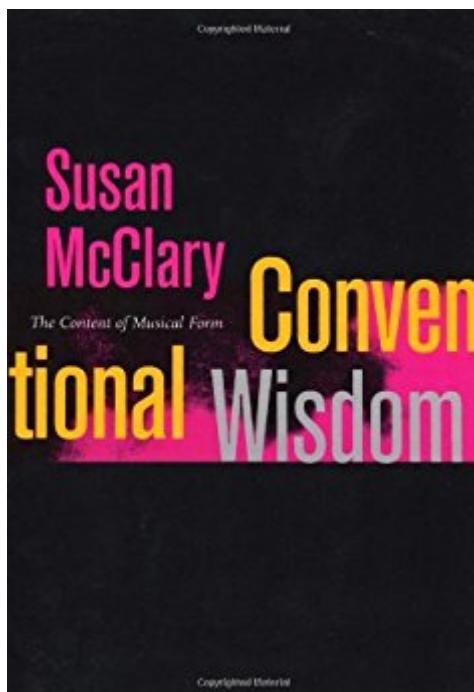


The book was found

# Conventional Wisdom: The Content Of Musical Form (Ernest Bloch Lectures)



## Synopsis

With her usual combination of erudition, innovation, and spirited prose, Susan McClary reexamines the concept of musical convention in this fast-moving and refreshingly accessible book. Exploring the ways that shared musical practices transmit social knowledge, *Conventional Wisdom* offers an account of our own cultural moment in terms of two dominant traditions: tonality and blues. McClary looks at musical history from new and unexpected angles and moves easily across a broad range of repertoires--the blues, eighteenth-century tonal music, late Beethoven, and rap. As one of the most influential trailblazers in contemporary musical understanding, McClary once again moves beyond the borders of the "purely musical" into the larger world of history and society, and beyond the idea of a socially stratified core canon toward a musical pluralism. Those who know McClary only as a feminist writer will discover her many other sides, but not at the expense of gender issues, which are smoothly integrated into the general argument. In considering the need for a different way of telling the story of Western music, *Conventional Wisdom* bravely tackles big issues concerning classical, popular, and postmodern repertoires and their relations to the broader musical worlds that create and enjoy them.

## Book Information

File Size: 3668 KB

Print Length: 219 pages

Publisher: University of California Press; 1 edition (May 9, 2000)

Publication Date: May 9, 2000

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B003DQP7OM

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,108,829 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #7 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Sheet Music & Scores > Composers > Bloch #177 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Arts & Photography > Music > Theory, Composition & Performance > Appreciation #453 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Arts & Photography > Music

## Customer Reviews

If you ever met Susan McClary, you'd find it hard to believe that this petite, soft-spoken, witty woman could inspire such ardent hatred from scores of musicologists. Moreover, the sociological and feminist concepts that she brings to bear on Western art music are already old hat in literary and art criticism. But musicology is, to a large extent, still in denial about Modernism, so Post-Modernism is way beyond the pale. So McClary's first book, "Feminine Endings," rocked the world of musicology to its hardbound, white-male foundation, and provoked round after round of McClary-bashing. Her new book, based on a series of lectures given at UC Berkeley, therefore occasionally sounds a bit defensive. (At one point she notes that she *\*can\** say something nice about Beethoven, as if pointing out the sexual agenda in the 9th Symphony needed an apology.) For any reasonably intelligent reader who has wondered how Western music works, this new book is superb at explaining those mechanisms. McClary uses her usual catholic tastes to discuss everything from Vivaldi to the Blues, and you will come away understand how both of them function, and why we feel moved when listening to either one. Armed with her usual wit and unusual perceptivity, McClary lays bare the workings of Western music with clarity and grace. In the process, she nearly redeems musicology as a discipline worth taking seriously. You go, girl.

During an analysis of a Stradella aria, McClary discusses how the music which starts in a sunny mood (in a major key) moves to a relative minor, and it's as if a cloud has passed overhead. She shows how this modest but effective narrative, dramatic device eventually became a convention (modulation to the relative major or minor) that was so widely used, the dramatic roots became obscured and this modulation began to be taught as a purely "formal" device. Time and again, McClary shows that "form" is not something that is necessarily dry and intellectual, but rather something that serves a very particular purpose, rooted in the needs and desires of society, though often invisible to that society. By bringing to light the conventions that are integral to the work, her analyses offer as many insights into the audiences of their day as they do into the compositional mechanics of the works themselves. Speaking as a classical composer and a performer, I found it inspiring the extent that this book brings music to life. That her analytical methods work as well with Bessie Smith and Prince as they do with Vivaldi and late Beethoven string quartets is a strong plus. Let's live in the whole world of music! I think we have here what will be a highly influential book, or at the least, part of a highly influential and fruitful new trend in musicology. I'm recommending it to all

my composer and performer associates, particularly those of a more analytical bent. It's not always the easiest read. I'd rate it at a "college" (but not necessarily "graduate college") level as opposed to being directed to a more popular audience. Lots of interesting footnotes and citations. But much will be accessible to music lovers with only a little formal musical training. I think having some ability to read music would help (especially if one does not have access to recordings of the works she analyzes).

This book is better than Feminine Endings. Its conclusions and assumptions are less questionable, but it also explains her approach in Feminine Endings. Only a very basic knowledge of music theory is necessary, I imagine you could have a friend in their first year of music theory explain it to you while you listened to the music she discusses. Yet she explains more than most first year theory classes would.

You know, I don't think this author's or any author's physical appearance is either here or there. And please, let's not take ridicule for "ardent hatred". If you fed an English dictionary into a computer program that generated random permutations, one of the more improbable combinations of words it might spit out could be: "as if pointing out the sexual agenda in the 9th Symphony needed an apology". "The sexual agenda in the 9th Symphony"?

[Download to continue reading...](#)

Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form (Ernest Bloch Lectures) The American Musical Landscape: The Business of Musicianship from Billings to Gershwin, Updated With a New Preface (Ernest Bloch Lectures) The Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds (Ernest Bloch Lectures) Reclaiming Late-Romantic Music: Singing Devils and Distant Sounds (Ernest Bloch Lectures) Béla Bartók: Composition, Concepts, and Autograph Sources (Ernest Bloch Lectures) Essays on Italian Poetry and Music in the Renaissance, 1350-1600 (Ernest Bloch Lectures) US Army Technical Manual, DESTRUCTION OF CONVENTIONAL AMMUNITION AND IMPROVED CONVENTIONAL MUNITIONS (ICM) TO PREVENT ENEMY USE, TM 43-0002-33, 1993 Chen Taiji Self Defense - Fighting Applications of the Chen Family Tai Chi 19 Form (Chen Taijiquan 19 Form Book 2) Two-Dimensional Sonata Form: Form and Cycle in Single-Movement Instrumental Works by Liszt, Strauss, Schoenberg, and Zemlinsky Anatomy & Physiology: The Unity of Form and Function: Anatomy & Physiology: The Unity of Form and Function Wholeistic Dentistry - Balancing Conventional Dental Care with Ancient Wisdom Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons (The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures) FrameMaker - Creating and Publishing Content: LEARN TO USE,

MANAGE, AND PUBLISH CONTENT WITH ADOBE FRAMEMAKER Content Everywhere: Strategy and Structure for Future-Ready Content Content is King: How to use great SEO content, video and analytics to put you ahead of the game Creating Fat Content: Boost Website Traffic with Visitor-Grabbing, Google-Loving Web Content Documents, Presentations, and Workbooks: Using Microsoft Office to Create Content That Gets Noticed- Creating Powerful Content with Microsoft Office Lectures on Antitrust Economics (Cairolis Lectures) The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979 (Lectures at the Collège de France) The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the College de France, 1982-1983 (Lectures at the Collège de France)

[Dmca](#)