



## Classical Listening: Two Decades of Reviews from The American Record Guide

*Rob Haskins*

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The classical record business gained a new lease on life in the 1980s when period instrument performances of baroque and classical music began to assume a place on the stage. This return to the past found its complement in the musical ascension of the American minimalists, in particular the music of Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and John Adams, and smaller specialty labels that focused on experimental composers like John Cage. During this period of change—of classical music's transition of looking both forward and back—Rob Haskins served as a reviewer for *The American Record Guide*, tracing these evolutions while also attending to works emerging from within the mainstream of classical music performance and composition.

*Classical Listening: Two Decades of Reviews from The American Record Guide* collects the several hundred reviews produced since Rob Haskins's start in the mid-1990s. A performer and musicologist, Haskins writes delightful, cogent reviews that unapologetically reflect his personal experience, musical interests, and professional background, emphasizing the value of subjectivity in music criticism. Witty, provocative, and eloquent, Haskins's book reads like a diary of personal experience even as it addresses important topics as diverse as historical performance practice and the aesthetics of contemporary music. It is also a perfect guide to buying or listening for the classical music devotee seeking an informed opinion on the breadth of remarkable recordings available.

Record collectors, students and scholars of early and contemporary music, and performers, professionals, and general music lovers will find this collection an invaluable resource as they trace the reception of recordings in the last twenty years of classical music performance.

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