, Walking Blues*, where Ross isolates three different bass lines as they wind through music history from the 16th-century *chacón*, a dance that promised the upending of the social order, through the laments of Bach, opera, and finally the blues. Ross nimbly finds the common ground on which 16th-century Spanish musicians, Bach, players from Ellington's 1940 band and Led Zeppelin's bassist John Paul Jones can stand, at least momentarily. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Full of surprises and sharp observations, this "absorbing, illuminating, exciting collection" (San Francisco Chronicle) gives equal billing to pop stars and classical composers, crossing musical margins with remarkable fluidity. Though they bear the *New Yorker*'s signature style, most critics upheld Ross's writing as eloquent and thoughtful, in language accessible to both laypersons and connoisseurs (although aficionados may have an easier time with the details). The Washington Post complained that the essays lacked excitement and literary "zing," but others praised Ross for the sense of adventure that imbues each piece. Readers may find it difficult to resist Ross's enthusiasm, and *Listen To This* will no doubt take an honored place on many a bookshelf. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Very good discussion of Mitsuko Uchida. Very odd lack of discussion of Daniel Barenboim.

If you're buying the kindle version you're gonna have to do a lot of hunting on Youtube for the music mentioned but that kind of made it more fun.

I bought this book to assign chapters to students for an introductory Music 101 class. Many of the chapters -- especially 1 and 3 -- are excellent for a course of this kind. Writings by Alex Ross are intellectual enough to be rigorous for a college course (or an intelligent lay-reader), but accessible enough that students/readers are never confused by musical jargon. That said, for those who want to read the book from beginning to end, it's not cohesive like "The Rest is Noise" -- just a scattered collection of *New Yorker* pieces.

This book so far has been a great read. Once again Alex Ross takes the reader beyond the music and words and bring us to a new level of understanding about music, he really opens us to many different genera of music that i have not listen to until reading this book. recommend reading, for music majors and for anyone that loves music

This was for my husband's birthday as he loves music in any kinds. I can't really say about the book because of this reason besides he seems to like it.

The book is very interesting and great to read, but I was very dissapointed to find out that the Kindle version doesn't contain the images/figures that the paper version does! It would have been great if the Kindle version at least had the figures, and maybe even the audio examples built in!

Good

From the first chapter of his second book, LISTEN TO THIS, in which he recounts how Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony inspired a lifelong love of music in him - to the last in which he details the pathos lingering throughout the work of Johannes Brahms - Alex Ross cements his reputation as perhaps the most dynamic writer on music today. His first outing, THE REST IS NOISE, has become an international bestseller and established itself as THE premiere survey on twentieth century classical music - an obtuse subject effortlessly broken down and made accessible by Ross's seamless prose and clear narrative structure. LISTEN TO THIS proves to be far more episodic than THE REST IS NOISE. In contrast to that book's linear chronology, LISTEN TO THIS is simply a collection of essays on various musical subjects, most of which have already been published in Ross's primary meal ticket, THE NEW YORKER magazine. But LISTEN TO THIS is no less riveting, as Ross's engaging writing is by turns emotional (the sentimental chapter on Lorraine Hunt Lieberson), intelligent (he chronicles the entire musical history of a particular walking bass line in chapter two) and funny (the many on-campus scenes he depicts involving Marlboro College in "The Music Mountain"). Also, since it includes chapters on a wide variety of musicians, from Mozart to Dylan to Bjork to contemporary Chinese classical composers, LISTEN TO THIS truly does have "something for everyone," and reading through all of the essays is a great way to expose yourself to new music in which you may not have had any prior interest. Personally, I was less than enthused about reading the chapters on Schubert and Brahms, for example, but after making my way through them

- which I ultimately considered more of a joy than a chore - I found myself researching more historical facts and seeking out samples of their music. It is a testament to Ross's skills as a writer that he has long been inspiring this effect in many of his readers. Don't be surprised if you pick up a Marian Anderson record or develop a sudden peculiar liking for obscure Chinese composer Qigang Chen after reading this book! Ross even makes it easy on us by providing a "suggested listening" section on each chapter, in which he recommends a slew of recordings. Ross isn't without his flaws, however: he is far more comfortable when covering classical subjects than pop or rock, as evinced by the rather bland chapter on Radiohead (though he fares better with Bjork, weaving comparisons of her music to the Icelandic classical tradition throughout that chapter). Also, the chapter "Edges of Pop" is without any real thesis - only offering brief glimpses at a small smorgasbord of oddball musical artists. Regardless, anyone with even a remote interest in classical or rock music would be hard pressed not to find inspiration and insight in *LISTEN TO THIS*. Alex Ross's devout love of music bleeds off of every page, without fail, directly into the heart of the reader.

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