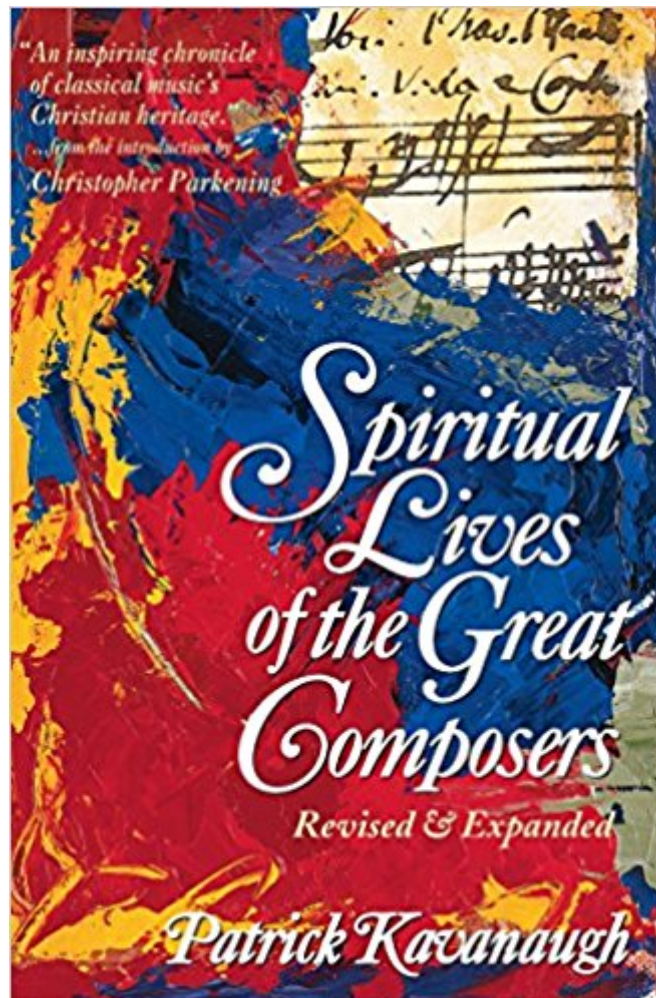




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# Spiritual Lives Of The Great Composers



## Synopsis

Handel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Dvorak, Stravinsky, Messiaen . . . Men of genius as different as their music - but all inspired by deep spiritual convictions. Peter Kavanaugh uncovers the spirituality of twenty of music's timeless giants, revealing legacies of the soul as diverse as the masterpieces they created. Warmly written, beautifully illustrated, and complete with listening recommendations for each composer, *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers* is a fascinating look at the inner flame that lit the works of these masters.

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## Customer Reviews

Handel, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Dvorak, Stravinsky, Messiaen . . . Men of genius as different as their music - but all inspired by deep spiritual convictions. Peter Kavanaugh uncovers the spirituality of twenty of music's timeless giants, revealing legacies of the soul as diverse as the masterpieces they created. Warmly written, beautifully illustrated, and complete with listening recommendations for each composer, *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers* is a fascinating look at the inner flame that lit the works of these masters.

Patrick Kavanaugh, executive director of the Christian Performing Artists' Fellowship, holds a doctorate in music composition. A conductor and performer, he is the author of *Spiritual Moments with the Great Composers*, *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, and *Raising Musical Kids*.

I believe that this book is an important read, because I think it's definitely in the interests of too

many classical-music reviewers to more or less downplay or disregard the personal faith of so many of the classical masters. Although this book isn't exhaustive either in its information or its selection of composers documented -- which the author himself acknowledges -- and would've been better if it were longer, perhaps, yet it is still a highly recommended read. The information is well-documented and referenced; and it was a joy, a delight, and confirmation to me, as a Christian, to read about the personal, well-documented expressions of faith from some of classical music's most talented artists, including Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and others less popular. Thanks Mr. Kavanaugh, for the research and writing -- and why don't you release more of your own music for us classical-music fans to check out? :-)

"People of faith" will likely be the most interested in these mini-biographies of the great composers that focuses mostly on the spiritual (mostly Christian) aspects of their lives. In that light, this book helps fill-in some of the personal faith aspects of each composer that are rarely expounded upon in depth in the other biographies. Kavanaugh's distillations here extract many of the most personal conversations and writings of these composers in an attempt to "reconstruct" their inner, spiritual life. And while some of the common lingo in the letters written in 18th/19th century Europe did indeed contain more neutral and polite "God talk," most of the direct quotes go way beyond that to reveal deeply personal and theological thoughts about what that composer felt about God, faith and the relation to their musical lives. Kavanaugh cites Brahms as a notable example who supposedly revealed very deep theological thoughts and personal beliefs to writer/friend Abell, who published them finally in 1955 after years of avowed silence ("Talks with Great Composers"). Many will also find the author's account of Chopin's last years particular touching as the great poet-pianist embraced the faith within him that had faded to a flicker amidst the hedonistic Parisian lifestyle of the 19th century. Other composers listed here will appear to some readers to be somewhat of a stretch regarding the presence of a genuine faith in God and love of mankind in their lives. But, again, Kavanaugh presents other, more hidden aspects of their lives not common in other biographies that are worth hearing. However, trying to really understand the inner life and faith of a person - any person then or now - is a tricky proposition. It is tempting to extrapolate and make simple conclusions about a complex person based on a few words in a letter, and Kavanaugh might do this at times. But, other times the original writings Kavanaugh quotes seems to more clearly reveal a deeply spiritual person that might not have been apparent to others then or now. Overall though, this book is very revealing and presents a rather unique and detailed account of the spiritual lives of these great composers. As such it is a useful adjunct book on the topic. One caveat: given

that the author's perspective here, you will not find any discussion on other religious or spiritual leanings outside mainstream 18th/19th century European Catholic/Protestant faith but will need to consult other sources if that is your interest. Other highly recommended books for general study of the great composers are (1) "The Gift of Music" which gives excellent biographies on 36 composers and also gives some Christian perspective ... and (2) "Lives of the Great Composers (Schonberg)" which is one of the legendary references for the study of the composers and musical eras but reads more like a good novel than an academic treatise.

This is a wonderful look into composer's such as Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and many others about their spiritual lives. The book is well written and great research has been done on each composer. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes music, especially the classical composers. What I liked about this book was how personal the stories were about each composer. I felt like I knew them well after reading this book.

If you are , musician , this book will inspire you, if you are a worshiper or band leader for church, it would be a treasure, no matter denomination , this is all about God , and how the greaters undertanded it. F you wanna learn something about God and the real music and wanna meditate about it to do your best , just get this book , and keep with you to be inspire .

Informative and uplifting for the musical person.

Great book. We learned a lot about the great composers. Their music was great for a reason and many of them considered it a privilege to glorify God by sharing their talents. Thank you for putting this together, Mr. Kavanaugh.

Deep spiritual insight as to the Adamic Men who Created Reverberations of Musical History both Present and Past that is and always willbe Unstoppable while bringing Us All to Tears. God downloaded wonders of mathematical cords which are unchangeable and deeplysearchable to this day. Enjoy!!

I was given this book as a gift and have given several to other friends. It helped me to appreciate the music as I came to understand the spiritual backgrounds each of these composers possessed. Each composer is only given a few pages so its a fast read to pick up and put down and yet very

insightful.

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