

# **COMPENDIUM OF MODERN INSTRUMENTAL TECHNIQUES BY GARDNER READ**

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## Review

"This updated volume is a welcome and necessary addition to the literature. Read's style of writing is casual and straightforward. He clearly and concisely describes numerous complex techniques, allowing the reader to visualize and understand the correct means of execution. It should hold up well to vigorous use in library and reference collections and music studios. Any composer or instrumentalist who is interested in music that incorporates the ever-expanding range of techniques that the 20th century has engendered will want to have this book close at hand. Compendium of Modern Instrumental Techniques is highly recommended for composers, instrumental students and teachers and all music libraries."-Music Reference Services Quarterly

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An important characteristic of contemporary art music has been the use of conventional instruments in unconventional ways, achieving effects undreamed of or thought impossible in the early twentieth century. This compendium codifies these techniques, explains their production and effects, cites representative scores, and provides numerous example from an international selection of composers. Part One considers techniques and procedures that apply to all instruments; Part Two takes up idiomatic techniques with specific instruments in all orchestral categories. This monumental survey is essential for any music library or serious musician.

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An earlier version of this volume, *Contemporary Instrumental Techniques* (1976), was widely acclaimed by musicians and educators, recognized as a significant achievement in cataloging and organization and as an invaluable reference tool. Now extensively expanded, with additional techniques, new and revised explanations, and hundreds of recent citations and examples, this monumental survey is essential for any music library or serious musician. An indispensable guide for composers and orchestrators, it will also be valuable as a sourcebook for performers and teachers and as a textbook for courses in composition.

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Exhaustive

By A Customer

Gardner Read has compiled an exhaustive account of modern instrumental techniques, putting aside subjective opinions of their worth or importance and including information about instruments foreign to traditional orchestras, such as the banjo. He sites numerous source examples of each techniques use and the varying methods of notation suggested by pioneering composers.

The book serves a dual service to both modern composers and musicians. First, it serves as a reference manual for reviewing and understanding the history of new notations of a particular instrumental techninieue. Second, it serves as a source for ideas and inspiration, simply by flipping through randomly and stumbling

upon examples.

The first part of the book contains "Generalized Techniques" about extended ranges, muting, glissandi, harmonics, percussive devices, microtones (several suggested notations), amplification and extramusical devices.

The second part of the book focuses on "Idiomatic Techniques" in detail regarding woodwinds and brasses, percussion, harp and plucked instruments, keyboard instruments, and strings.

Gardner Read's details suggest that technique experiments of 20th century composer's, mainly the "scrape and scratcher's", in my personal opinion, have been explored to such an extent that they should now be a part of a musician's and composer's arsenal: meaning they should no longer be consider experimental. Composers can get back to composing listenable and interesting music, utilizing the assorted intrumental techniques when they will benefit the music vs being used primarily as an experiment, resulting in a "composition" that sounds terrible. (It was a good idea on paper, but it sounds like crap.) The experiments have been thourougly hashed out. It's time to start using the results in compositions accesible to those not wearing stuffed shirts.

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