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## *Preface*

In the present day, with the universal availability in the domestic living room of accurate recordings with “correct” acoustics and original instruments, there exists (compared with, say, fifty years ago) far greater awareness of the importance of music’s architectural and acoustic context. This is part of a demand for greater musical authenticity in general, and it was out of this trend that my ideas for this book arose. I have attempted to provide a broad background to the buildings for which Western music was composed from the seventeenth century to the present day, while outlining some of the influences that architectural acoustics exert on musical style and, conversely, tracing the importance of musical factors in auditorium design.

I have by no means attempted to catalogue every concert hall and opera house that has either architectural merit or claim to association with a particular composer. I have aimed, rather, to include those that are architecturally innovative or outstanding in themselves (though I have not dealt with stage design or machinery in opera houses, which is a field in itself); those that relate to a trend, such as the fashion of concertgoing in eighteenth-century London, or to a plan type in the evolution of the building in relation to musical needs; and those that exemplify the body of work of a specialist architect or of a particular period.

My policy on illustrations to the text has been to confine them as far as possible to those nearly contemporary with the building; that is, drawings and engravings from the early period, old photographs where these are available from the mid-nineteenth century, and commercial architectural photographs from the present day.