



MUSICAL BEAUTY

Negotiating the Boundary between Subject and Object

FÉRDIA J. STONE-DAVIS

This book offers an important new perspective on the Western tradition of musical aesthetics through an examination of Anicius Boethius and Immanuel Kant. Within the trajectory illuminated by these two thinkers, musical meaning is framed by and formed through the concept of beauty—a concept which is shaped by *prior* understandings about notions of the self and the world. Beauty opens up a space within which the boundary between the self and the world, subject and object, is negotiated and configured. In doing so, *either* the subject *or* the object is asserted to the detriment of the other, and to the *physicality* of music. This book asserts that the uniqueness of music's ontology emerges from its basis in sound and embodied practice. It suggests that musical beauty is generated by the *mutuality* of subject and object arising within the participation that music encourages, one which involves an ekstatic mode of attention on the part of the subject.

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“*Musical Beauty* is an interesting and original contribution to theological aesthetics.”

—Patrick Sherry, Lancaster University, UK

“Here is a fresh and impressive new voice in the burgeoning conversation between music and theology. With considerable skill, Dr. Stone-Davis negotiates two of the most important figures in Western aesthetics. She emerges with striking proposals about the interrelation of beauty, physicality, and musical perception that have far-reaching consequences, affecting every aspect of the way we hear and listen to music in our own time.”

—Jeremy Begbie, Thomas A. Langford Research Professor of Theology, Duke University

“The philosophy of music is finally starting to emerge from the straitjacket imposed by the analytical tradition. Férédia Stone-Davis’ *Musical Beauty* makes a vital contribution to the growing realization that music is a resource for philosophical thinking, rather than simply an object to be defined by philosophy.”

—Andrew Bowie, Professor of Philosophy and German, University of London

“Beauty leads to more than just pleasure. This elegant new study argues that it can reveal epistemological insights as well, and that musical beauty in particular can help us better understand our relationship to the world around us. As Stone-Davis argues, musical beauty is the most abstract, problematic, and, for that very reason, the most revealing of all varieties of beauty in art. She brings both historical and contemporary perspectives to this wide-ranging account.”

—Mark Evan Bonds, Boshamer Distinguished Professor of Music, University of North Carolina

FÉRDIA J. STONE-DAVIS holds a doctorate from the University of Cambridge and a masters in performance from Trinity College of Music, London. She is an interdisciplinary academic working in the fields of music, theology, and philosophy. She is also an accomplished performer of both baroque and contemporary recorder repertoire.

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