

michael b. bakan

speaking for ourselves

conversations on life,
music, and autism

Michael B. Bakan and

Speaking for Ourselves: Conversations on Life, Music, and Autism



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Because the advent of autism as a diagnosed condition in the 1940s, the need for music in the lives of autistic people has been widely observed and studied. Meanwhile, music scholars and historians have got posited autism-centered explanatory models to account for the initial musical artistry of everybody from Béla Bartók and Glenn Gould to "Blind Tom" Wiggins. Content articles on musical savants, incredible feats of musical memory, unusually high rates of absolute or "perfect" pitch, and the effectiveness of music-based therapies abound in the autism literature. In *Speaking for Ourselves*, famous ethnomusicologist Michael Bakan does just that, participating in deep conversations--some spanning the course of years--with ten fascinating and incredibly different individuals who talk about two basic factors in common: an autism spectrum analysis and a life where music takes on a central component. Given the great deal of attention paid to music and autism, it is surprising to learn that autistic people have seldom been asked to account for how they themselves make and experience music or why it matters to them that they perform. These conversations give profound insights in to the intricacies and intersections of music, autism, neurodiversity, and life generally, not really from an autistic viewpoint, but instead from many different autistic factors of watch. They invite readers to partake of a rich tapestry of words, concepts, images, and musical sounds that speak to both diversity of autistic encounter and the common humanity we all share.



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A Valuable Contribution to a Gap in Music Literature My experience reading this publication was somewhat tempered by my prior consumption of his previous published articles about them, but there was plenty of new material. I would suggest it to anyone, specifically those who have under no circumstances go through anything by him before. I also really appreciated his honesty. The format is mainly conversations with the writer on their various perceptions and interactions with music. Among the best actions that a neurotypical can take is the promotion of neurodiverse voices (and also truly listening to those voices). This applies to any member of many with regards to a minority. Various other authors could possibly learn from the idea of a companion website to provide audio/visual material that enriches the written text. The book is remarkably free from jargon, musical or neurological, and I recommend it to the widest group of readers. and I would recommend it to the widest group of readers This book introduces several individuals, each with diagnosis on the autistic spectrum. Don't assume all researcher is usually that transparent. I appreciated the "re-presentation" of his conversations with his autistic contributors, rather than simply posting the transcripts (not worthy of a book) or hardly using any quotes. The variety of musical encounter and the perception that we are all someplace on the spectrum is amazing. His learning experience over time was evident, in addition to how he discovered from the individuals who he was talking to.



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