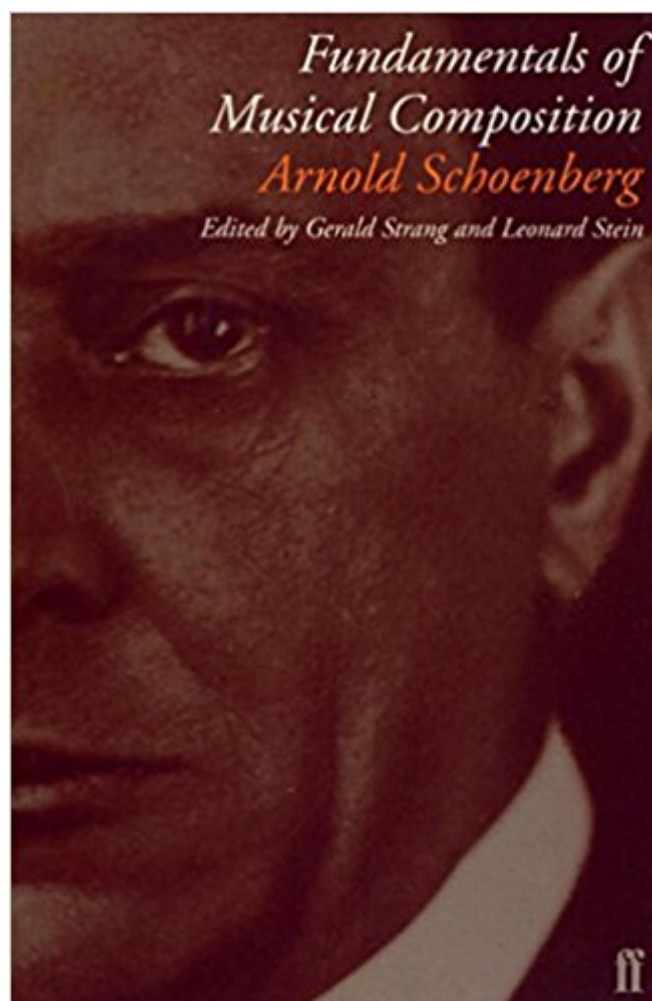


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# Fundamentals Of Musical Composition



## Synopsis

Fundamentals of Musical Composition represents the culmination of more than forty years in Schoenberg's life devoted to the teaching of musical principles to students and composers in Europe and America. For his classes he developed a manner of presentation in which 'every technical matter is discussed in a very fundamental way, so that at the same time it is both simple and thorough'. This book can be used for analysis as well as for composition. On the one hand, it has the practical objective of introducing students to the process of composing in a systematic way, from the smallest to the largest forms; on the other hand, the author analyses in thorough detail and with numerous illustrations those particular sections in the works of the masters which relate to the compositional problem under discussion.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) was an Austrian composer, later moving to the United States, and was leader of the Second Viennese School. In the 1920s, Schoenberg developed the twelve-tone technique, and his approach, both in terms of harmony and development, is among the major landmarks of twentieth-century musical thought. The extraordinary scope of Schoenberg's intelligence, and the often prophetic character of his insights, make his writings on music an indispensable source for anyone interested in the complex history of twentieth-century music.

I have studied a lot of books on composition and in my opinions this is the best damned book on

how to write music. Although Schönberg gave us atonality, this book is all about learning how to write traditional music. The book is very systematic in its approach and relies on Arnold's own mastery of traditional music. If you don't believe me, listen to Jacob's Ladder and other works prior to his serial music. Please keep in mind that this book requires knowledge of rudiments of music theory. If you need to brush up on that, may I suggest Paul Harder's fantastic book on the subject: Basic Materials in Music Theory.

This is FAR beyond "fundamentals." A bigger problem, though, is that he uses his own vocabulary (the preface specifically states this is the case). So if you've read anything music theory/composition related written in the last 40 years, you're going to be confused by his quirky word choices. I'm saving it for the future, in case I ever get that far, but I'm a bit disappointed.

Schoenberg's group of essays reads easily, and has a coherence that gives purpose to his subject matter. The work is a happy marriage of his technical content in "Style and Idea" and his earlier tonal works. In fact, and by that I mean my opinionated observation, these essays are written as though in the form of an extended requiem. Organized into twenty movements, my 20th Century musical hero begins "lightly" by discussing the concept of form. He then plays through motive constructions, melodic connections, and the different parts of form, keeping all his instruction neatly connected. At times, it seemed like I could hear music flowing out of his words, paragraphs, and punctuation. This book is more than a course for music student and/or composer; it is a flavorful experience for all five senses, unless you are unfortunate enough to have received a previous owner's toilet read.

This was definitely a great read on music composition... just be aware that it is far from the "Fundamentals." I'm fairly well versed in musical and harmonic analysis and found it to be a very slow read. The first half-or-so of the book is Schoenberg describing what the fundamental 'elements' of music. While he uses traditional musical terminology; if you were to begin the book halfway through, you wouldn't be able to understand what he's talking about at all because of his usage of his own personal musical dictionary. After slogging through Schoenberg defining his terms, the book is definitely worth the read. The book largely focused on musical examples, and after each chapter is 2-5 pages of examples that are referenced in that chapter. This is definitely very helpful. Sometimes he'd describe a musical idea that seems extremely obvious, but the examples provided can really show how far these ideas can go. For example, he'd describe the methodology for writing

a harmony to a melody, then provide an example of a Beethoven piano sonata that I've played. These examples really help everything click.

My son already has this book and bought another as a gift for a high school senior who will be studying music composition. He used it and found it to be helpful.

I feverishly am in the process of brushing up on my music theory as I am making an attempt to move from songwriter to film, TV, etc. composer. I have always done some orchestration, arranging, etc but mainly by ear even though I studied music a long time ago in college. As I progress from one book to another I have come across several good books and this is one of the best so far. It really covers a lot of great theory from motive writing to larger works. Along with great musical examples (mainly Beethoven) this book is great and I highly recommend it .Â Fundamentals of Musical Composition

Arrived in amazing condition and was very fast to Australia from the USA and the book is great! Been looking for this fir ages. Price was very reasonable too :)

Schoenberg is a talented composer, if only a little stuck up when it comes to musical teaching in relation to composition. This book functions like a textbook, but not for the feint of heart, for Schoenberg is a stickler. I plan to continue with this book, even though Schoenberg himself is rather condescending towards musicians like myself, who do not necessarily have a formal musical education to back up my compositional explorations. Even still, it is a fine book.

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