

# Three Questions for Sixty-Five Composers: Unveiling the Creative Genius Behind Musical Masterpieces

Music, a universal language that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers, has the power to evoke emotions, inspire creativity, and unite hearts. Behind every captivating melody and intricate symphony lies the mind of a composer, a visionary who transforms abstract ideas into sonic wonders. In "Three Questions for Sixty-Five Composers," renowned author and music scholar Judith Tick invites readers on an extraordinary journey into the creative processes of some of the world's most celebrated musical minds.

## The Questions That Unlock the Creative Process

At the heart of this captivating book are three thought-provoking questions that Tick posed to each composer:



### Three Questions for Sixty-Five Composers (Eastman Studies in Music Book 85) by Bálint András Varga

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 356 pages



1. What are the musical elements that you find most compelling and why?
2. How do you approach the creative process? What are your sources of inspiration?
3. What advice would you give to aspiring composers?

Through these questions, Tick delves into the composers' musical philosophies, inspirations, and creative techniques. The responses, as diverse as the composers themselves, provide a unique glimpse into the minds of these musical geniuses.

### **Insights from Musical Luminaries**

The sixty-five composers featured in this book represent a wide spectrum of musical genres, from classical to jazz to contemporary. Among them are icons such as:

- Milton Babbitt
- Aaron Copland
- Lukas Foss
- Philip Glass
- John Harbison
- Jennifer Higdon
- Steve Reich
- Roger Sessions

- Joan Tower
- Toru Takemitsu
- Charles Wuorinen

Tick's interviews with these composers reveal the complexities of their creative processes and the unique musical journeys they have undertaken.

### **Unlocking the Creative Spark**

Aspiring composers and music enthusiasts alike will find invaluable insights in the composers' responses. Through their words, readers gain a deeper understanding of the elements that shape musical compositions, the sources of inspiration that fuel creativity, and the challenges and rewards of the composer's life.

### **A Must-Read for Music Lovers and Scholars**

"Three Questions for Sixty-Five Composers" is an essential resource for anyone fascinated by the art of music composition. It offers:

- Exclusive interviews with renowned composers, providing insights into their creative processes
- Exploration of diverse musical elements and compositional techniques
- Thought-provoking perspectives on the role of inspiration and creativity in music
- Valuable advice for aspiring composers seeking to hone their craft

Whether you are a seasoned musician, a music scholar, or simply an ardent lover of music, this book promises to enrich your understanding and

appreciation of the creative genius behind musical masterpieces.

### **Free Download Your Copy Today!**

Embark on this extraordinary journey into the minds of musical maestros. Free Download your copy of "Three Questions for Sixty-Five Composers" today and unlock the secrets of musical genius. Available in hardcover and paperback, this captivating book will inspire and inform music lovers and composers for generations to come.

**Three Questions for Sixty-Five Composers.** By Bálint András Varga. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2011. [xiv, 333p. ISBN 9781580463799.] Illustrations, index.

This book has been almost thirty years in the making. The author, Bálint András Varga, spent his entire career promoting the music of contemporary composers, first at Editio Musica Budapest, and later at Universal in Vienna. This work brought him into contact with many of the most prominent composers of the last half century. Although not a trained musicologist, his devotion to the music, his keen ear and intelligence, as well as his flawless command of the English language, made him one of the most effective and successful advocates for new music in recent years. His book-length conversations with Witold Lutosławski, Luciano Berio, Jannis Xenakis and György Kurtág (*Witold Lutosławski*, London: Chester Music, 1976; *Luciano Berio: Two Interludes*, London: Boyars, 1985; *Conversations with Jannis Xenakis*, London: Falmer&Falmer, 1996; *György Kurtág: Three Interviews and Ligeti Homages*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2009) are models of insight and empathy. The present project—putting the same three questions to as many composers as possible—has occupied him since the early 1980s, and the first version of the volume under review was published in Hungarian exactly a quarter of a century ago. At that time, 82 composers were included; in the American edition, Varga eliminated 21 of these and added four new ones, arriving at a new total of 65. Prior to the publication of the book's new incarnation, Varga gave his interviewees a chance to revise or update their answers, and quite a few of them availed themselves of the opportunity. The result is a fascinating panorama of many issues central to music in the 20th and 21st centuries, and a testament to the wide range of aesthetic positions held by composers today. (György Kurtág's answers to the 'Three Questions' were already included in the Kurtág interview book referenced above.)

The questions have to do, respectively, with any particular pieces of music that changed the composer's creative lives; their openness to sounds of the everyday environment; and their views on personal style versus self-repetition. They are excellent questions, sufficiently focused to give the book its thematic unity, yet broad enough to allow the composers to discuss their music in their own terms.

The answers vary widely not only in their content but also in their length and depth. Some composers provided very brief, one-paragraph responses while others contributed many pages. Some, with whom Varga has enjoyed a closer professional contact, are obviously more comfortable with the interviewer than others. The author describes his connections to the composers in introductory paragraphs inserted before each interview; here we may learn how the meetings came about. Varga also offers thumbnail sketches of his impressions of composers' personalities, freely admitting if he was unable to get close to a certain composer, either personally or musically.

Out of the 65 composers, ten are from Varga's native Hungary, and ten from the United States; the remaining 45 represent 14 more countries. There is only one woman—Sofia Gubaidulina—among the sixty-five. A full 40%, or 26 composers, have passed away since the interviews were made, which gives the volume a certain retrospective character. (Milton Babbitt and Emil Pfitzner died since the book was published.) Chronologically, the interviewees represent the entire span of the 20th and the early 21st centuries: the oldest composer in the volume is Wladimir Vogel, born in 1896, the youngest, Johannes Maria Staud (1974). In general, Varga managed to make contact with the majority of the defining figures of Western music since 1945.

As one might expect, there is a great deal of important biographical material here, and, when Varga was able to establish a personal relationship with the composers, quite a few revealing anecdotes. The composers' philosophies and aesthetic ideas are no less interesting, but what makes the book really unique is the way Varga occasionally breaks the pattern of successive conversations between himself and the composers to let the composers respond directly to one another. When he reports John Cage's responses to what Martin Feldman had told Varga about Cage, or when he reports Klaus Bohn and Witold Lutosławski amplify and contradict one Gubailin's statements, Lutosławski's su-



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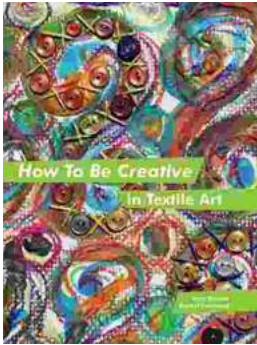
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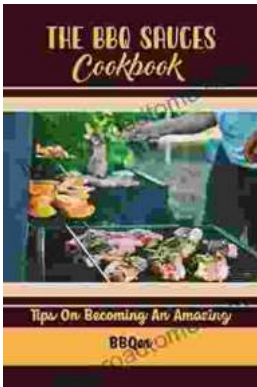
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