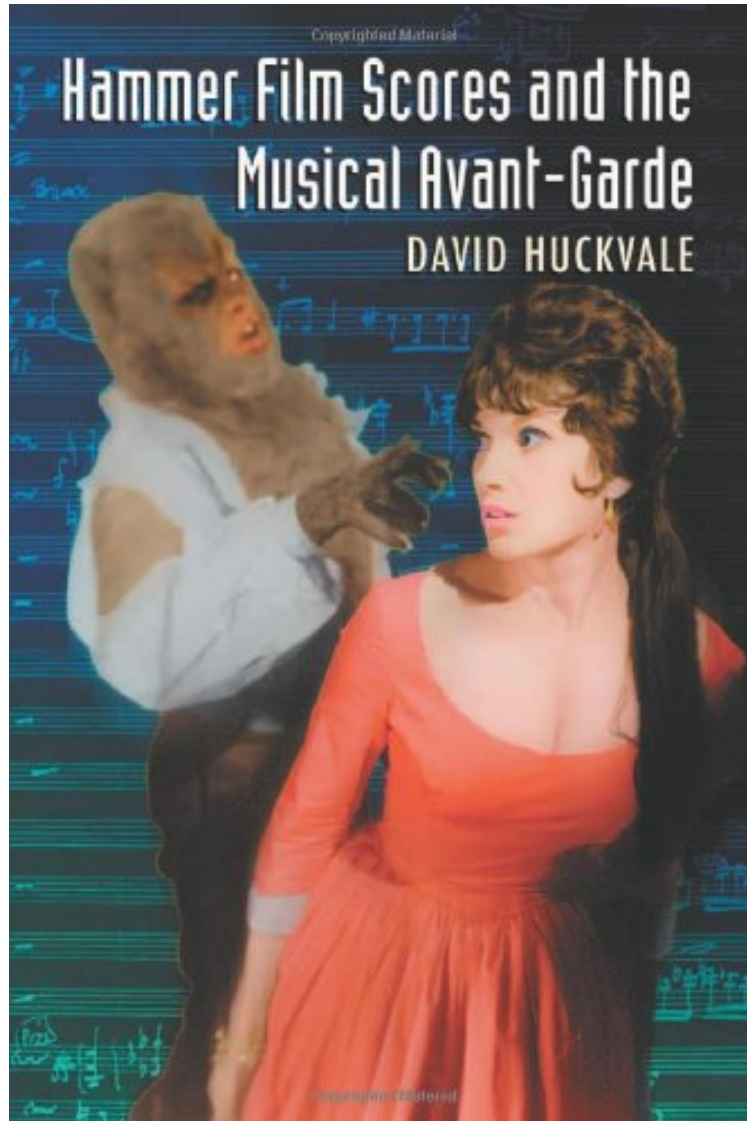


Hammer Film Scores and the Musical Avant-Garde

David Huckvale

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David Huckvale : Hammer Film Scores and the Musical Avant-Garde before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hammer Film Scores and the Musical Avant-Garde:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Scholarly study of Hammer horror music By mormoviesHuckvale provides a detailed, scholarly overview of the composers and avant garde influences that shaped the memorable and disturbing sounds of Hammer Films' music scores. Informative and entertaining.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Very convincing analysis of the place of horror in 20th-century music By David L RattiganHuckvale

argues that Hammer horror did more than the concert hall to further the cause of modern music in the latter half of the 20th century. He analyzes Hammer film scores by composers such as James Bernard (*Dracula*) and Benjamin Frankel (*Curse of the Werewolf*), and puts them in historical context, alongside developments in classical music, eg Schoenberg, Boulez, etc. His main thesis is hard to refute: While musical innovation took place in academia and among the relatively small audiences of concert halls, it was horror films that took the same ideas worldwide, to the masses. In making the argument, Huckvale gives Hammer's composers (and its musical directors) their fair due and exposes the shortsightedness of traditional music historians and critics, who banish film composers (especially in the horror genre) to the sidelines in the story of 20th century music. The book is written in an intelligent, but accessible style; that is, you don't need to be an advanced academic to understand it. I certainly enjoyed it more than the disappointingly thin "Music from the House of Hammer," by Randall Larson. My one concern is that its contents will most benefit music historians and critics, but the title, with its focus on Hammer horror, may restrict its appeal to Hammer aficionados.

Music in film is often dismissed as having little cultural significance. While Hammer Film Productions is famous for such classic films as *Dracula* and *The Curse of Frankenstein*, few observers have noted the innovative music that Hammer distinctively incorporated into its horror films. This book tells how Hammer commissioned composers at the cutting edge of European musical modernism to write their movie scores, introducing the avant-garde into popular culture via the enormously successful venue of horror film. Each chapter addresses a specific category of the avant-garde musical movement. According to these categories, chapters elaborate upon the visionary composers who made the horror film soundtrack a melting pot of opposing musical cultures.

"a highly entertaining, meticulous examination" --Rue Morgue; "fascinating, informative, and illuminating reads"--*Soundtrax*. About the Author: Music writer David Huckvale teaches film music at Birmingham University and has taught extensively for Cambridge University, The Open University and other adult education organizations. He is the author of *James Bernard, Composer to Count Dracula* (2006) and his work has been published in *Journal of Popular British Cinema*, *Popular Music*, *BBC Music Magazine* and *Wagner*.