

Ames Town and Gown Book Club listings

Indivisible by Four (Arnold Steinhardt): A memoir of the violinist's musical career, most of it spent as a player in the Guarneri Quartet.

The Rest is Noise (Alex Ross)

Winner of the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award and many other prizes for non-fiction this book is a voyage into the labyrinth of modern music—specifically 20th century classical music.

What to Listen For In Music (Aaron Copland)

A book about music for lay people -- those of us who love music but don't know much about it and want to learn more in order to enjoy it even more.

Copland takes the reader through the building blocks of music. He starts with what he calls the four elements: rhythm, melody, harmony and tone color. Then he proceeds to musical texture, to musical structure, and then to five fundamental forms: sectional, variational, fugal, sonata, and free. Each chapter is followed with a list of suggested pieces of music to listen to.

The Triumph of Music: Composers, Musicians and Their Audiences (Tim Blanning)

A distinguished historian chronicles the rise of music and musicians in the West from lowly balladeers to masters employed by fickle patrons, to the great composers of genius, to today's rock stars. How, he asks, did music progress from subordinate status to its present position of supremacy among the creative arts?

Am I too loud: Memoir of a Piano Accompanist (Gerald Moore)

Eminent mid-20th century accompanist Gerald Moore's memoir of his life in Canada and Britain provides advice about the art of the collaborative pianist including preparation, practice, rehearsal and performances all over the world with some of the pre-eminent instrumentalists and vocalists of the 20th century.

Chopin's Piano (Paul Kildea)

The story of Frederic Chopin and George Sand's 1838 winter trip to the island of Majorca where Chopin completed the composition of his twenty-four Preludes using a small pianino made by a local craftsman while living in an abandoned monastery.

The First Four Notes (Matthew Guerrieri)

A musical and cultural history of the origins, subsequent reputation, and attributed meanings of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony

Joys and Sorrows; Reflections by Pablo Casals (Albert E Kahn)

This book was written by cellist Pablo Casals with help of Albert Kahn in his 90th year and contained fascinating reflections on this important Spanish 20th century musician, truly a citizen of the world and humanitarian.

The Maestros and Their Music (John Mauceri)

An accessible and exuberant look at the enigmatic art and craft of conducting from the point of view of a celebrated American conductor whose international career has spanned half a century.

The Piano Shop on the Left Bank: Discovering a Forgotten Passion in a Paris Atelier (Thad Carhart)

This memoir follows the experience of an expatriate American in Paris who rediscovers his love for piano after stumbling on a piano shop while walking his children to school. The atelier's master proves to be an indispensable guide to the history and art of the piano.

Dinner with Lenny: The Last Long Interview with Leonard Bernstein (Jonathan Cott)

Leonard Bernstein invited the author to his home for what turned out to be his last major interview, an unprecedented and astonishingly frank twelve-hour conversation that illuminates Bernstein's brilliance and wit.