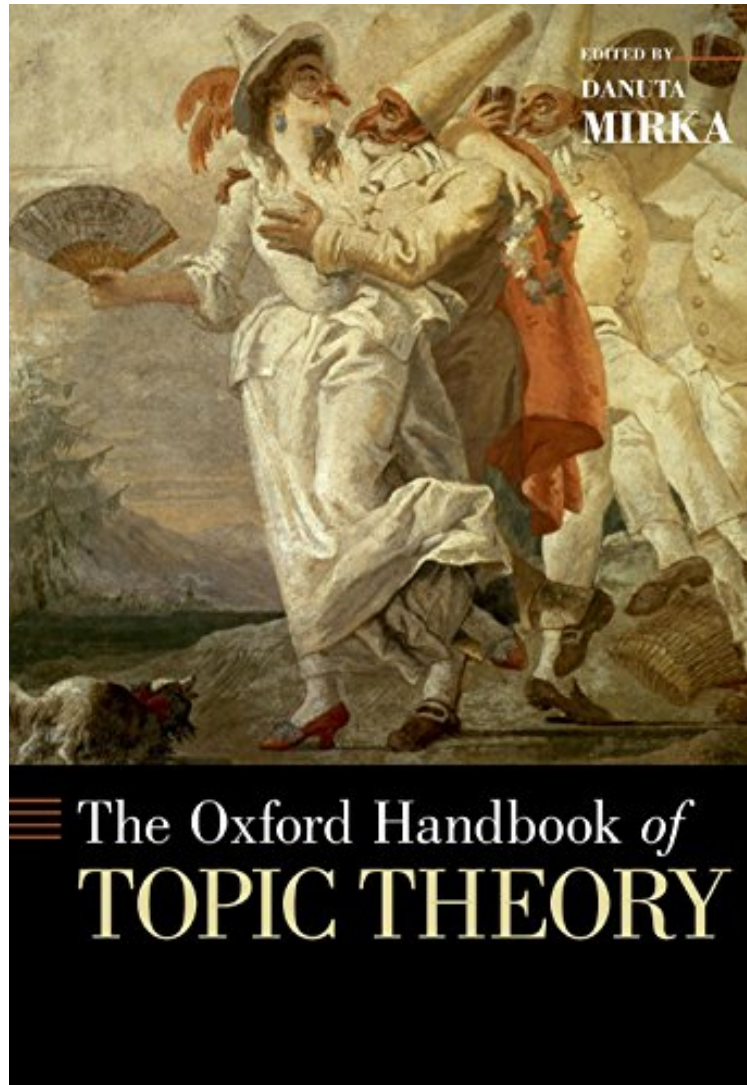


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The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory (Oxford Handbooks)

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From Oxford University Press : The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory (Oxford Handbooks) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory (Oxford Handbooks):

Topics are musical signs that rely on associations with different genres, styles, and types of music making. The concept of topics was introduced by Leonard Ratner in the 1980s to account for cross-references between eighteenth-century styles and genres. While music theorists and critics were busy classifying styles and genres, defining their affects and proper contexts for their usage, composers started crossing the boundaries between them and using stylistic

conventions as means of communication with the audience. Such topical mixtures received negative evaluations from North-German critics but became the hallmark of South-German music, which engulfed the Viennese classicism. Topic theory allows music scholars to gain access to meaning and expression of this music. The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory consolidates this field of research by clarifying its basic concepts and exploring its historical foundations. The volume grounds the concept of topics in eighteenth-century music theory, aesthetics, and criticism. Documenting historical reality of individual topics on the basis of eighteenth-century sources, it relates topical analysis to other methods of music analysis conducted from the perspectives of composers, performers, and listeners. With a focus on eighteenth-century musical repertoire, The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory lays the foundation under further investigation of topics in music of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

Recipient of a Citation of Special Merit from the Society for Music Theory "This latest addition to the Oxford Handbook Series refines and re-defines Leonard Ratner's concept of musical topics, addresses questions concerning their identification, organization and syntax, and distinguishes them from other uses of stylistic conventions in eighteenth-century music. The twenty-five contributors to the volume include theorists, musicologists and performers, who from multiple perspectives explore the historical origins of topics, their compatibility with other theories of musical structure, their utility to performers, and their reliance on listeners' expectations. At the same time, the volume as a whole is grounded in a theoretically consistent definition of topics as 'musical styles and genres taken out of their proper context and used in another one,' and lays the foundation for their further investigation as tools for analysis and interpretation."--Society for Music Theory "This handbook contains contributions by twenty-five leading scholars and aims to clarify the concept of topic theory and develop it as 'an efficient tool of analysis and interpretation.'"--The Beethoven Journal "The [Oxford] Handbook [of Topic Theory] has all the hallmarks of a major reference work. . . . [It] aims to legitimize topic theory through a solid anchoring of topical expression in historical foundations and a demonstration of topics' analytical potential, largely succeeding in both endeavors. Moreover, the collection offers a critical assessment of the field's tradition and the first comprehensive treatment of the subject, especially praiseworthy for its multifaceted approach. This editorial enterprise signals a laudable pursuit of disciplinary rapprochement in current music scholarship-in this case integrating contextual musicology, structuralist music theory, and historically informed hermeneutics."--Notes "As a collaboration among like-minded scholars, The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory succeeds admirably. Original insights, detailed historical work, and pertinent musical examples abound. . . . It is a major achievement and will doubtless inspire fresh engagement with topic theory in the years to come."--Music and Letters "The admirable ambitiousness of [its] aim gives Topic Theory a sense of excitement. Reading it, one repeatedly feels the energy of scholars working together on an intellectual mission. . . . the book . . . presents a marvellous cornucopia of insights and information that will certainly inspire and inform future work on topic theory."--Journal of the American Musicological Society About the Author Danuta Mirka is Reader in Music at the University of Southampton. She is the co-editor, with Kofi Agawu, of *Communication in Eighteenth-Century Music*. Her books include *The Sonoristic Structuralism of Krzysztof Penderecki* and *Metric Manipulations in Haydn and Mozart: Chamber Music for Strings, 1787-1791*, which won the 2011 Wallace Berry Award from the Society for Music Theory.