

Music remains something of a mystery to many people. This book begins with the basic question of what music actually is, employing simple, clear scientific explanations of waves and acoustics while appreciating them as part of God's natural creation. It presents fascinating theories about how music is perceived and how it speaks to the mind, emotions, and spirit—concepts rarely addressed outside academia, and even more rarely examined through the lens of Catholic theology.

This comprehensive, yet accessible, theology of all things music is written by an internationally respected classical composer who teaches music at a top secular university. It is groundbreaking in its treatment of music from a Christian perspective, and it presents a most penetrating insider's view into the troubled waters of contemporary classical music. It is particularly timely in advocating a return to the little-known norms for liturgical music found in the documents of Vatican II.

"I am overjoyed this work is being published. There are no other books on music that articulate the Catholic aesthetic so masterfully. It is a precious jewel to be cherished."

—**Joseph Pearce**, from the Foreword; Author, *The Quest for Shakespeare*

"Even the most devoted atheist recognizes the spiritual component in music. Here at last we have the professor, the composer, and the man of faith together looking at how music can reveal God's immanence and his transcendence together. Kurek's journey to the Catholic faith is fascinating and revealing in its own right."

—**Maggie Gallagher**, Executive Director, Benedict XVI Institute for Sacred Music and Divine Worship

"A fascinating perspective into the mechanics of music, while speaking to the spiritual and transcendental effects of music. With a view of the human person as mind, body, and soul, Kurek delves into the reasons why music speaks the words we cannot speak, shapes the emotions in our hearts, and elevates the longing in our souls."

—**Andrew V. Abela, Ph.D.**, Provost and Senior Vice President, Catholic University of America

"This marvelous book by an acclaimed professional composer explores music from a number of perspectives: physics, aesthetics, theology, philosophy, and the vexing issue of style in both the concert hall and in the Liturgy. His chapters on liturgical music are especially compelling and eye-opening and should be required reading for all Catholics."

—**Frank La Rocca, Ph.D.**, Professor Emeritus of Music, Composer-in-Residence at the Benedict XVI Institute

"What has happened to music? Kurek dares to tell the truth about music in the modern day with the acumen of a scholar and the candor of a friend. With a humility born of reverence for the power of music, he traces the descent of the artistic impulse from the transcendent and timeless to the self-referential and grating. In the nick of time, he urges us back on track, mapping the road to the 'wondrously sacred'."

—**Marie Bellet**, Nashville Songwriter and Singer

Michael Kurek is a classical composer whose works have been performed on six continents. His numerous awards include the prestigious Academy Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His 2017 album, *The Sea Knows*, debuted at No. 1 on *Billboard's* Traditional Classical chart. Holding his doctorate in composition from the University of Michigan, he serves on the faculty of Vanderbilt University.

kurek

The Sound of Beauty

A Classical Composer on Music
in the Spiritual Life

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