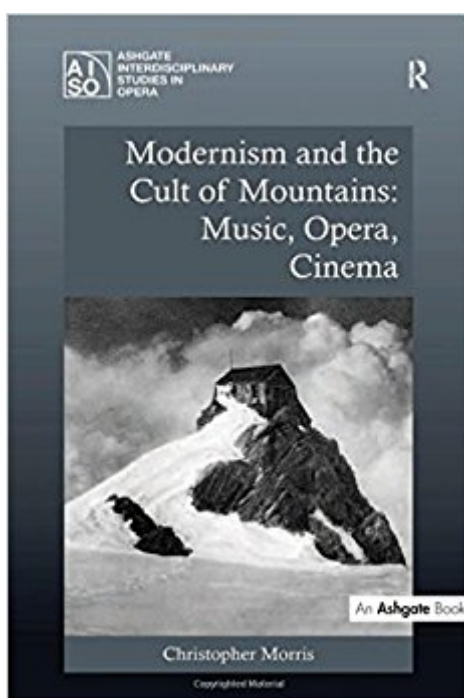


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Modernism And The Cult Of Mountains: Music, Opera, Cinema (Ashgate Interdisciplinary Studies In Opera)



Synopsis

Adopting and transforming the Romantic fascination with mountains, modernism in the German-speaking lands claimed the Alps as a space both of resistance and of escape. This new 'cult of mountains' reacted to the symptoms and alienating forces associated with modern culture, defining and reinforcing models of subjectivity based on renewed wholeness and an aggressive attitude to physical and mental health. The arts were critical to this project, none more so than music, which occupied a similar space in Austro-German culture: autonomous, pure, sublime. In *Modernism and the Cult of Mountains* opera serves as a nexus, shedding light on the circulation of contesting ideas about politics, nature, technology and aesthetics. Morris investigates operatic representations of the high mountains in German modernism, showing how the liminal quality of the landscape forms the backdrop for opera's reflexive engagement with the identity and limits of its constituent media, not least music. This operatic reflexivity, in which the very question of music's identity is repeatedly restaged, invites consideration of musical encounters with mountains in other genres, and Morris shows how these issues resonate in Strauss's *Alpine Symphony* and in the *Bergfilm* (mountain film). By using music and the ideology of mountains to illuminate aspects of each other, Morris makes an original and valuable contribution to the critical study of modernism.

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'Christopher Morris takes the cult of mountains as an unusual and fascinating point of view from

which to consider anew some of the creative tensions at the core of German modernism, including such hotly debated themes as the place of the aesthetic in modernist thought and the role of music in early-twentieth-century German culture. This original and exciting book will interest not only musicologists, but also film scholars, cultural historians, and anyone interested in the relationship between art, culture and society.' Emanuele Senici, University of Rome La Sapienza, Italy 'With Modernism and the cult of mountains, Christopher Morris provides a most interesting contribution both to the lively field of opera studies and to the investigation of German modernism.' Die Theaterforschung

Dr Christopher Morris is Lecturer in Music at University College Cork and teaches in the university's interdisciplinary programmes in film studies and digital arts. He has published widely on opera, new media and film music, including *Reading Opera Between the Lines* (2002). Current research projects include a critical analysis of opera on video and an investigation of contemporary staging practices in opera.

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