

The Ninth – Beethoven and the World in 1824 by Harvey Sachs.
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The Ninth and last of Beethoven's symphonies is beloved the world over. In its variety, its depth, and its exhilarating final movement, it takes listeners on a musical journey that is almost unparalleled and leaves them at its conclusion exhausted and uplifted in almost equal measure.

In The Ninth, the writer, conductor and musicologist Harvey Sachs explores the symphony, and especially its last movement, in depth, as a subject in itself and also set against the background of contemporary national and international affairs. The book is divided into four parts, mirroring the ninth's four movements topped and tailed by a Prelude and Postlude: Part One, a Grand Symphony with Many Voices, Part Two, 1824, or How Artists Internalize Revolution, Part Three, Imagining the Ninth, and Part Four, To Begin Anew.

Sachs writes enthrallingly, describing the influence of the historical background of the period on composers and writers alike, the character of Beethoven and the demands that he made in the Ninth on his singers and musicians, and the history of the symphony after its first performance and the champions who brought it to a wider audience.

If you love classical music, or are intrigued by history, or have an open mind and like to learn new things, then this is the book for you. If nothing else it will encourage you to go immediately to listen again to the symphony that inspired the book, and provide you with information to inform and deepen that experience.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh