



After Sound: Toward a Critical Music

G Douglas Barrett

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After Sound considers contemporary art practices that reconceive music beyond the limitation of sound. This book is called *After Sound* because music and sound are, in Barrett's account, different entities. While musicology and sound art theory alike typically equate music with pure instrumental sound, or absolute music, Barrett posits music as an expanded field of artistic practice encompassing a range of different media and symbolic relationships. The works discussed in *After Sound* thus use performance, text scores, musical automata, video, social practice, and installation while they articulate a novel aesthetic space for a radically engaged musical practice. Coining the term "critical music," this book examines a diverse collection of art projects which intervene into specific political and philosophical conflicts by exploring music's unique historical forms.

Through a series of intimate studies of artworks surveyed from the visual and performing arts of the past ten years-Pussy Riot, Ultra-red, Hong-Kai Wang, Peter Ablinger, Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, and others-*After Sound* offers a significant revision to the way we think about music. The book as a whole offers a way out of one of the most vexing deadlocks of contemporary cultural criticism: the choice between a sound art effectively divorced from the formal-historical coordinates of musical practice and the hermetic music that dominates new music circles today.

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