

## Metapoetics

What an abundance of wisdom, generously shared with the reader! The quality of thought is superb and the tone a delightful mixture of authority and coaxing wit. The author offers a unique blend of intellectual resources – German aesthetics of the Romantic-Modernist ‘periods’, dialectical thinking, British practical and ‘New’ criticism, psychoanalysis, Classical literary and theatrical aesthetics, and so on – but more than this demonstrates an open mind, cutting without venom, questioning but not hesitant, seeming to work beyond the limits of common sense without becoming perverse. I imagine that many of these aphorisms will be cited for decades to come.

*Matthew Head (King’s College London)*

It is clear that the widely ranging topics have been chosen well. They reflect important issues in a suitably glancing manner. And the fact that music turns out to be the governing theme seems only right for a book so keenly aware of the presence of the Muses, and for which Hans Keller is quoted as saying, music is not so much an art as a ‘mode of thought, and hence of life’.

*Paul Driver*



Among the ancients, instruction in drama and letters – poetics – mixed craft, precept and criticism quite freely; in our time, pedagogy, aesthetics and critical theory are usually kept firmly apart. This collection of ‘aphorisms, thoughts and maxims’ repairs something of the split by organizing the precepts that stand behind the making and reception of the arts into a unified ‘metapoetics’. The book reflects on its own lapidary manner, investigates three representative theatres of life (power, love and death) and asserts our continuing need for Gods and magic. It then moves from life into art, explores art, artists and the ethics of art, argues for the continuing relevance of notions of beauty, truth and genius, ponders style and probes music, song and opera. Finally, it returns to ‘life’ with thoughts on criticism and its practice. An appendix addresses other arts, notably film. The book is richly illustrated with a set of mythic ‘Beasts’ by the celebrated Anglo-Brazilian artist, Ana Maria Pacheco.

CHRISTOPHER WINTLE was born in London in 1945 and educated at the Universities of Oxford, Southampton and Princeton. He taught music at Reading University from 1971, at Goldsmiths’ College from 1979 and at King’s College London from 1989, where he is now a Senior Research Fellow in Music. He has published a monograph on Benjamin Britten, *All the Gods*, and edited four volumes of essays by Hans Keller. He has also edited volumes by Julian Littlewood, Hugh Wood, Bayan Northcott and Leo Black.

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Metapoetics

Plumbago

# Metapoetics

Christopher Wintle

*Aphorisms, Thoughts and Maxims  
on Life, Art and Music*



with

Beasts

Ana Maria Pacheco