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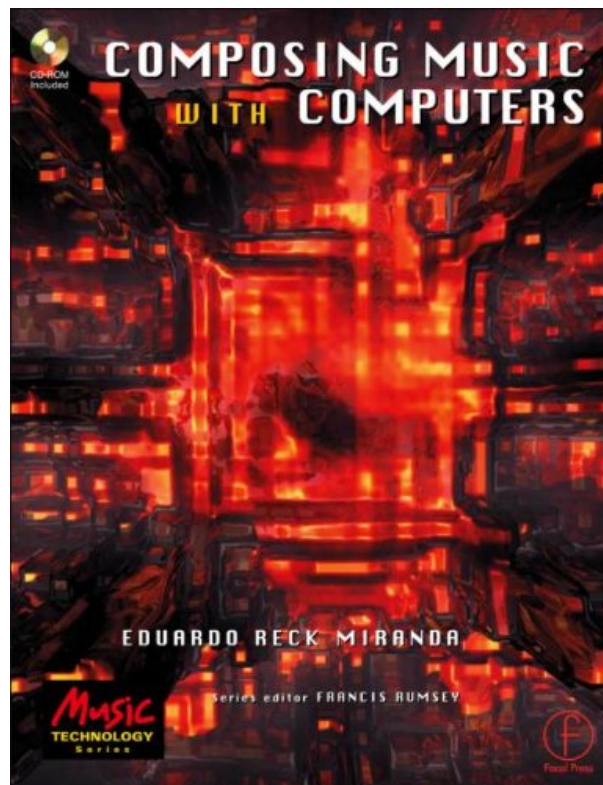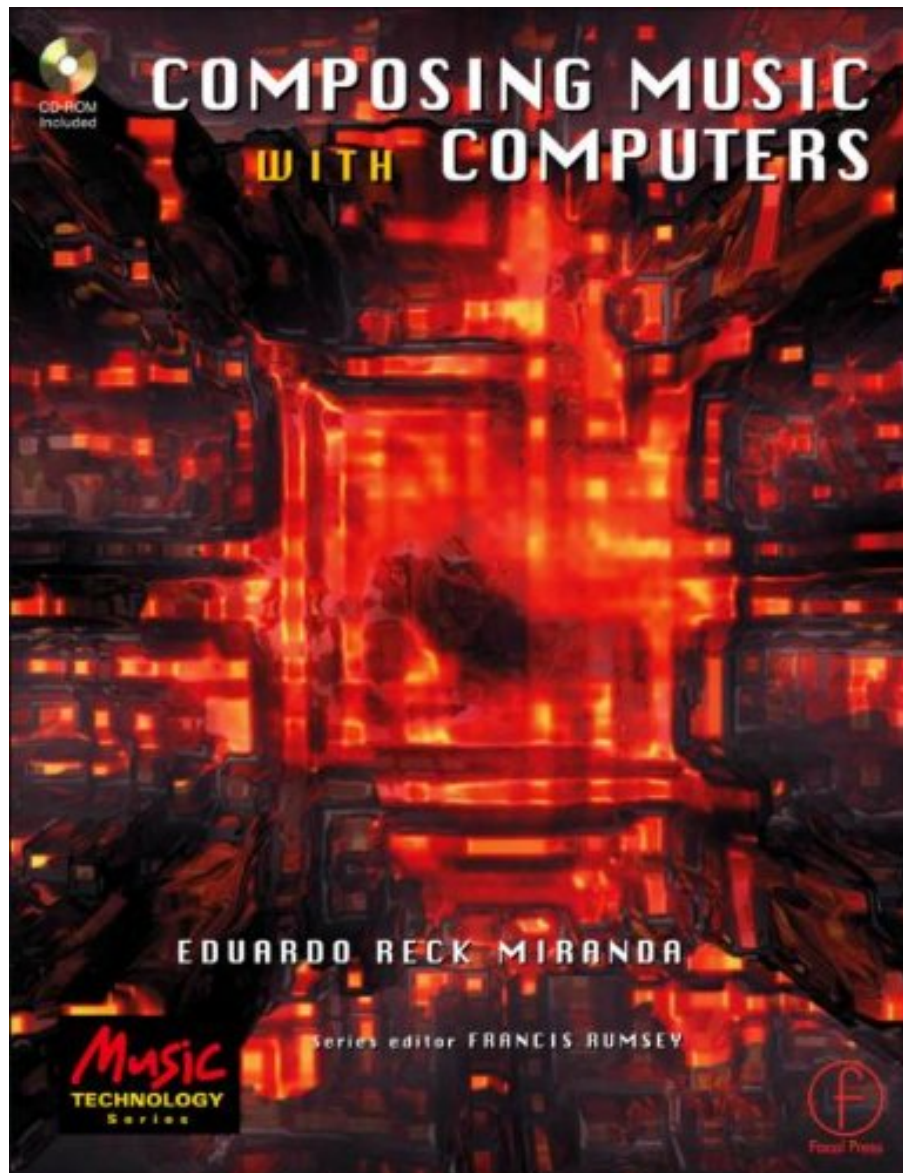
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Review
'...anyone interested in using computers to compose music will find herein a useful technique, regardless of his style or method of composition. In the tradition of computer music - experiment: try, listen, and refine.'
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About the Author
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Focuses on the role of the computer as a generative tool for music composition. Miranda introduces a number of computer music composition techniques ranging from probabilities, formal grammars and fractals, to genetic algorithms, cellular automata and neural computation. Anyone wishing to use the computer as a companion to create music will find this book a valuable resource. As a comprehensive guide with full explanations of technical terms, it is suitable for students, professionals and enthusiasts alike.

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Most helpful customer reviews

9 of 11 people found the following review helpful.
not really
By B. McKeon
a few algorithms and other techniques as applied to latice based musical structure. nothing here particularly exciting if you have any education in mathematics or computer science. no truly deep or interesting generative techniques are covered here, just the basics. in my view you are better off studying sound synthesis and then going straight to the source, i.e. textbooks (and websites) about algorithmics, automata, grammars, evolutionary computation etc, for the comp-sci and mathematics stuff. gave it 3 stars for effort and because for the beginner it may contain a diving board from which to jump into deeper waters, and a broad but shallow overview of the algorithmic possibilities in musical 'composition'.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.
Best intro to the techniques of algorithmic composing
By calvinnme
This book is relevant to several different audiences including computer scientists, mathematicians, and AI researchers. However, this book is most directly aimed at musicians/composers who are interested in algorithmic composition. The book artfully introduces computer science and mathematics concepts to those with music backgrounds, and then also explains some music concepts to those with a more technical background. Some composers will never have a need to compose algorithmically, no matter which tools they have, and others will see immediately how to employ algorithms in their work. For those in the middle,Composing Music with Computers is an essential guide. That said, the book may have been even more valuable to such readers with a greater range of worked-out examples.
Throughout the body of the text,there are helpful illustrations with musical material provided at every appropriate juncture. These illustrations tend to be short and didactic, however, rather than elaborated and

evocative.The most useful bridge between theory and practice is provided by chapter 7, a group of three case studies showing in greater detail how musical material can be derived from algorithmic techniques. In particular, the case study, titled "From content to form", shows how to generate chordal material using a collection of generative modules and then to shape that material with a group of "moulding rules". For example, Moulding Rule Two states that "'all ascending sequences. . . of notes are slurred in order to form an articulatory unit". At the end of the discussion is a measure of music for six instruments, complete with articulations, that clearly demonstrates the musical potential of the formalizations that are the subject of the book.

Beyond that, the accompanying CD-ROM includes many applications for algorithmic composition in full-blown or demonstration versions. These include Roger Dannenberg's Nyquist language, the OpenMusic programming system developed by Gérard Assayag and Carlos Agon at IRCAM, a prototype of Music Sketcher, an algorithmic composition tool designed by Daniel Oppenheim and his colleagues at the IBM Computer Music Center, and several others. There are entries for both Windows and Macintosh platforms, with documentation and supporting material. The CDROM alone makes the book well worth the investment for a serious study of algorithmic composition. With this toolbox, readers can immediately test their ideas using established and relevant software.

This book addresses a field that is widely practiced but little described: probably the closest equivalent is Phil Winsor's "Automated Music Composition", published in 1989. Not only is the book needed, but it is exceptionally well-written and, above all, clear. Composers, student or otherwise, will find a valuable resource for ideas, software, algorithms, and their underlying mathematics. This lucid and scholarly text will be read not only by computer musicians, but by everyone with an interest in the artistic possibilities of technology.

16 of 17 people found the following review helpful.
A great learning experience
By David Byrne
I am neither a musician or a computer programmer by trade but have a strong interest in both topics.
I have been looking for just this type of book for a couple of years now. It provides an excellent balance of detail and overview and seems to cover more maths in an interesting way than I have seen before.
It provides a couple of good case studies which are reasonably easy to follow and before I knew I was up and running with my own generated tunes.
I haven't even started on the CD yet!

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