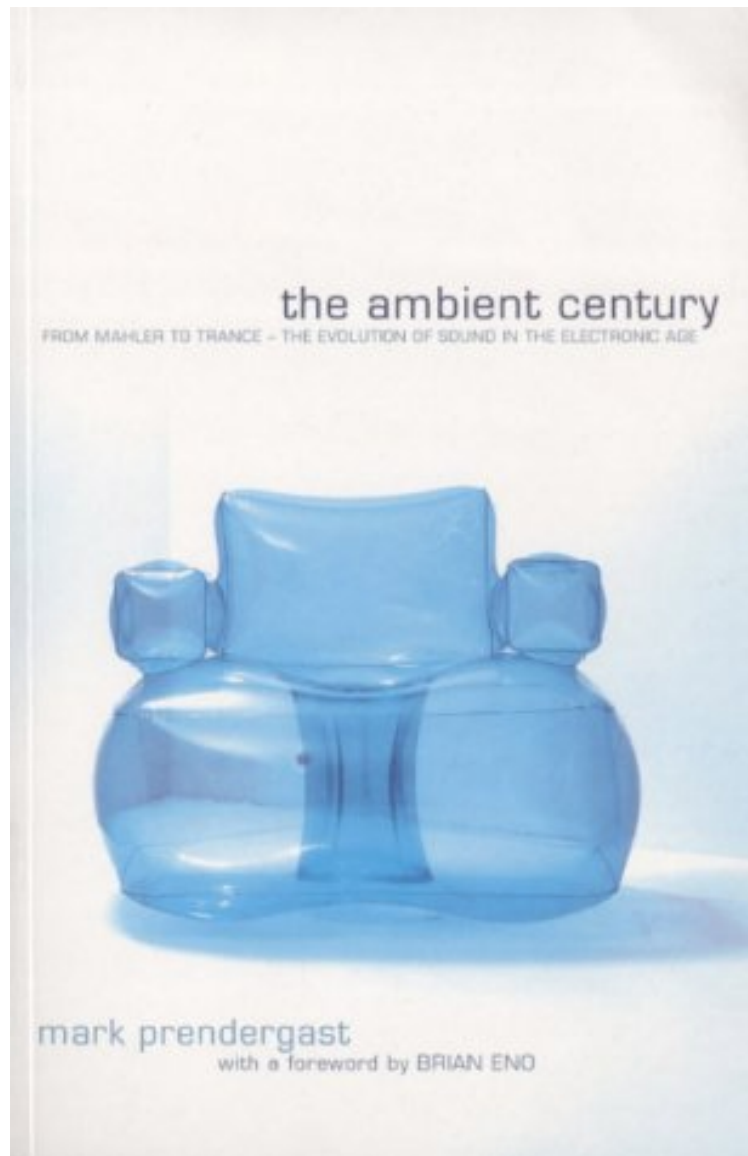


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Ambient Century

Mark Prendergast

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Mark Prendergast : Ambient Century before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ambient Century:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An unfocused encyclopedic reference on a theme that's never defined By Christopher Culver Mark Prendergast's THE AMBIENT CENTURY is an encyclopedia of the biggest names in "ambient music", a style that's never defined, but which might be a) music that the author digs, and b) music that the author doesn't like so much but which lends respectability to later figures. Prendergast starts off all the way at

the beginning of 1900s with innovative classical music figures such as Debussy, Mahler, and Ravel. There is little that these figures have in common with what came later, but Prendergast seems like he has to start early and so comes up with these guys. His inclusion of Schoenberg and the other Viennese composers is just crazy, since most of the minimalists (the real inspiration of techno, house, and drum bass in the 80s and 90s) were trying as hard as possible *not* to write like that. Ditto for the inclusion of Pierre Boulez, although his friend Stockhausen merits inclusion. Passing over the rock era (I'm not competent to comment much on this genre), I must take issue with his treatment of electronic music, which is somewhat US-centric. Sasha is presented as a minor figure that didn't achieve much until 1999, when his Ibiza compilation came out, when he had really be earning praise since 1990 (when the British press was calling him "The Man Like God"). The book then says that Sasha left the U.K. entirely for Australia, which is simply false. Frequent collaborator John Digweed is called "The James Brown of DJing", leading me to suspect that the author has never seen Digweed live. This is a really disappointing and often-wrong book, and a bit of an odd duck because, expect for the "coolness" of it all, the people mentioned here have little in common. If you are interested in innovative classical music in the 20th century, try Griffith's MODERN MUSIC AND AFTER: Directions Since 1940 (Oxford University Press, 1995). Similarly, those interested in electronic music would do well to find a more focused guide.

23 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Errors In the Ambient Century By Derek Pierce I bought this book having read a review in "The Wire" magazine, the review said the book was bad, but I didn't believe it and bought it. I have since read it and can honestly say that I have never read a book with so many factual mistakes in it. As the writer of a "History of Electronic Music" for a magazine and a lecturer in Computer music I would suggest that you do not buy this book until all the errors have been corrected. A typical example, "Robert Fripp studied JG Bennett at Sherborne House, Dorset", the Sherborne House where he studied Bennett is in Gloucestershire, near Cheltenham. Another "EMS produced the "Portobello" synth, it was in fact called the PUTNEY. There are many more mistakes which makes the book difficult to recommend to my students or indeed anyone else until such time as it has been corrected.

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Missed opportunity! By A Customer Upon merely skimming through the index, I came upon numerous errors, as have the other reviewers. I list a couple that I spotted with ease: Incredibly, there seems to be no mention at all of Isao Tomita, at least according to the contents and index. Wendy Carlos has never owned or used a Moog System 55. Giorgio Moroder didn't use a drum machine in anger until at last 1981, when the Linn LM-1 was released. The drums and percussion on all the groundbreaking 1970's Moroder/Bellotte recordings was provided by drummer Keith Forsey or through the use of Moog synthesizer modules. It was a tape loop of Forsey's kick drum that provided the only real drum sound on 'I Feel Love'. The inaccuracies in this book made me refrain from buying it, which was a shame since the effort was clearly well-intentioned. Roll on a properly error checked new edition!

This publication reveals the drift in 20th-century music from composers to non-musicians, from strict rules to no rules, from the single note to the sample. This drift through technology, Minimalism, the rock era and techno music is earthed by the development of ambient sound, to the author the most important breakthrough of the past 100 years. With the help of electronics, new ideas and consumer music, Ambient music has established itself beyond question as "the classical music of the future."