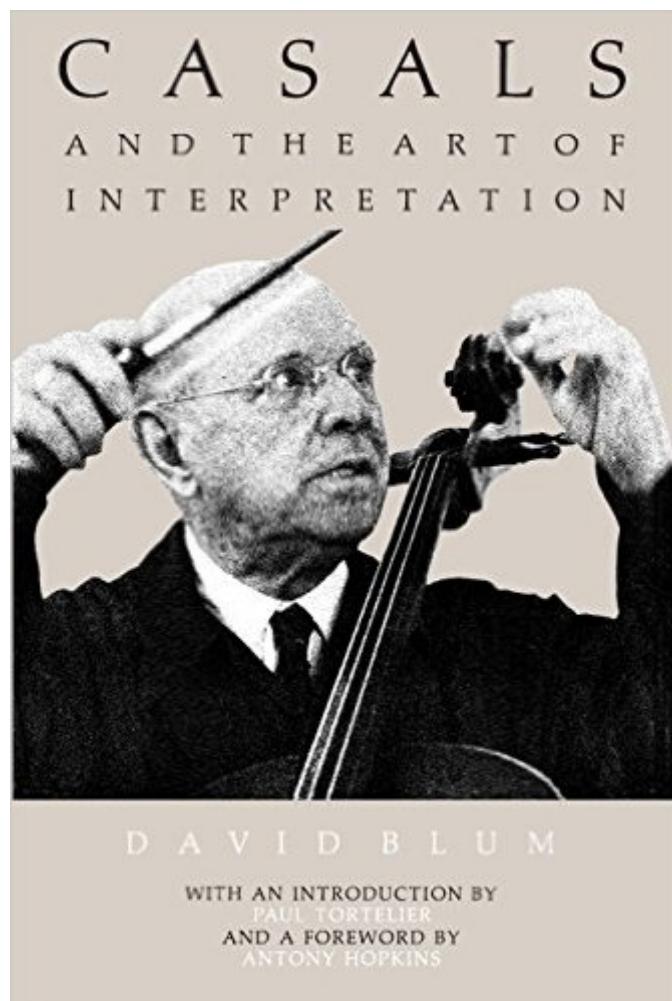


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# Casals And The Art Of Interpretation



## Synopsis

"This is an immensely valuable book and one which is clearly designed to appeal to all musicians—not just string players...Mr. Blum has captured in great detail the little things that so often make a great teacher. I would strongly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the Art of Interpretation."<sup>1</sup>*Music Teacher*"The volume belongs to an exceptional class of literature: it is to be welcomed as a significant contribution. In his Forward, Antony Hopkins in a most eloquent way makes us fully aware of our possible great loss had the subject material forming this book not been preserved for posterity...throughout the book one remains not only an absorbed reader, but very much an active participant."<sup>2</sup>*Violoncello Society Newsletter*"Now we have an authoritative guide to this great artist's approach to interpretation...a book which should be compulsory reading for every player, conductor and teacher."<sup>3</sup>*Music Journal of the Incorporated Society of Musicians*"Blum has elegantly combined precise music terminology with meticulous music examples to present lucid and revealing details of interpretation that can be quickly and easily grasped. Only superlatives apply to this book, and all serious musicians would find immense pleasure and musical profit from reading this work. Highly recommended at all levels."<sup>4</sup>*Choice*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

David Blum writes an insightful and rewarding text based on notes taken from rehearsals, master classes, and personal conversations with Pablo Casals. According to Blum, the idea for the book came from Antony Hopkins who encouraged him to take his notes and memories and document

them so that other musicians could benefit from Casals' musicianship. The book provides a study of the "laws of music" or "laws of nature" which Casals considered to be the essential elements of meaningful interpretation. The text serves as a guide to musicians, conductors, and music educators on the art of music making. Most musicians know of Casals the cellist. Unknown to many, his conducting career spans a period of over sixty-five years. During his career as a conductor, rehearsals clearly revealed his ideas about music interpretation. The text records the oral statements and the aural interpretations made by Casals during his rehearsals. Five chapters divide the text with each chapter representing the main areas of Casals' interpretive ideas. The last chapter serves as an application of the elements of interpretation combined to produce a performance. Every chapter includes printed music excepts, detailed notations of performance practice, insightful commentary from the author, and compelling statements made by Casals during the rehearsal of a particular passage. Topic areas covered in the chapters include The First Principal, Finding the Design, Diction for Instrumentalists, Perceiving Time Relationships, Insights for String Players, Casals and Bach, and A Casals Rehearsal: the Pastoral Symphony. A unique aspect of Blum's book, the reader is encouraged to study and become involved in every music example. The music examples are excerpts from his performances on the cello, lessons with cello students, and rehearsals with the orchestra. Transposed to the key of C for easy reading, all excerpts are in treble or bass clefs. They have notated phrases, articulations, dynamic nuances, and other stylistic attributes illustrating the points of Casals' concepts. Blum tastefully adds Casals' vocal statements to enhance the music examples, "Casals cried out, Here is the anguish! - Let it sing at the top of the phrase!" David Blum's book is well written and informative. The music examples with Casals' statements allow the reader to easily and quickly grasp the details of interpretation. This scholarly book with practical applications and insights is invaluable.

David Blum has compiled a comprehensive guide to interpretation based on discussions with Casals and his observations of the great cellist/conductor in rehearsal. This work should be required reading for any student of music performance at the intermediate to advanced level. Phrasing, dynamics, rhythm and other musical devices are discussed to help one create a more expressive performance of any music that is performed. Analysis of Casals' great performances help to illustrate the concepts covered.

This book, being a 'collaboration' of two exceptional musicians, the astounding Pablo Casals & the multi-talented David Blum, is a great asset to anyone genuinely interested in musical interpretation. It

is not in anyway a dry 'Oxonian' musicologist-style book, but shows great insights into what makes the written score live, and enables music to breathe. It includes many detailed musical examples and is therefore of particular benefit to practising musicians, but the book is at the same time enlightening and accessible to non-performing music-lovers for its heart-warming and human side which is evident in every chapter and compares music to painting and aspects of humanity. What a welcome change!

From Blum's first discussion of the "First Principle" through his Casals-inspired revelations about melodic shape, dynamics, and rhythm, this book is invaluable as a guide for true artistic expression. The line between music as a set of performance skills and as an interpretive art is clearly drawn, and the spirit of Casals beckons all of us who would be truly inspired musicians

so inspiring!!!

Written like a fanzine, which was annoying. Written in the 70s, Casals' approach to intonation was somewhat revolutionary, but now is commonplace. You know all this stuff already.

Who cares what Casals thought about music? If you listen to his interpretation of the Bach Suites- it's shocking- at least compared to 100 different cellists performing them. So, to make it quick: Casals is the most overrated cellist of all ages!

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