



**Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History:
Shaping Modern Musical Thought in Late
Nineteenth Century Vienna (AMS Studies in
Music)**

Kevin Karnes

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More than a century after Guido Adler's appointment to the first chair in musicology at the University of Vienna, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History* provides a first look at the discipline in this earliest period, and at the ideological dilemmas and methodological anxieties that characterized it upon its institutionalization. Author Kevin Karnes contends that some of the most vital questions surrounding musicology's disciplinary identities today—the relationship between musicology and criticism, the role of the subject in analysis and the narration of history, and the responsibilities of the scholar to the listening public—originate in these conflicted and largely forgotten beginnings.

Karnes lays bare the nature of music study in the late nineteenth century through insightful readings of long-overlooked contributions by three of musicology's foremost pioneers—Adler, Eduard Hanslick, and Heinrich Schenker. Shaped as much by the skeptical pronouncements of the likes of Nietzsche and Wagner as it was by progressivist ideologies of scientific positivism, the new discipline comprised an array of oft-contested and intensely personal visions of music study, its value, and its future. Karnes introduces readers to a Hanslick who rejected the call of positivist scholarship and dedicated himself to penning an avowedly subjective history of Viennese musical life. He argues that Schenker's analytical experiments had roots in a Wagner-inspired search for a critical alternative to Adler's style-obsessed scholarship. And he illuminates Adler's determined response to Nietzsche's warnings about the vitality of artistic and cultural life in an increasingly scientific age. Through sophisticated and meticulous presentation, *Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History* demonstrates that the new discipline of musicology was inextricably tied in with the cultural discourse of its time.

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