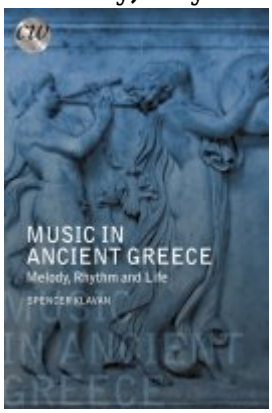

S. A. Klavan, *Music in Ancient Greece : Melody, Rhythm and Life*

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S. A. Klavan, *Music in Ancient Greece : Melody, Rhythm and Life*, London, Bloomsbury, 2021, 176 p.

Life in ancient Greece was *musical* life and in this perfectly pitched introduction, Spencer Klavan explores its origins, forms, and place in society. Soloists competed onstage for popular accolades, becoming centrepieces for cultural conversation and even leading Plato to recommend that certain forms of music be banned from his ideal society. And the music didnt stop when the audience left the theatre : melody and rhythm were woven into the whole fabric of daily existence for the Greeks. Vocal and instrumental songs were part of religious rituals, dramatic performances, dinner parties, and even military campaigns. Like Detroit in the 1960s or Vienna in the 18th century, Athens in the 400s BC was the hotspot where celebrated artists collaborated and diverse strands of musical tradition converged. The conversations and innovations that unfolded there would lay the groundwork for musical theory and practice in Greece and Rome for centuries to come. In recent years, state-of-the-art research and digital technology have enabled us to decipher and understand Greek music with unprecedented precision. Yet many readers today cannot access the resources that would enable them to grapple with this richly rewarding subject. Arcane technical details and obscure jargon veil the subject it is rarely known, for instance, that authentic melodies still survive from antiquity, helping us to imagine the vivid soundscapes of the Classical and Hellenistic eras. *Music in Ancient Greece* distills the latest discoveries into vivid prose so readers can come to grips with the basics as never before. With the tools in this book, beginners and specialists alike will learn to hear the ancient world afresh and come away with a new, musical perspective on their favourite classical texts.

Spencer A. Klavan is Lecturer in Greek at Exeter and Magdalen Colleges, University of Oxford, UK. He has published widely in scholarly journals such as *Classical Quarterly* and *Greek and Roman Musical Studies*.