

Rebirth: The Future of Classical Music

by Greg Sandow

Outline (v. 2)

What's missing from this outline – details, objections to what I say (along with my answers), liveliness, fun, and, above all, music. I'm going to write a lot about music in this book. Some of that will come in what I'm calling "musical interludes" – one in each chapter, sections of the book that will only be about music, and in which I'll hope to bring classical music alive. (And, in places, non-classical music, when I need to evoke how different it is from classical music, and what its value can be.)

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[for a web page with links to everything I've posted from this book, go [here](#)]

About this book:

Note the title – *Rebirth*, not "Death." Classical music isn't going to die. But it's going to change. It *has* to change, or (for reasons I'll describe at length in chapters two and three) it won't survive.

The changes, of course, are already happening. And they promise something wonderful. Classical music will rejoin our larger culture. And classical musicians – with a new and larger audience – will emerge with new confidence and strength, empowered now to use their music to speak fully for themselves.

The outline follows.

Part I -- The Crisis

Chapter I --Rebirth and Resistance

[For a riff on what this chapter will say, go [here](#). There's also a [shorter version](#) of the riff.]

I'll describe some of the changes already happening in classical music, and show how they'll help bring about the rebirth I've described above.

One reason for change is the classical music crisis – the fear that classical music is receding from our culture, and that its audience might disappear.

But there's resistance to change, and some people don't even believe that the crisis is real.

Musical interlude:

Some people resist change because they're in love with the great classical music tradition. I love that tradition, too, and I'll evoke it here, drawing partly on my own experience to show how deeply classical performers enter into the music they play, and what profound and creative work it can be to bring that music alive.

Chapter II – Dire Data

[This chapter has a [riff](#), too. Plus a [shorter version](#).]

Why the crisis is real.

Proof that the audience really is aging. How dramatically younger it used to be. How its aging signals a very large cultural shift.

Tangible evidence that this shift really happened. The declines in classical music broadcasts, recording, media coverage, and ticket sales. Recent data from the National Endowment for the Arts, and how it shows that the mainstream classical music audience will almost certainly shrink.

And why money for classical music will become harder to raise.

Musical interlude:

A saddened reaction to the drop in funding. What we get when, as a culture, we spend a lot of money on classical music – star musicians, well-honed orchestras, exquisitely rehearsed opera productions, string quartets that can spend full time deepening their performances, and composers who can give their music all the time it needs. We get musicians who can earn a decent living, getting paid what professionals in other fields might earn.

And there's the chance, too, to play really large compositions, works that aren't only huge and grand, but go very deep, emotionally and spiritually.

Not to mention widespread classical music education. (Though in an increasingly multicultural world, should we be teaching classical music at the expense of other musical genres?)

Chapter III -- Renegade Culture

The central problem -- our changing culture. The world has changed, but classical music (mostly) hasn't. Which explains why people -- of all ages -- have lost interest in it.

Part II --The Nature of Classical Music

Chapter IV -- Defining Classical Music

What classical music really is, and why we should save it. More about its great tradition.

Chapter V -- The Myth of Classical Music Superiority

Why classical music isn't better than music of other kinds. Why it's harmful – especially (as I noted earlier) in an increasingly multicultural world – to think that it is.

Chapter VI -- World Gone Wrong: The Failure of Classical Music

Why classical music – in the ways it's presented today – no longer makes sense. Why it functions now as a refuge from contemporary life.

Part III -- Alternatives

Chapter VII -- Pop Music and Popular Culture

Why popular culture is smart and valuable. What it can teach classical music. Why classical music has to coexist with it.

Chapter VIII -- Classical Music in the Past

How classical music used to be freer, and more expressive. How this can inspire us now.

Part IV -- Rebirth

Chapter IX -- What Should We Do?

How classical music has already changed. Problems we still have to solve, and recommendations for further change.

Chapter X -- Rebirth for Real

The future. What classical music might look like, after it reconnects with our current culture, and becomes a truly contemporary art.

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